

*Feast of St. Ignatius*

*July 31, 2018*

## **Public Challenging *Method* Board II**

A strange title for an essay, you may note: but does it not catch attention? Its story will unfold slowly, but perhaps a simple lead helps.

The board, we can surely assume, are agreed on some standard model of what constitutes an adequate contribution. Such a standard model would be, for each, within what might be called *The Standard Model* of present achievement in Lonergan Studies. The name is borrowed from physics and has that meaning there.

In this essay I am, so to speak, calling the board out—think of the O.K. Corral, but at best think of section 5 of the chapter on Dialectic in *Method in Theology*. There Lonergan quite clearly compacts his view on “The Structure” (the title of the section) of Dialectic. The structure is within the full eightfold structure of specialties. Its operations begin with *Assembly*—please imagine now a mature cyclic process, dealing with additional suggestions regarding advancing the Standard Model. Again, the paralleling with physics helps. So, here, in the context of the *Method* journal, an *Assembly* is the provision of a candidate for publication. The board, with assistance perhaps from non-board referees, has to move this along. “Now this work of assembly, completion, comparison, reduction, classification, selection will be performed by different investigators and they will be operating within different horizons. The results, accordingly, will not be uniform. But this lack of uniformity will be brought out into the open when each investigator proceeds . . .” (halfway through section 5).

So here is my public challenge: I invite the board to push forward with me in the procedure laid out by Lonergan, a procedure of three objectifications. Does the board and its referees refuse? And if so, why? Their operations are dialectic: should they not have in their standard model a standing by and with Lonergan’s standard model, even if

it be in some reduced form? Do they prefer to give the appearance of being *voraussetzungslos* (*Insight*, 600)?

Questions and comments could get complex here, so best move to the origin of this challenge. That origin is given in an e-mail sent (July 18<sup>th</sup>) to contributors to the functional specialist volume *Seeding Global Collaboration* (Axial Publishing, 2016). It encouraged them to venture into that challenge, indeed as a paradigm of a range of challenges. Thus I concluded my communication to them: let you find your way to that conclusion now by venturing into that e-mail of two weeks ago. Here you have the conclusion first, and then the full contextualizing e-mail. In the third essay of this series I shall return to the problems that are emerging through the challenge of outreaching that I posed to the *SGC* contributors.

Might the board, indeed anyone, take up the challenge? I would be delighted to add such efforts here. Might this strategic little nudge blossom into a creative lift of Lonergan studies, finding its way through a series of essays here? E-mail me with you searchings, your suggestions: [pmcshane@shaw.ca](mailto:pmcshane@shaw.ca). As I wind up my battle for the beauty of Lonergan's pointings, I think of how, sixty years ago, he ended his lectures on Logic: "In other words, this is our last slap at this problem, and people may have questions of one kind or another that they want to raise." (*Phenomenology and Logic*, 138).

"This *Method* vs. McShane thingy is simply an instance in a larger paradigm of inswinging "institutions, roles, tasks" of present Lonergan studies out of the dark. Over to you to find and effectively exploit, perhaps, in interpersonal discomfort, further stale destructiveness of classrooms, essays, theses, papers, conference-organizations. Yes, we can reach beyond this little pool and its foggy froggy croaks. But would it not be better to have the ocean, the notion, of being debank it?"

And now the full climb to that conclusion, the e-mail of July 18<sup>th</sup>:

Topic: *Method* Board versus McShane

Greetings!!

You notice that I am addressing each of you as belonging to the group of 'dissenters from Lonerganism' that fermented forward into the volume *Seeding Global Collaboration*. However, I shall send my message to others and would invite you to do the same. Our

problem is to tilt globally towards a hearty breakthrough of our “not numerous center” into, around, an increasingly walled-off sick shrinking Lonerganism: reaching beyond that pond is another story. A little incident of this month of July provides a corner-turning possibility, and I find the leisure to push it forward as one neat sweet seed, being hospitalized with a pneumonia that, I am told, will haunt my airways for at least another month.

But let me tune you into the context of the road to the clash named in the title, indeed in a broad way that should be helpful to those included in our broader outreach. Where to start? The issue is of each of us becoming characters of glocal “effective intervention in this historical process.” My normativity of that issue is crested by  $\{M(W_3)^{\theta\Phi T}\}^4$ : even those of you who have been frontline strugglers with me for decades find that cresting disconcerting. I ended my sixty years of writing within the poise, “I rest my case,” but the added “C” gives is a terrible symbolic fantasy of unrest: “I Crest my case.”

Perhaps it could be helpful for us, for us together, to think of Lonergan’s grip on his own Everesting never-resting crest-quest at a couple of spots in his careering upcurved climb. At 29 he ended his powerful *Essay in Fundamental Sociology* with deep Christian hope of the future of the intervention of charity. (The conclusion of the Essay of 1934). At 53 he cut off his updrafting of interventions by drawing attention to theology’s normative lean into the humanities (*Insight*, 766: “theology possesses”). You might fruitfully day- or month-dream about the facets of that minding: at either stage he would have had some poise regarding  $\theta\Phi T$ ; at no stage prior to his sixtieth year did he have in his mind’s Aye the interventional leaning tower of  $W_3$ , apart from 1934’s seeding sniffing around its cyclic dynamics (*Essay on Fundamental Sociology*, 20).

That suggested helpful thinking could carry each of you, and all of you as a growing community, into a slowly growing ontic and phyletic genetic togetherness regarding and guarding the feeble first efforts at effective intervention of these next centuries. But that is not my focus now. Indeed, I would effectively focus us, in this run up to intussuscepting the *Method* Board–McShane snafu, on two particular recent potentially effective interventions of mine, possible seeds of massive annoyance. First, there is the emergence of the footnote 28 that concludes my final [Tinctures of System](#) series. Secondly, there is the strategic inclusion of that footnote in my reply to the *Method* editors’ comments last July in which they justify rejecting my article on a relevant paradigmatic strategy of intervention.

Footnote 28? Well, let each of us start with a read of the note in some *ethos* of effective intervention, my present dominant cultural pointing. Then I will muse with you on our readings, on our future readings, on our interventionist readings of the future. Here we are then:

<sup>28</sup> A final note in this essay, and in my essaying of 60 years. That I ended in an aesthetic mode probably provides some with an excuse to ignore my efforts. So, let me end with some dull remarkable barking remarkings.

It seems to me that Lonergan's disciples have little imagining of what he was reaching for. The issue is and was a science of progress. The solution is and was a critical creatively effective genetics of the global thinkings and doings regarding that progress. My regular analogy of growing a sunflower is obvious. Since my audience is primarily Christian, I narrow my musings here to Christian theology. Jesus arrives at the fullness of time—we could count to three and had the linguistic signs to contextualize such an achievement—but we were comfortably settled into truncated consciousness and a fussy optimism about initial meanings. Let's skip the mystical stuff here and think of that trail as it messed on through the centuries of patristics and councils in the putterings of generations "whose consciousness is unmitigated by any tincture of systematic meaning" (*Method in Theology*, 32: see also 278, 309), to a large extent, and clearly untheoretic in delineating the message that was and is in Jesus' minding. In later centuries the putterings delineated that minding, well, in what we can recognize as the usual narrow-minded tracts of theology that *de facto* narrow the minds of theologians and their victim-students and "the Cargo" (See [Vignette 19](#)).

Lonergan's search for an answer "Do you know His Kingdom?" (*Essay in Fundamental Sociology*, conclusion) finally bubbled out beyond the contemporary imagination in the key problem of locating the genetics of that Kingdom in an effective cumulatively redemptive, science: we are leaping now, remarkably and markedly, over the second paragraph of *Method in Theology*, chapter one: the bold spiriting that has mislead and shrunken us through more than two millennia. The answer comes in Lonergan's meaning of *Comparison* when it is fully, and genetically, sifted up out of the program of *Method in Theology* 250. What is to emerge eventually is a mind-boggling fresh effective genetic perspective on the ongoing Son-flowering of the Kingdom—including its eschatological realization. Further, the treatise Lonergan heralded in *Insight* 763-4 is to be not only the heart of the entire enterprise of theology, but also its basis in the teaching of theology. I think back now to the stupid messing of my first year theology (1961-2) titled "On the Church," all the more startling in that I had come from the real world of lecturing graduate physics and mathematics. Pause for a shot at imagining the rest of a degree in Christian theology with such a new mind-boggling scientific beginning, "outshining everything since the rise of Christianity" ("Questionnaire on Philosophy," *CWL* 17, 353).

My claim, expressed already in the beginning of the second paragraph, but now with some backing, is that most likely you just cannot effectively have that shot, a shot at breaking the locked neuromolecular patterns in your cranium. The "some backing" is just a few hundred of my words jostled onto the surface of those fixed sick patterns. Lonergan studies will continue in the ruts of the past until a "not numerous center" (*CWL* 4, 245) becomes numerous enough to think

their way effectively out of present gross global-billionaires or buttons-misery. "We are not there yet" (*For a New Political Economy*, 306), nor will there be a jumpstart towards "effective intervention in history" (*Phenomenology and Logic*, 306) until Faithfilled fantasy effectively replaces the junkyard that is present religious reflection and prayer. That fantasy would lift the symbolic heuristic, {M (W<sub>3</sub>)<sup>0ΦT</sup>}<sup>4</sup>, into humble effective climbing. But in what sense can I thus "Crest my Case"? As far as present theologians are concerned, my Case's Crest flags a life of dead see strolls.

A first reading, however self-intent, will not normally lift you to the sense of a strange existential gap between the note and the text which it completes. Certainly there are hints, but your first young reading can carry you unwittingly past reading in those awful hints. Nor am I here going to get into the comic idiocy of brief hints about hints that crave to take us captive. I simply add a little more plain prose to the note's seeming plainness.

So: there was a temporal gap of perhaps two weeks before the challenge of that note fermented up to its actual—"though never in this life complete" (CWL 20, 209)—beyondness. The beyondness is that of a life's largest meaning found in a fresh InWithTo context, and, for example, the present context of my typing is part of that freshened context: a hospital ward in Vancouver in which elders of Korea, China, Ireland, poise in freedom's care. But think now again, in these odd leaps and links of the smelt of nations, of the new leaf note cooking let loose in footnote 28: expression, but again to whom???—cherish here the haunting presence of the first two sections of *Insight 17*—of my new, now newsome in this writing, new view of a central horror of the twentieth century's Christian intellectualism.

My new view was present and expressed as above, just before I received, a week ago, the rejection letter from the editorial board of *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*. My response added, as you'll see, the beyondness stuff to its simple bluntness: but, again, we 'paw', to whom??? The question of communication thus recurs, even now, as you meet my beyondness, meet that note 28 in one of its many outreached contexts.

This group nudging of effective intervention had originally a maddening complexity of further hintings and suggestions, yet here I am suddenly inspired to end where Lonergan ended his 28-year-old sad failed letter of 1934 to a Jesuit Superior: "What on earth is to be done?" My letter is in better hands? Spread, pro or con, my discomfiting poise: might it not be the beginnings of what Lonergan so clearly expressed as central—but to whom???—when he put together his brilliant *1833 Overture*?

Here you are, then, preferably in that Overture Context with others, my response to the editorial board's rejection letters—added immediately—of the *Method Journal*. The rejected article, "[A Paradigmatic Panel for \(Advanced\) Students \(of Religion\)](#)," is now

available as a [Website Article](#) on my website. But facing into it is not a necessity of the effective noise-making to be hoped for. Might there be a plethora of effective heartbeats? The present Lonerganian silence is the ally of ongoing decadence that is turning Lonergan into a cultural joke. There: that is an annoying little spontaneous add-on here, might I say at this stage in my venture with you! And slipping forward from that and previous little nudges, hints, I present you the centerpiece of my venture immediately. The rejection first: then my reply. The rejection—Byrne’s note to me and the referee’s comments on my article—are both brief and relatively formal. The reply from me to Byrne follows: it is not so brief, nor does it seem formal. The brevity is of little consequence in either case: the question I would have haunt your re-reading of this starry-bracketted section is, what is the form, the formality here: what, really is going forward?

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Appendix: Correspondence with *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*

A. Letter from Patrick Byrne, Co-editor, *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*

July 10, 2018

Dear Phil,

Thank you for submitting your article, “A Paradigmatic Panel Dynamic for (Advanced) Students (of Religion)” to *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*. I am sorry to inform you that the referees have not recommended the publication of your article in *MJLS*. With this letter I am enclosing the referee’s report on your article.

Sincerely,

Patrick H. Byrne

Co-editor, *MJLS*

B. Editors’ Comments

This submission reports about an invitation to several people, to participate in a panel at the 2018 West Coast Method Institute on the topic identified in the title. This report is then followed by reflections on four important passages from *Method in Theology*. There is no record of which panelists declined the invitation, or which accepted, nor what those who accepted the invitation had to say. McShane’s own reflections on the four passages call upon the reader to enter more seriously into the reading of those passages, and to become shocked by the poverty of our present situation. The call is intensified by

references to visionaries from Vancouver Sikhs to Nadia Boulanger and Vaslav Nijinsky and George Eliot among others. If I had to classify the submission, I would say it is prophetic, fully aware [sic] of the great irony in ever “classifying” anything as prophetic. In this prophetic mode, the submission includes a not too subtle rebuke to “jump-start a repentance from ‘academic disciplines’ Lonergan studies” with a footnote to the phrase “academic disciplines” from *Method in Theology*.

I have no doubt of the intellectual and spiritual poverty of our present condition. I have no doubt that in the future times when Lonergan’s work has been accepted and effected a reorientation of academic disciplines, things will be much different, and we would hope, much better. But at present those involved in “Lonergan studies” – those doing the best they can to learn from one another, whether housed in academic departments or not – need insights as much if not more than prophetic exhortations. *MJLS* does the best it can to meet the prior need. While I do not doubt the need for prophetic exhortations, *MJLS* is not the venue for this submission.

The editors of *MJLS* do take seriously the issue raised in this submission about the state of the academic disciplines. They are considering steps that *MJLS* might take to address this concern more seriously in the near future.

### C. Reply to Patrick Byrne

Dear Pat,

a sad business, this. The referee shockingly misread the article. It is not a narrow report, but a full heuristic paradigm. And oh, yes, my stuff is, I would claim the referee’s word, “Prophetic”. So, then, the little tinkering mentioned at the end of his[her] comments is a joke: “The editors of *MJLS* do take seriously the issue raised in this submission about the state of the academic disciplines. They are considering steps that *MJLS* might take to address this concern more seriously in the near future.” That not-near future, if the seriousness blossomed into honesty, should develop in taking Lonergan seriously when he clearly shifts the norms of the usual trivial comparison-work to the control of a genetic sequence of prior efforts to understanding whatever. See *Insight*, the two paragraphs on the turn of pages: (i) 603-4 (ii) 609-10. And yes, indeed, there is some jump-start needed, but it seems sadly decades away.

Perhaps there is some good in placing before you my bluntness in the final note (28) of my last essay of the “Tincture of System” series. *Tinctures of System* 6: “ $\{M (W_3)^{0\Phi T}\}^4$  Converging the Fifth Column: I Crest my Case.” They are indeed, happily, my last note and my last series: it is time to halt my long climbing scattered efforts to share Lonergan’s 29-yr-old yearnings of Essay on Fundamental Sociology and venture into practical and

disturbing nudges – LOL – such as this.

So here you are, “a measure of needed bluntness” that Crowe talked about in 1964 (*Spirit as Inquiry*, 27):

*Tinctures* 6, note 28:

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You have, perhaps, re-read that exchange, as I suggested, bearing, borning, in your mind a struggle to answer for yourself my question about its formality, its form, its forwhom, its forum, its wheregoing in finitude. Blush not if you have only read it once, and let this paragraph ready you for tenuous repentance of a re-read. I will keep the readying up to a single reading—indeed perhaps a shocking reading “up”—from *Insight*, p. 766, “theology possesses.” Read that text as “up” as you can and then consider the *Method* Board–McShane exchange as—yes, twirled into the cycle, **worth researching!** But now the cycling from the Boston–Vancouver topology to a range of equivalent or analogous future intertwinings is a geohistorical frontiering that poises “Meaning and Ontology” over “Common Meaning and Ontology” in a global-families Bell-curve  $C_9$  “fruit borne” (*Method* 14, page 1) achievement, dynamic in its anticipation of divergence-tightening in the cycles to follow.

Are you now a little better poised in fantasy towards an effective re-read of the *Method* Board–McShane exchange? Think frighteningly big of a task like the volume we produced, *Seeding Global Collaboration*—until now a resolute but ineffective intervention in this historical process. Depending together on our grip on the Crest of History (and in the

main we are like a pre-Faraday community being flagged forward by Maxwell), we bring a normative three-specialists genetic control of e.g. rhetoric to bear on its critical forward-sifting. So, do I not make you chuckle or modestly grin (the context is *Insight* 647–49)? Does it make the *Method* Board of drifting sifters grin or groan to find their performances inswung into an *Assembly* that leads to the discomfoting task of the triple objectification of Lonergan’s 1833 Overture? “But,” they can plead, “this we did not have in mind when we dumped McShane’s article.” Well, that article, in a year-younger form, was a core of the Crest of the rest of restless history, what I had in mind thus youngly when I put the paradigm paper together. What the board needs is a vulnerable presence on such a panel that would slowly reveal to them their settled participation in what positionally are disgusting counterpositional patterns of dodging progress and bolstering decline.

This *Method* vs. McShane thingy is simply an instance in a larger paradigm of inswinging “institutions, roles, tasks” of present Lonergan studies out of the dark. Over to you to find and effectively exploit, perhaps, in interpersonal discomfort, further stale destructivenesses of classrooms, essays, theses, papers, conference-organizations. Yes, we can reach beyond this little pool and its foggy froggy croaks. But would it not be better to have the ocean, the notion, of being debank it?