

AMONG THE LILIES¹

O prince's daughter!
The curve of your thighs
Is like the curve of a necklace,
Work of a master hand.
Your navel is a bowl well rounded
With no lack of wine,
Your belly a heap of wheat
Surrounded with lilies.
Your two breasts are like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle.
Your neck is an ivory tower.
Your eyes, the pools of Heshbon,
By the gate of Bath-rabbim.
Your nose, the Tower of Lebanon,
Sentinel facing Damascus.²

Might we begin again together, quietly, in the Jesus-singing with us of *The Song of Songs*?³
Might you try freshly to read with me that glorious paragraph of Lonergan that I lay now
before your eyes, a sleeping princess, newly typed, needing kissing?

¹ “He pastures his flocks among the lilies” (*The Song of Songs*, 6:3). I am using the original Jerusalem Bible version. I had best recall my comment in the first note of previous Vignette. “I think of the lilies of the fields, God’s global panting cargo, and then muse over a parallel with Monet’s many “Water-Lilies” (See *Monet by Himself*, edited by Richard Kendall, Chartwell Books, 2014, 240-79). Poise over the remark, from a Monet letter of 2008, “It’s quite beyond my powers at my age, and yet I want to succeed in expressing what I feel” (*ibid.*, 240)). Here I am poised, like Monet “presenting” twice (*ibid.*, 268, 269) a Japanese Bridge Among the Water Lilies.”

² The Song of Songs, 7:2–4.

³ There are massively complex issues of causalities lurking here, but I would have you focus on bringing forwards the issues of ontic and phyletic growth raised in Vignette 18. In what way is finitude a song of Jesus? Is each of us a song of songs: a genetics of his symphonic weavings? I noted previously that this Vignette would be a beginning of the main challenge of the series, which is to point, in *Assembly*, to the full meaning of the paragraph that is the center of our attention here, the paragraph that I have named in this decade 60910. You might consider this beginning odd. Carry your consideration into the problem as it is raised in chapter seventeen of *Insight*. Pick up on how that chapter’s parallel in *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History*, Chapter 17, “Remembering the Future” has its three sections tied into Jesus triple identification as Way, Truth, Life. You will find a new twist on that in the three *Vignettes* 22, 23, 24, as they carry us to love from

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Embrace it now, reading it again now for the first time—after the next question mark—its love-singing,

arising like the dawn,
fair as the moon,
resplendent as the sun,
terrible as an army in battle array?⁵

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Thirdly, with the advance of culture and of effective education, there arises the possibility of the differentiation and specialization of modes of expression; and since development conditions not only the exact communication of insights but also the discoverer's own grasp of his discovery, since such grasp and its exact communication intimately are connected with the advance of

issues of truth, through the character of a core and cor way, to a simple seeding of a way of global life.

⁴ *Insight*, CWL 3, 609–10.

⁵ The Song of Songs, 6:10.

positions and the reversal of counterpositions, the three elements in the explanatory differentiation of the protean notion of being fused into a single explanation.⁶

And indeed, it is to be terrible in its full-tower splendor: arrayed—but “our sister is little: her breasts are not yet formed”⁷—against the scattered and scatty global hordes that rest on “man’s proud content to be just a man,”⁸ even when vested for worship and wedding, surrounding our little sister, sick in their unfaltering “academic disciplines’s”⁹ offerings of “rather vigorous resistance.”¹⁰

The introduction into physics of tensor fields and eigenfunctions raised a barrier between the theoretical physicists that grasped the mathematics but possessed no great skill in handling laboratory equipment and, on the other hand, the experts in experimental work for whom the recondite mathematics was sheer mystery. In similar fashion one may expect the diligent authors of highly specialized monographs to be somewhat bewildered and dismayed when they find that instead of singly following the bent of their genius, their aptitudes, and their acquitted skills, they are to collaborate I the light of common but abstruse principles and to have their individual results checked by general requirements that envisage simultaneously the totality of results.¹¹

Oi vey: to envisage simultaneously the totality of results!? **What, Who**, is this Great Dame¹² *Song of Songs* that is to sweep the post-exilic Persian poem into the full symphony of

⁶ Were you different when you read this present-aging? Did you age as you move through it line by line? You never step into the same word twice.

⁷ The Song of Songs, 8:7.

⁸ *Insight*, 750.

⁹ Method in Theology, 3, the end words. Revisit the musings about the academic disciplines approach in [Vignette 16](#), “Academic Disciplines.”

¹⁰ *Insight* 603. Just before the quotation to follow here.

¹¹ *Insight*, 603–4.

¹² The Great Dame is, of course, Grace, the Clasp of finitude, whose exigence is thus Exigence, not a Noah’s Ark, but a hark of the Covenant. (See *Phenomenology and Logic*, the index under both *exigence* and *Noah’s Ark*.) See below, note 24.

the spheres,¹³ fused into a single explanation of “the order of the universe”¹⁴ that is to be electro-laced¹⁵ into “that order’s dynamic joy and zeal”?¹⁶

But is that **What** sincere, an in-you leaning little breast-tower of Gaia, a “Sow What?” frailly positioned and poisioned against an imperial arraying and braying of “so what?” The potential gasping aspen¹⁷ **What** in you is a frail infested¹⁸ “spooky”¹⁹ unknown little what, unknown in its seedily-bent bent for The Beloved, the Single Explanation, the Married-to-us Explanation, Explanted but Implanted, The Vine. After two millennia we must begin afresh to wonder

— “Doh-oh, me, fah, ^{Soh}, _{Soh},”²⁰ —

¹³ I am thinking, of course, of Shakespeare’s *Pericles* (see Act V, scene I, 255). But the full pilgrim poise is to be taken to art: see Patrick Kavanagh’s reflections on Pericles in my *Lack in the Beingstalk, A Giants Causeway* (Axial Publishing, 2006), 56–65.

¹⁴ *Insight*, 722, last paragraph.

¹⁵ No metaphor here. Think of Maxwell’s ship-shaping:

$$\begin{aligned} \left(\frac{\partial^2 E_x}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 E_x}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 E_x}{\partial z^2} \right) &= \frac{1}{c_0^2} \left(\frac{\partial^2 E_x}{\partial t^2} \right) \\ \left(\frac{\partial^2 E_y}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 E_y}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 E_y}{\partial z^2} \right) &= \frac{1}{c_0^2} \left(\frac{\partial^2 E_y}{\partial t^2} \right) \\ \left(\frac{\partial^2 E_z}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 E_z}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 E_z}{\partial z^2} \right) &= \frac{1}{c_0^2} \left(\frac{\partial^2 E_z}{\partial t^2} \right) \end{aligned}$$

¹⁶ *Insight* 722, the final words.

¹⁷ I am thinking, as image of human collaborative and caring togetherness, of the Aspen Grove in Fishlake National forest, Utah, U.S.A., 80,000 years old.

¹⁸ Detecting the character, indeed the characters, of the infestation, is a massive communal psychic task of these next centuries. The superego of the axial period has a massive hold on the molecules of our imagination. Both the top 1% and the poor of the cargo are living in oppressions of misery, “together swept in a swirling mass down the cataract of life to the serene pool of a green churchyard.” (*Shorter Papers*, “The Mystical Body and the Sacraments,” *CWL* 20, 78).

¹⁹ “spooky”: “Mission and the Spirit,” *A Third Collection*, in the beginning of the section on the Supernatural. Obviously, this entire Grace-kataphantism of Lonergan is a present context.

²⁰ These notes weave forth at the beginning of the second movement (after a 15 minute first movement in Bruckner’s 76 minute eighth symphony), and move to a magnificent take-over of the work. They have been for me, for many years, a symbol of the entry of Lonergan’s functional “notes” of 1965 into the symphony of history. I wait to hear faint promising chords. Bruckner knew what was “going on,” but without the depth of postaxiality. Lonergan was radiantly clear of what he had done as he scribbled at the bottom of page of notes, doubly underlined, “mine and catholic”. He had discovered the science of Futurology. He remarked in an interview with Val Rice, in his last years, that he was leaving its development to his disciples. How long do we have to wait? More than twenty years before he had discovered the science of economics, but he was not optimistic about its reception. In 1977 he remarked to me, as we planned his spring lectures, “you know, Phil, this is going to take a hundred and fifty years!” Are we to wait till after 2120 for the 2020 vision of philosophy and theology?

about that Wholly Frail Sprout, the Cherished Cauler.²¹ A mountain of gardening messing has surrounded the Frail's Desire, "may they all be one."²² "You can either sit on your hands or you can put spade to earth and move the first sod. Some day, if others have the same idea, the mountain will be moved – and restructured."²³ But it is not primarily the mountain that needs restructuring. It must be moved, yes, patterned below and around the Sprout: primarily, it is to let the Frail Sprout X signal parabolic and hyperbolic ship-shapings towards the Sonflower structuring of a distant identity hidden now in a crannied axial wall. You and I must come what-watering, what-weeding, gently what-plucking. With Interior Lighthouse twirling patience in Grace²⁴ we must needs say to the Beloved, "Flower in the crannied wall, I pluck you out of the crannies."²⁵ Then your "nose"²⁶ and knows, and nos, and mine, can become, in a strange global togetherness, a Tower of Lebanon, a Sentinel facing Damascus.

Where did your Beloved go,
O loveliest of women?
Which way did your Beloved turn,
So that we can help you to look for him?²⁷

²¹ See "The Finding of the Wholly Frail," p. i–ii of *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History*. There is, of course, much more to be reached for in millennia to come. See "Embracing Luminously and Toweringly the Symphony of Cauling," my Epilogue to *Seeding Global Collaboration*, edited by Patrick Brown and James Duffy, Axial Publishing, 2016, 221–45.

²² John 17:21. The final Scripture reference in *Method in Theology*.

²³ Frederick Crowe S.J, *Theology of The Christian Word. A Study in History* (Paulist Press, 1978), 149. I have brooded over the significance of this book for decades (see first my [Cantover 38](#), "Functional History," and then later the reflections on the work in the [Humus](#) series). It finds fresh significance here. Might his chapters not point to 7 songs within the genetic dynamics of history's song of songs?

²⁴ In Grace we can, with Grace, be pretenders of praying to Grace (See *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History*, 199–200, 223) "Grace, Grace, Grace, attune us to the Allure of the Scent of a Nomen."

²⁵ Lonergan referred to this short poem, "Flower I the Crannied Wall" (1869) by Tennyson in his 1942 version of his economics. I quote it in full in a note to the text there (*For a New Political Economy*, CWL 21, 31, note 1): "Flower in the Crannied wall, / I pluck you out of the crannies, / I hold you here, root and all, in my hand, / Little flower – but if I could understand / What you are, root and all, and all in all, / I should know what God and man is."

²⁶ We have cycled back symbolically to the initial quotation from the *Song of Songs*, strangely "providing a statistically effective form for the next cycle of human action," (Lonergan, "Essay in Fundamental Sociology," p. 20 of Michael Shute's *Lonergan's Early Economic Research*), the action of learning from ordinary care of strange little plants, messengers of Plant X, so that we can begin a glocal but eternal harmony of eighth and ninth symphonies.

²⁷ The Song of Songs, 6:1.