

(Reviewing)³ ‘living human bodies linked in charity,’¹ in the Context of
the 2015 Lonergan Philosophical Society Gathering, October 8-11,
ACPA, in Boston

This short essay is really about (reviewing)³ three word in *Method in Theology*: “Assembly,”² “academic disciplines.”³ They are turn-of-page words, and for me they are turn of culture words. Might this way of viewing also be true of Lonergan? But to discover that in a serious scientific fashion one needs all the subtly of Lonergan’s suggested strategy of reviewing, of discerning, that is compactly expressed in the most powerful paragraph in *Insight*, the turn-of-page paragraph that I usually identify as 60910.

Let me take this slowly and so, I hope, helpfully. First, a pause over the odd amalgam “(Reviewing)³” to show that it is not indecently mysterious. I introduced the notion in an essay of the early 1990s when I wrote about sublating St. Ignatius’s reflections

¹ *Insight*, 745.

² The last word on page 249 of *Method in Theology*.

³ The last two words on the first page of chapter one of *Method in Theology*. As I weave my little essay to a conclusion I found it better to leave our musing on the meaning of those two words and on the conference referred to aside. The full context of the challenge emerges in the essays HOW 5 and HOW 6. There comes then a shift in global probabilities of us musing together over their meaning in the context of the gathering mentioned in the title. The four papers delivered at that gathering are readily available: certainly I can forward them to you if you contact me at pmcshane@shaw.ca. Pat Byrne presented a paper titled “Edith Stein & Bernard Lonergan: Empathy, Phenomenology and Self-Appropriation,” and it was responded to by Chip Hughes’ paper, “A Response.” Anne Carpenter presented a paper which focuses on the problem of addictions, “THE ECLIPSE AND RECOVERY OF MEMORY: LONERGAN, DADOSKY, AND THE EXPERIENCE OF COGNITIVE REDEMPTION” and it was responded to by Liz Murray, “The Transcendental Precepts and Recovery. A Responses to Anne Carpenter.” All four papers weaved round the meaning of *empathy*. For a broader background to the search for Assembly’s psychic tonalities I would recommend Carpenter’s recent book, *Theo-Poetics: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Risk of Art and Being*, University of Notre Dame Press, 2015. My own short musings of [Bridgepoise](#) 3 and 10 are useful: “Liberal Arts as the Core of Future Science,” Parts One and Two.

on discernment.⁴ Other people in history have written of the activity, perhaps under other names, like examination, interpretation, reviewing, but we can conveniently talk and think now of discernment of discernments. Here, you should have little difficulty in moving back and forth from this expression to the expression “reviewing of reviewings.” A key little difficulty is, being clear on any first viewing or discerning. There is an object—which may be a subject—viewed or discerned. So, one may discern one’s own or another’s intentions, arriving at a view of those intentions. Another may do the same: think perhaps of Napoleon’s intentions of invading Russia. Then you find a history of discerning Napoleon’s discerning regarding the march on Moscow. That standard history is there, a scattered human achievement. But now I throw in a third *discernment* or *reviewing*. What my odd symbolism challenges us to do is to lift—so so slowly—that standard cultural achievement to a level of self-taste that belongs in a new stage of meaning. One discerns the discernment of and in oneself, making the ‘second’ discernment luminous and indeed then, THEN,⁵ within that luminosity, inviting globally, though unevenly, in a future of emphatic living, a distant realization of core-calling, very much beyond present human bluntedness. And now I recall the conclusion of my sixth chapter in that strange book:

So to detect and foster a core-calling becomes an outsiderish passion.
Still, to detect such a neural surge in you is a matter of the ordinary

⁴ The essay, “The Value of Lonergan’s Economics for Lonergan Students” became the first chapter of the book, [The Redress of Poise](#). The reflection on discernment came at the end (page 10 of the website book). It was continued at the end of the sixth chapter (see note 6 below).

⁵ The implicit reference is to my *Cantower* 5, “Metaphysics THEN”, and the reference is pertinent to our search for the meaning of *Assembly*, since that *Cantower* spins its meaning round an old Scottish Song that claims “I will build my Love a Bower”, beginning in the mood of Ezra Pound’s *Canto* IV, “upon the gilded tower in Ecbatan / Lay the God’s bride lay ever, waiting the golden rain”. Pound’s reach for “vorticist man” was, of course, an inspirational lift. I quote immediately a comment of Pound from note 39 of my 2002 (Easter Monday and April Fool’s Day!) *Cantower* 1, “Pound wrote ‘if you clap a strong magnet beneath a plateful of iron filings, the energies of the magnet will proceed to organize form ... the design in the magnetized iron filings expresses a confluence of energy’ “ (“Affirmations, Vorticism”, *The New Age*, xvi, 11, Jan 14, 1915, 277). One could sublimate Pound’s various reflections on ‘vorticist man’. Even here, does it not give you a new notion of filing systems?!”

discernment familiar to you from spiritual exercises. Further, to risk cultivating it gently, for a month or a year, would seem a necessary seeding of a new political order in later millennia. But the achievement of core-care in its foundational fullness involves decades of Hopkinesque self-taste mounting to a discernment of discernment of discernment that would ground a global efficiency of the vortex of method, spreading new levels of culture and common meaning.⁶

You shall note later on that the word *empathy* is central to Pat Byrne's paper in that conference of 2015, the title of which, as mentioned in note 3, is "Edith Stein & Bernard Lonergan: Empathy, Phenomenology and Self-Appropriation." But here I am asking you to stay with a usual dictionary meaning, "ability to share in another's emotions or feelings." That dictionary meaning is an initial meaning,⁷ pointing, in wondrous vagueness,⁸ to over a hundred billion abilities, capacities-for-performance.⁹ Might I pull in the first paragraph of my book *Allure*?

The emergence of humanity is an evolutionary achievement of sowing what among the cosmic molecules. The sown what infests the clustered molecular patterns behind and above your eyes, between your ears, lifting areas—named by humans like Brocca and Wernicke—towards patterned noise-making that in English is marked by "so what?"¹⁰

But now I am at a new beginning, with focus on what's molecularity, empathically concerned (about)³ "the well of loneliness"¹¹ of that molecularity as it is to be swept

⁶ The conclusion to chapter 6, "In Tune with Timely Meaning", of *The Redress of Poise*, 99.

⁷ On the difficult topic of initial meanings see *Allure*, note 24 of page 51 and note 4 of page 223. Note 24 is referred to in the reference of page 223 as "note 61 of chapter 4". It is, in fact the 61st note, but the appendix there starts the notes again at a note 1.

⁸ For a decent but truncated push beyond vagueness see Douglas Watt, "Towards a Neuroscience of Empathy," *Neuro-Psychoanalysis* 2007, 9 (2), 119-140.

⁹ I am adding the context of *Insight's* reflections in chapter 15 on capacity-for-performance. Helpful here is my [Quodlibet 3](#), "Being Breathless and Late in talking about Virtue".

¹⁰ *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History*, Axial Publishing, 2015, 3. Referred to here as *Allure*.

¹¹ "The Well of Loneliness" is the title and topic of the nineteenth chapter of *Allure*, which parallels—as indeed all the chapters do—the same-numbered chapter of *Insight*. See the following note.

up, in future millennia, by the good will of a mature discernment “at one with the universe in being in love with God, and it shares its dynamic resilience and expectancy. As emergent probability, it ever rises above past achievement.”¹² The well of loneliness is not destined by providence’s smile to be a lone Nuala or Noah in the dark,¹³ but to find slowly, beyond primitive ape-hugs, a shift from sapling history to a solution to the well-problem in a luminous huglaboration of community. “It follows that the solution will be not only a renovation of will that matches intellectual detachment and aspiration, not only a new and higher integration of intellect through faith in God, but also a mystery that is at once symbol of the uncomprehended and sign of what is grasped and psychic force that sweeps living human bodies, linked in charity, to the joyful, courageous, wholehearted, yet intelligently controlled performance of the tasks set by a world order in which the problem of evil is not suppressed but transcended.”¹⁴

But before I go on I might ask, I ask you to ask, what is this essay really about? My answer is that it is (about)³ *Assembly*. It is about the central word of the book *Method in Theology*. It is about the first operation of dialectic in any cycle of huglaboration.¹⁵

¹² *Insight* 722, the final paragraph on the integral joy of the cosmos that screams for our luminously-felt integrity.

¹³ The issue of chapter 19 of *Allure* is to identify you, well of loneliness, within the subjectivity of God, reaching contemplatively and exigently (See CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic*: the index under *exigence*) for God “not an object” (*Method in Theology*, 342, line 2). The katapahatic contemplative climb towards that empathetic reality is described in the four appendices of *Allure*, chapters 2, 4, 10, 11. In that climb one comes to grips psychically with the fact that the Trinity’s knowledge is not a “Noah’s ark of possible natures” (CWL 18, 351), that you are in the glorious Trinitarian weave of Claspings, Cherishing, Cauling, Craving, Christing: an Assembly reaching for an everlasting neurodynamics.

¹⁴ *Insight* 744-45.

¹⁵ Collaboration is a word that occurs more than 30 times in the final dozen pages of *Insight*. Was Lonergan ‘thinking’ of huglaboration? There are abundant fables about Lonergan and feelings. As Crowe remarked to me, with a grin, about his revision of the index of *Insight* for the University of Toronto edition, “there’s a lot more about feelings there!” At Florida, in the 1970 conference, when asked, in academic discipline fashion, whether he found feelings in Scheler he quipped “I’ve got feelings too!” I recall phoning him later in the 1970s to check how he liked a

It is about the reality of the Tower Community in, perhaps, a much later millennium, leaning empathically forward, a cord and chord in the Symphonic Jesus, “the leaven that leaveneth the whole mass”¹⁶ towards a global reality of Isaiah’s dreaming. “Is this to be taken literally or is it figure? It would be fair and fine, indeed, to think it no figure.”¹⁷ The Assembly of later millennia, overpowering gently “the antiquated sovereignty of the state,”¹⁸ will spiral contemplatively hugupwards in the Christclimb of the law of history, sensing of the Jesus of history that “his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will yes.” The law of history? Eventually a (law)³. It is to be brought forth by Assembly,¹⁹ Tower-spiraled into town and gown, a positive global yes I said yes I will yes²⁰ to the question, “Do you view humanity as possibly maturing—in some serious way—or just messing along between good and evil, whatever you think they are?”²¹

I have been (reviewing)³, (discerning)³, the meaning of the word *Assembly* at the bottom of page 249 of *Method in Theology*. I have lead you to think, in popular fashion, of its meaning as containing the yes to the question of historical being. My ramble “proceeds by cajoling or forcing attention and not by explaining the intended goal and

gift I gave him of Beethoven’s *Last Quartets*, when I foolishly asked “what did you think of them Bernie?” His answer: “I don’t think; I feel”.

¹⁶ Lonergan, “Essay in Fundamental Sociology,” pages 15- 43 of Michael Shute, *Lonergan’s Early Economic Research*, University of Toronto Press, 2010, 37.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁹ *Assembly* is the name for the beginning of the operations pertaining to dialectic. But it is within the Assembly that The Leaning Tower of Able. Its results in any cycle of “cumulative and progressive results” whirl into the next cycle of collaboration and are spun out into common meaning particularly in boosts of empathy, kindness, care. “And finally, I am not sure if I speak wildly, out of the very progress itself to produce a mildness of manners and temperament which will support and imitate and extend the mighty power of Christian charity. This, then, is the virtue of social progress, by which man directs his action so that it will be easier for his neighbours and his posterity to know and to do what is right and just.” *Ibid.*, 42-43.

²⁰ The concluding words of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Also the concluding words of my introductory musings to *Allure*, “The Finding of the Wholly Frail”, ii.

²¹ This question begins the eighth chapter of *The Everlasting Joy of Being Human* (P. McShane, Axial Publishing, 2013), “The 8-fold Cyclic Way Folds Other Ways”.

by inviting an intelligent and reasonable cooperation.”²² But has my cajoling or forcing succeeded? Is there in you, here and now, an empathy alluring you to say yes I said yes I will yes? I have whirled, legitimately, all the meaning of Lonergan’s final achievement into that single word, *Assembly*. How do you feel about it?

The answer might well be a notional assent, but it is sickeningly vulnerable.

Today, the English word, *science*, means natural science. One descends a rung or more when one speaks of behavioral or human sciences. Theologians finally often have to be content if their subject is included in a list not of sciences but of academic disciplines.²³

The real assent is to empathize with the “yes I said yes I will yes” of Lonergan as he scribbled his discovery page of 1965, and ended by arrowing crazily down the page from the words “in orat recta” to a final scribble, “vital intelligent reasonable responsible mine and catholic.”²⁴

We are at a turning pointing in a book, in a life, in history, as we read together those last words of the first page of *Method in Theology*. Might you remember how you turned the page on your first reading of these words, “academic disciplines,” and found your way to Lonergan’s molecularly-patterned future-bent memory of his

²² *Insight*, 415.

²³ *Method in Theology*, the conclusion of page 3, turning from your reading of “academic disciplines” to start page 4 with the words, “Clearly enough”. Those two words bring to mind the oft-repeated paragraph-beginner of *CWL 12*, “These things being understood”. Am I going to get you to pause here over the two words “academic discipline” as I forced you to pause in these few pages over the meaning of *Assembly*? It seems to me best now to leave my musing (about)³ those two words till after the meeting in Boston on Saturday June 25th. A naïve optimism would lead me to think that the six of us – you and I and the four paper-givers of the October gathering of 2015 – might meet in some version of the discomfort of Lonergan’s 1833 Overture of *Method in Theology*, 250, lines 18-33. Meantime, it is for you to brood over the yes answer to the question of history, and find the sick NO that lives and moves our beings and has-beens in the ineffective and effete to-and-fro of gatherings haunted by the over-reaching ethos and the psychotic empathy of academic disciplines.

²⁴ The page is reproduced on page 160 of Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan. His Life and Leading Ideas*, Axial Publishing, 2010. The underlining is in the text, but there it is a vigorous double underlining.

scribble of 1965 as he cried out to his philosophic or theological reader, 8 lines later: “Some third way, then, must be found and, even though it is difficult and laborious, that price must be paid if the less successful subject is not to remain a mediocrity or slip into decadence and desuetude.” Are we not back in-on the dodged first page of *Insight*,²⁵ with Lonergan in his lonely nakedness running away from conventions of ill-suited academic disciplines of bathing?

²⁵ *Insight*, 27. From my conversations I have found that even serious Lonergan scholars are not keen to get into the problem of Archimedes. For an invitation to that adventure see my [Cantower 27](#), “Atoms in Motion”, pp. 5-10, section 27.2, “Plunging in with Archimedes.” The five [Cantowers 27-31](#) are an effort to lift the reader’s emphatic poise towards *Insight* by paralleling the first five chapters of *Insight* with the first five chapters of Feynman’s famous *Lectures on Physics* Vol I (Addison-Wesley, sixth printing, 1977). I would draw attention to the editorial note (*Insight*, 780-1) regarding Lonergan’s efforts here, “an overemphasis that aids clarity” but venturing “to show ‘the psychological resonance of the occurrence of insight’ (Lonergan’s words).