John Raymaker

Empowering Bernard Lonergan's Legacy: Toward Implementing an Ethos for Inquiry and a Global Ethics. Lanham: University Press of America; 2012. Pp. 212. Hb, \$65.00 (£39.95).

John Raymaker has been active in Lonergan studies since earning his PhD in 1978 at Marquette University; he is currently a moderator on the Lonergan Forum and serves on the faculty at Global Ministries University. This is the fifth book he has published on Lonergan in the past fifteen years; others relate Lonergan's "legacy" and Pope John Paul II, Zen, climate change, and Buddhist-Christian ethics. This text works in a familiar vein: Lonergan scholars seeking ways to engage the broader culture in what they regard as Lonergan's breakthrough achievements. The present volume's unique addition to this literature derives from Raymaker's starting point, a complaint about his colleagues: they are unorganized! To address this problem, Raymaker develops the idea of "feedback matrices" to lay the groundwork for what he believes is a necessary next step for those invested in advancing Lonergan's legacy: the formation of interdisciplinary committees who would collaborate through what he calls IGEMA, his acronym for an international association of individuals who ground their work in what Lonergan called "generalized empirical method" ("GEM"). Raymaker nicely captures what he hopes this proposal can do for his community midway through the book: "to move us from ungrounded idealisms to GEM-grounded ideals achieved when we appropriate our basic operations first personally, then interpersonally" (107).

Raymaker does not pitch his book simply as an *ad intra* conversation within Lonergan Studies. Indeed, Raymaker criticizes Lonergan scholars for their "parochialisms" (17, 124), and references throughout the need to move beyond the confines, debates, and plateaus of the Western-grounded Lonergan orbit to engage non-GEM individuals, communities, and insights. He peppers his argument with references to, by way of example, debates in the philosophy of science, literature, political theory, historical arguments in other disciplines, interfaith initiatives, and most central to his proposal, the work of sociologist Gibson Winter. His transcultural interests—he repeatedly claims that Lonergan's "GEM, born in the West, can be adapted by persons from other cultures" (27, see also 66, 87, 98, 101)—comes alive through his references to Zen throughout the book. (Raymaker lived and worked in Japan for over twenty-five years.) But in the end, these *ad extra* gestures serve his primary agenda: to reverse the "'GEM-gone-astray' syndrome" (87), a lamentable inability to make Lonergan work, and to address the "lack of organization" (8, 123n.54) that at best fails to tap "GEM's unmet potential" (16) and at worse confines Lonergan

to Western ivory tower theology and philosophy departments. It is not that Lonergan scholars have been inactive; it is that their efforts in institutes, websites, publishing endeavors, centers and the like are *ad hoc*, uncoordinated, and, since Lonergan's passing, lacking in leadership (126). Recognizing that not every Lonergan scholar is called or inclined to collaboration, Raymaker addresses his proposal to "a coalition of the willing" (125). What is this 'IGEMA' that he proposes to move this "unorganized diaspora" (8) forward?

Raymaker develops his proposal through five chapters devoted to what he calls "feedback matrices." While he does draw a bit on Lonergan for this concept, as best I can tell "feedback matrix" is Raymaker's own brainchild. He is enthusiastic about its scope: "my matrices are dynamic heuristic tools that address or lay a ground for the study of ongoing problematics. They examine the past so as to apply valid insights to present problems through sets of incomplete insights that, related to non-Western points of view, may help GEM address secularism more effectively with a dose of what Lonergan calls historical mindedness; they retain and deploy a feedback notion of the habitual if incomplete insights of common sense." (20) This vision is to be realized in the fifth matrix, his proposal for the IGEMA. He takes the reader there through a presentation of four further matrices.

The first three matrices are historical in nature and focus on Western contexts (65). The first matrix (21–28) traces the dynamics that over the past thousand years has produced our current state of secularized globalization. Brief and topical, it serves more to illustrate the idea of a feedback matrix than to draw conclusions about what Raymaker calls "papal-political histories" (24). The next two matrices draw from Lonergan's own development and his retrieval of key insights from Aquinas (Matrix two, 46–49) and Galileo (Matrix three, 49–55). Both reveal Raymaker's interest in a global, interfaith ethic that bridges religious and secular perspectives, key to which is Lonergan's turn to interiority to relate "reason and the heart's reason," which Raymaker cites as a "core feedback-matrix insight" (52, see also 46).

The fourth matrix (87–109) takes us into Raymaker's constructive interests, drawing out the full and diverse implications of the collaboration of "self-appropriated" individuals, which is "one of the underlying themes of this book" (65). His interest in a religiously-grounded ethics is evident, but now the focus shifts to his agenda to extend GEM beyond its Western roots into a transcultural perspective, one that grounds world-transforming praxis (55). The matrix is developed through an exposition of the eight functional specialties Lonergan introduced in *Method in Theology*, which Raymaker presents as analogous to "the ways architects use operational models [...] to describe operationally significant strengths and weaknesses" (67). Raymaker's command of the Lonergan

material leads to a tight and insightful exposition. The latter is particularly evident in Raymaker's integration of the transcultural, interreligious dimensions of religious love with Gibson Winter's effort to retrieve an intersubjective element in social science methodology and to craft a social ethic.

The goal of the fifth matrix, Raymaker's IGEMA proposal, is the source of the book's title: to empower Lonergan's legacy (124–146). Raymaker's enthusiasm (and impatience) is evident in the 1848 slogan with which he opens his appeal, "GEM workers of the world unite!" (124). And his ambitions for the project are evident in his claims that IGEMA will "elicit a new role of religious authenticity in the midst of today's efficient, sophisticated technologies" (131) and, because it is collaborative and integrative, "foster good by confronting evil situations" (133). The aspirations are translated into a relatively straightforward proposal: IGEMA's committees will operate "as a FS feedback team" (130) that draw on interfaith work in the form of "sensitive spiritual feedback pivots" (138) and will avoid the pitfall of becoming a new scholasticism by inviting participants to act as Lonergan did throughout his life (124, 129–31), "to ever re-appropriate their consciousness and intelligently understand transformative historical realities" (133). The committees are fashioned along the lines of the functional specialties, for which Raymaker proposes new names to capture his interest in addressing real-world problems: for example, Dialectic becomes "Economics Committee and Ethical Policies" (139–142; Appendix two) and Systematics becomes "Globally Transformative Strategies" (142–144).

This book demands much of the reader. Raymaker's command of the Lonergan corpus is clear, but those not deeply immersed in Lonergan studies will be challenged by sections of the book—including the crucial last chapter—that assume we are in the thick of it with the author. Raymaker's use of non-Lonergan sources to develop his argument is at times uneven. The discussion of Gibson Winter, who is key to matrix four, is thorough; but others, like the repeated reference to Buddhist ethics (largely relegated to a short appendix) or the introduction of major philosophers (Rorty alongside novelist Michael Crichton), remains undeveloped. Numerous insights and comments unfold in the many long endnotes (283 notes take up seventy-six of the book's 196 pages), and their integration into the main body of the argument would have enriched Raymaker's explanations. Philip McShane, in his excellent forward, warns us that the author's prose can be "dense," and key sections in the book support his judgment. A chart in the middle of the text maps out the most important elements in Raymaker's argument (91), but the technical terms and sometimes inelegant sentences that follow often left me with something of a jigsaw puzzle with more small pieces than I was prepared to handle.

Empowering Lonergan's Legacy is not an easy read—even for those engaged with Lonergan's legacy—but for those who persevere, it is definitely a rewarding read.

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DOI 10.1163/22141332-00203005-24