
The General Character of Mathematical Logic

I need not repeat here the points made either at the beginning of the previous chapter or in the Introduction. Below you find, as you expect, the second section of *Cantower XXIII*, the Cantower that rambles round the problem of description. This certainly gives a fresh twist on Lonergan's introductory pointers in the parallel chapter: "discovering what they are trying to do, understanding what is going on."¹ What is going on? Take the *Journal of Symbolic Logic* as symbol and fact and fantasize about its transposition in the next millennium through the general² emergence of characters³ incarnating what the third section of *Cantower 23* calls **The Tomega Principle**.⁴ In a previous note-gathering for this chapter I turned attention towards various characters of twentieth century logic, among them Goedel and Brouwer, given now only footnote comment. What is needed eventually, and not here, is a very lengthy imaginative reach towards a quite new logic that would rescue, say, the *Journal of Symbolic Logic*, from its mess and mesh of descriptiveness. The need for that rescue is a component of the perspective on incompleteness the fantasy of which I am inviting throughout this book. See, for example, note 2 of chapter 3 and note XX of chapter 4 above.

But the perspective is in quiet continuity with the point made in note 8 of the previous, worth adding here as text:

"It is useful to pull in a paragraph from *Insight*: "an adequate metaphysics must

¹PL, 3.

²This word hides a massive problem of conceiving **general** in a way that makes its meaning thoroughly concrete. Useful here are parts of *ChriSt in History*: section 4 of chapter 2; section 5 of chapter 5; section 4 of chapter 8.

³See note 13 of chapter 1 above.

⁴A further consideration of the Principle is in section 2 of the first of my new and final series, *Eldorede: Eldorede 1*: "Re Forming Teachers of Selves".

distinguish not only positions and counter-positions but also explanation and description a sheer leap into the void for the existential subject.” (*Insight*, 538-9[565] . And for the subject interested in Logic. Have we not reached here, or are we not reaching for here, a massive transposition of the lectures on Logic and Existentialism? Pull in, for better measure, later comments in chapter 17 of *Insight*: on the problem of working out types of expression (*genera litteraria*) through a determining of operators (*Insight*, 572[595]), and that “a study of the various kinds of insight provides the ground for a logical theory of universals and particulars, experiential and explanatory conjugates, descriptive and explanatory genera and species of things.”(*Insight*, 576[599]. Then, perhaps, add in explicitly the problem of geometry raised in *Insight* chapter 5: “as long as men remain on the level of invariant expressions, they are not considering any concrete extensions and durations” (*Insight*, 171[195]). What, then, of the full logic of Schwartzchild searching for a metric, of stretching towards a logic of Husserl’s stretch towards the dynamics of the calculus of variation, of reaching for a concrete genetic logic of the genetics and dialectics of all logics?”⁵

23.2 The Upper Grounds of Describing

There are stories of both Flaubert and Joyce, struggling for days to bring forth a sentence. Herman Hesse writes about saying it all, saying all, in a word. Pound writes to Joyce of words stirring inner patterns.⁶ There are the famous ten Ox-herding pictures attributed to the 12th century Zen master Kakuan Shien. “Those stately horns, what artist could portray them?”⁷ “Ox and man alike belong to Emptiness. / So vast and infinite the azure sky / that no concept of any

⁵I am quoting, of course, note 8 of the previous chapter. It is worth adding a context given by Lonergan’s reference (PL, 94) to the work of Helmut Stoffer, “He argues that you are going to need six types of logic if you are going to deal with *Denkformen*, thought patterns, and he distinguishes them as plane, dialectical, existential, magical, mystical and hermeneutical” See further, note 5 of chapter 12 below.

⁶The context all along here is *Lack in the Beingstalk*, chapters 2 and 3.

⁷I quote from the verse-commentary on the third picture, “First Glimpse of the Ox”, *The Three Pillars of Zen*, Roshi Philip Kapleau, Doubleday, 1989, 316. The Pictures are reproduced there.

sort can reach it”.⁸ And no word or any sorting of concept-caressing words. Yet there is the aspiration: Joyce or Shakespeare reach for the anastomotic word,⁹ and “Yeats told of his aspiration to a form of utterance in which imagination would be ‘carried beyond feeling into the aboriginal ice’”.¹⁰

I think of that wonderful remark of Lonergan to me one evening, as he talked of Dante and Beatrice, waving his hand in the air, “Life is about saying ‘Hello’”.

Hello, you there! The ‘hello’ is multiplied, but I hope not monotonous.¹¹ Biography speaks to biography in history, and molecular patterns hold or withhold the baited listening: perhaps “we will some new pleasures prove, / Of golden sands and crystal brooks, / With silken lines and silver hooks”.¹² My lines are not silken: so you must strain to weave the web of yearning. For the buried exigence of yearning is what it is all about.¹³ “Is it somehow intimated? Is the intimation fleeting? Does it touch our deepest aspirations? Might it awaken such striving

⁸*Ibid.*, the eighth picture: “Both Ox and Self Forgotten”, 321.

⁹See the conclusion to chapter 2 of *Lack in the Beingstalk*.

¹⁰Seamus Heaney, *The Redress of Poetry*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1995, 156-7.

¹¹I am recalling here for you that odd wordsmith, Chesterton, writing of Francis of Assisi, words worth repeating here. “Whatever his taste in monsters, he never saw before him a many-headed beast. He saw only the image of God multiplied but not monotonous. To him a man was always a man and did not disappear in a dense crowd any more than in a desert” (*St. Francis of Assisi*, London, 1951, 114).

¹²John Donne, “The Bait”, lines 2-4.

¹³“Man’s artistry testifies.... What is he to be?” (*Insight*, 185[209]). It **presents** (the emphasis is in Lonergan’s spoken lecture) the beauty, the splendor, the glory, the majesty, the ‘plus’ that is in things and that drops out when you say that the moon is just earth and the clouds are just water. It draws attention to the fact that the splendor of the world is a cipher, a revelation, an unveiling, the presence of one who is not seen, touched, grasped, put in a genus,, distinguished by a difference, yet is **present**” (Topics in Education, 222). One needs the full context of Lonergan’s pointings *De Ente Supernaturale* (On Supernatural Being, of which a translation into English by M.Shields is available). See also the index, under *exigence*, in *Phenomenology and Logic*.

and groaning as would announce a higher birth?”¹⁴

Steiner writes of the sad reality of humanistic scholarship and science: “They may communicate only haltingly the jealous fruit of an utter inwardness”, and in the following page he notes that “A worthwhile university or college is quite simply one in which the student is brought into personal contact with, is made vulnerable to, the aura and threat of the first-class”.¹⁵ The first class is, of course, the cosmic word within you and me, symphonically speaking in each our little words, echoing piccolos of our small hellos.

But how might I add to that contact and that vulnerability here? I would have you take note of, knot into your nerves, a refreshing me-ning of that describing that concert-hauls us innerout. But the noting and the knoting is another level of innerout, one that may well lead you to the longer journey into joy of a perilous pilgrimage with Shakespeare’s *Pericles*. You must find your own art and heart but now to be cherished, embraced, in that heart-reaching. Yes, it is philosophy of art under another name, but perhaps in another aim. It is “not only to read ... but to discover oneself in oneself.”¹⁶

We will return to that reading in its fresh beginner’s steps in the seventh section, but it seems well, before going on, to share a sense in which it is indeed a matter of new reading rather than more writing. Certainly, the new writing will emerge, like *Finnegans Wake* flying from *Ulysses*, but discontinuously deeper in its innerout.¹⁷ But there is a new reading of old texts and old towns, old toons and old tone poems lurking yearningly in the seed of the subjectivity of the

¹⁴Lonergan, “Mission and Spirit”, *A Third Collection*, 1985, 26.

¹⁵George Steiner, *Errata: An Examined Life*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1997, 42-3.

¹⁶*Method in Theology*, 260. “Read ...” ? The work referred to in the text is *Insight*, but in the third stage of meaning self-discovery will become normative regarding any text. It is the normativity to which you may have been led by the pointings of *Cantower XVIII*. I am implicitly applying that normativity to Langer’s work etc in the text above.

¹⁷I am pointing toward sophistications of that luminosity hinted at by Lonergan in note 34 of *Method in Theology*, 88: “At a higher level of linguistic development, the possibility of insight is achieved by linguistic feed-back, by expressing the subjective experience in words and as subjective”.

second time of the temporal subject. Then a new endorfrend politician will see and seize the sea of the old Pericles¹⁸, and the rivers of James Joyce¹⁹ and of J. M. Turner²⁰ will bring new tidings to democracy.

¹⁸You will recall the discussion of Shakespeare's late play *Pericles*, and the dominance of images of the sea, in *Lack in the Beingstalk* 61-77. This is very different from the world captured by the brutal two-line poem of E.E.Cummings: "a politician is an arse upon / which everyone has sat except a man" (100 selected poems by E.E Cummings, Grove Press, New York, 1954, 77. That world is the world of the lower ground and grinding of describing, undifferentiated consciousness in this axial stage of meaning.

¹⁹I think of that section of *Finnegans Wake* the writing of which was a massive struggle for Joyce. "O / tell me all about / Anna Livia! I want to hear all / about Anna Livia. Well, you know Anna Livia? Yes, of course, we all know Anna Livia. Tell me all. Tell me now." (FW, 196).

And again, there is the sea, which rivers reach with gravity, "lonely in me loneness.... till the near sight of the mere size of him, the moyles and moyles of it, moanamoaning, makes me seasilt saltsick and I rush, my only, into your arms"(FW, towards the conclusion).

²⁰I am thinking (and pausing over my copies) of Watercolours in the British Museum, Marly sur Seine (1831), A View of *the Rhine* (1844), *Florence From San Miniato* (1828). Could not Helen Keller and Turner and Smetana and thousands of chemists hold hands in the search for the meaning of water?