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### Mapping the Minding

I need hardly recall the introductory comments regarding the shift to the book's chapters 2-13 as sketchings. Here, perhaps it is more apparently true. The name systematics ranges over all fields of inquiry throughout history, from strange Chinese catalogues of animals beyond the push of Linnaeus to such as Gould,<sup>1</sup> from Plato to Talcott Parsons. And of course there is Bertalanffy. But perhaps I can nudge you best towards a glimpse of the long-term project of a genetically-open Standard Model by asking you to muse over Kneale and Kneale's *The Development of Logic*<sup>2</sup> with its descriptive menagerie of systems of logic. Descriptive menagerie?! At a very simple level you may note that there is no controlling logic of development itself. Deeper levels push fantasy to new strange levels: think of the neurochemistry of Goedel and Brouwer as contributing both to the dynamics and, in a later century, to the explanatory understanding of the dynamics of twentieth century logic.<sup>3</sup> Chapter 13, then, offered too many possibilities, too many nudges towards novel expansion that we pass over here. But obviously, the title retains the implicit reference to Rita Carter, *Mapping the Mind*<sup>4</sup>: this

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<sup>1</sup>*Cantower XV* deals with Stephen Jay Gould's 1339 page effort, *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2002. *Cantower XVI* moves to the struggle of Kuhn towards a metasytematic context.

<sup>2</sup>William and Mary Kneales' well-known book was first published by Oxford University Press in 1962. There are many later printings, with added corrections.

<sup>3</sup>Perhaps a more familiar instance of neuroclash would be the direct clashing of Einstein and Bohr in the twentieth century. Section 4 of chapter 14, on sublating Feynman into a solution to that Copenhagen debate, provides an initial context.

<sup>4</sup>Phoenix paperback, 2002. This little text is a reminder of the drive of the book towards explanation, the drive mentioned explicitly in note 2 of chapter 2 and note 2 of chapter 3. At note 24 of the next chapter I mention a heavier text in the same area: *Neuroscience: Exploring the Brain*. But I would recommend Carter for a first sense of the need for the shift that I kept returning to in my writings in the past thirty years: the shift described in *Insight* 464[489], "study of the organism begins ...", and of course there is included now self-study of the organism that

reference and book help to keep in mind the heuristics that is implicit in the map given by the seven metagrams, **W0 - W6**.<sup>5</sup>

But, leaving aside novel reachings, there are previous pointings, with no point in compacting them.<sup>6</sup> And was not this entire book, and indeed the previous one, brought forth under the pressure of Robert Doran's question-title: *What is Systematic Theology?* Mapping the minding then is something we have been attempting all along in these few hundred pages, in these fifty of my years. Still, I cannot resist seeking to share a high transitional moment, an Archimedean leap of twenty five years ago. I had been struggling with that opaques sketch of insight chapter 17, section 3.6, especially driving for some meaning of *pure formulations*. What was the systematic perspective lurking in *The Sketch*, in the canons of hermeneutics? The lead was there for me in a single brilliant page of *De Intellectu et Methodo*. Might it be there for you? I give here the page in translation. So, one may arrive at an initial notion of the functional specialty Systematics. But what of theology as system? Well, you find my compact view of that

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you are, a study that has to blossom, in a creative minority, into the self-state described by the two texts of the frontispiece. There is, as I now see all too clearly, a very existential book to be written inviting others to the slow slow life-climb towards luminous self-appreciation of oneself as an organism "with an attitude". The "Inside-Out" of *Wealth of Self* chapter 6 is swept up into a street-wise startling presence and prescience, a lonely Proustian adult achievement.

<sup>5</sup>I have listed their occurrence in this book previously but no harm in repeating: chapter 2 contains W0 and W4k; chapter 4 contains W1 and W2; chapter 7 has W3, W5, W6; chapter 8 has W4d. And I should also repeat that these metagrams are just gropes of mine towards an control of the "conditioned escape" from description that is the possibility of the prehumous energy-bound human subject. It is useful even here and now for you to reach for the larger context of Chapter 14, sections 10-13.

<sup>6</sup>I should at least list a few previous ventures in the area. My first serious achievement was that of 25 years ago, written out of the leap mentioned on page 2 here: "Systematics, Communications, Actual Contexts", Lonergan Workshop, vol. 7, edited by Fred Lawrence. In the *Cantowers* the key writing is **Cantower VII**, "Systematics and General Systems Theory". Genetic systematics is a regular topic in both the books, *ChriSt in History* and *Method in Theology and Botany*, but I would draw attention especially to chapter 6 of the latter book, in which I solved, to my satisfaction, Doran's question, "What is Systematic Theology?" The heuristics of the seventh functional specialty is sublated into the fuller cyclic system that I have called here *The Standard Model*.

in chapter 6 of *Method in Theology and Botany*.

**The significant page from Lonergan:**

“The history of any particular discipline is in fact the history of its development. But this development, which would be the theme of a history, is not something simple and straightforward but something which occurred in a long series of various steps, errors, detours, and corrections. Now, as one studies this movement one learns about this developmental process and so one now possesses within oneself an instance of that development which took place perhaps over several centuries. This can happen only if the person understands both his or her subject and the way he or she learned about it. Only then will he or she understand which elements in the historical developmental process had to be understood before the others, which ones made for progress in understanding and which held back, which elements belong to the particular science and which do not, and which elements contain errors. Only then will he or she be able to tell at what point in the history of the subject there emerged new visions of the whole and when the first true system occurred, and when the transition took place from an earlier to a later systematic ordering, which systematization was simply an expansion of the former and which was radically new; what progressive transformation the whole subject underwent; how everything that was explained by the old systematization is now explained by the new one, along with many other things that the old one did not explain - the advances in physics, for example, by Einstein and Max Planck. Then and only then will he or she be able to understand what factors favored progress, what hindered it, and why, and so forth.

Clearly, therefore, the historian of any discipline has to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the whole subject. And it is not enough that he or she understand it in anyway at all, but he or she must have a systematic understanding of it. For that precept, when applied in history, means that successive systems which have been progressively developed over a period of time have to be understood. This systematic understanding of a development ought to make use of an analogy with the development that takes place in the mind of the investigator who learns about the subject, and this interior development within the mind of the investigator ought to

parallel the historical process by which the science itself developed.”<sup>7</sup>

Having eliminated any further sketching of the remote explanatory potential of this specialty as against present descriptive ventures,<sup>8</sup> it seems quite appropriate to end this chapter with section 4 of *Cantower XXIII*, and with the question, What is describing? Indeed, as you can notice, I carry my quoting over into the beginning of section 5, ending with the peculiar statement, “To the spontaneity of human linguistic expression is added further reflective expression which is opaque to its own source of luminescence”.

But what does this peculiar sentence mean?

It points to the failure of scholasticism, logic, phenomenology, whatever, to reach even the beginnings of luminosity regarding their own words.<sup>9</sup>

#### 23.4 What is Describing?

We are back, perhaps, with John Donne’s “The Bait”: ”Come live with me.... “ and perhaps the word of the dying Donne scholar that I have quoted before are relevant: “Now is not

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<sup>7</sup>I am quoting from Michael G. Shield’s translation of 1990, *Understanding and Method*, 130-2. The original Latin text I have of *De Intellectu et Methodo* has the material on page 55.

<sup>8</sup>I would invite a further reflective turn about note 3 above. Much of contemporary discussion of Scholastic and Lonerganesque system is obviously descriptive, but books like Neuroscience. Exploring the Brain are less obviously so. The truncated description just goes in another direction, gaining the illusion of science from chemistry. I would note that there is an effective enlightening parallel here with the illusion of science in contemporary economics: there the illusion is created by meshing statistics into feeble muddled systems, most of which are variations on the themes of that descriptive muddle, Keynes’ 1936 book. Schumpeter how no doubts of the muddles when he review the book that year ( ). But the broader point was neatly made Lonergan in 1942: “Economics corrected political economy not by moving to the more general field and so effecting the correction without losing the democratic spirit of the old movement, but by staying on the same level of generality and by making up for lost ground by going into the more particular fields of statistics ....”(For A New Political Economy, 7) Perhaps you see better now the challenge of a systematic *a priori* for the research to which chapter 6 above invites?

<sup>9</sup>So one may profitably ask What happened to Helen Keller? What happened to Hellenic self-attention? The beginnings of answers are found, respectively, in the first chapter of *A Brief History of Tongue* and in the final chapter of Voegelin’s third volume of *Order and History*.

the time for verbal thought-play. Nothing would be worse than a detailed scholarly analysis of erudition, interpretation, complication. Now is the time for simplicity. Now is the time for, dare I say it, kindness”.<sup>10</sup> Yet I muse of “kindness” in ambiguity, an ambiguity contained in my wish that my reader treat me with kindness even if we are not of a kind. This section pirouettes round a single sentence of Lonergan: “Prior to the explanatory conjugates, defined by their relations to one another, there are the experiential conjugates that involve a triple correlation of classified experiences, classified contents of experiences, and corresponding names.”<sup>11</sup> This, read properly, is “a methodological doctrine”,<sup>12</sup> to be cognized as a nudge towards Zen-Ken-Then plodding.

You are, at this stage, pretty clear on the fact that this essay is very much a positional presentation asking for a positional response. The ‘kind’ response I seek is primarily the few respondents who would do something like what Stephen McKenna did when he read Plotinus’ *Enneads*, writing in his diary on his 36<sup>th</sup> birthday “this is worth a life”.

Often, as I struggle on in these *Cantowers*, haunted by Bachelard’s glorious statement - “Late in Life, with indomitable courage, we continue to say that we are going to do what we have not yet done: we are going to build a house”<sup>13</sup> - I suspect that I am really only addressing seriously those few who are mad enough to try the Aristotelian thing of fulsome contemplation. It is that fulsome ‘ting’ that is captured by Lonergan in what I call the **Tomega Principle**: “Theoretical understanding seeks to solve problems, to erect syntheses, to embrace the universe in a single view”.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>I am recalling here my Epilogue to *Lack in the Beingstalk: A Giants Causeway*, titled “Sharing the Intussusception of Progress”. I am quoting again those final words of the Film, *Wit*, spoken so well by Emma Thompson.

<sup>11</sup>*Insight*, 555[578].

<sup>12</sup>*Method in Theology*, 295.

<sup>13</sup>Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1969, 61.

<sup>14</sup>*Insight*, 417[442]. I introduce my view of this sentence in *Cantower IV*. The reflection there draw attention to a fulsome meaning of the word ‘embrace’ which, thought central to our topic here, cannot be more than mentioned now as intimating a loving and total molecularity, a “psychic force that sweeps”(*Insight*, 723[745]).

Yet I also suspect that there are those among that few lunatics who are massively discouraged by present academic culture from searching for enlightenment. Shortly after the **Tomega Principle** Lonergan describes (yes, describes... what is such describing if the audience is academic?) the sophisticated stance of most of that academy. “It lauds the great men of the past, ostensibly to stir one to emulation, but really to urge one to modesty”. Certainly, I would stir many to modesty: for many this is just not their thing, especially in present culture. But there are those few, like perhaps you, who edge towards oddness. I would wish to push you over the edge, corrupt you, plunge you to be vulnerably new.

*“Good souls, to survive select  
Their symbols from among the elect -  
Articulate, suave, corrupt.*

*But from corruption comes the deep  
Desire to plunge to the true;  
To dare is to redeem the blood,  
Discover the buried good,  
Be vulnerably true.”<sup>15</sup>*

I can try to corrupt and encourage by autobiography. One of my favorite life-madnesses is imaged in Cezanne, setting out regularly in the pre-dawn light to see, seize, canvas the help of, Mt.St.Victoire. For me, in the present context, it was a matter of an evening walk to The National Library in Dublin where I sat day after day for a month, canvassing the help of the green lamp above my table. I was trying to read that central sentence of Lonergan, about the triple correlation. I still have those notes of over thirty years ago - it was about 1970 - 50 careful pages of foolscap reflection. I got some distance. Are the notes worth my sharing with you? Doubtfully.

But that is not the issue: the issue is, is the climb I undertook worth your sharing? Should

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<sup>15</sup>Brendan Kennelly, “Good Souls, to Survive”, *Selected Poems*, Allan Figgis, Dublin, 1969, 37.

there be people seeking enlightenment who seek to become self-luminous in regard to this uniquely human capacity-for-performance, beyond the angels, beneath God, the capacity to describe?

My next large-scale plodding was a component of twenty years of teaching that paragraph of *Method in Theology* that briefly describes - yes, describes - Helen Keller's five weeks of struggle towards meaning 'water'. Do my few pages on that five weeks capture that core of all describing? The leap in Helen to the word 'water' was a leap born of our common deeper thirst, and I am led to recall my comment of thirty years ago on the lesson to be drawn from zoologists' long battle to understand thirst: "if the understanding of animal thirst is a remote goal of the zoological enterprise, the philosopher should hardly consider the understanding of human understanding or thirst for understanding as some youthful achievement prior to doing their own thing".<sup>16</sup>

I was certainly quite beyond youthfulness when I again tackled the question of the triple correlation. Now it was a week of the summer of 1992, sitting on a bench eyeing and ayeing a cow on New Brunswick marshland, mouthing the name 'cow' to my crazy self, reaching for the full metaphysical heuristic of wording. I already wrote of that week and of the difficulty of communicating its findings.<sup>17</sup> But it did originate my second word of metaphysics, W2 of *Cantower XVII*, typed out fully there and in other parts of these *Cantowers*, contextualized in its meaning by chapter 4 of *A Brief History of Tongue* and by the first three chapters of *Lack in the Beingstalk*.

Yet none of these mark out the "sheer plod down sillion shin"<sup>18</sup>-ing path to a new control

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<sup>16</sup>P. McShane, "Zoology and the Future of Philosophy", *Shaping of the Foundations*, 1976, 86. I would note that I was struggling there, especially in note 42, page 167, with the problem of adequate expression, through subscripts and superscripts, of differentiated understandings. The first and second words of metaphysics, to which we turn in the text shortly, are simple pointers to such complexity.

<sup>17</sup>*Lack in the Beingstalk: A Giants Causeway*, 53.

<sup>18</sup>Hopkins' Windhover is discussed in manner that points towards bone-refreshing in the Epilogue to the new edition of *Music That Is Soundless. A fine Way for the Lonely Bud A*, Axial Press, Halifax, 2003.

of descriptive meaning that would freshen one's bones and tones, one's tonguetide. That path - founding and --finding must initially be solitary until it become revolutionary and then cultural. We are, in fact, talking about what will eventually be undergraduate exercises in features of W2, but which are at present quite absent from expertise in linguistics, in phenomenology, in British linguistic analysis, in child studies.

What I might call the "Keller Core" is not absent from these groups: for, they talk and write. What is missing is what I risk calling the Keller Kor<sup>19</sup>, an **Appreciation**<sup>20</sup> of the core. Helen describes its being made present, and we can sense the surge. But *appreciate*? I am bringing you back, or forward, here, like a voxherding pixie, to the ten oxherding pictures. If at more that seventy years I still struggle towards that appreciation, I know that, even if others share the climb and the partial achievement, it is not a community holding. The "being at home in transcendental method" is here a lone riding, "Riding the Ox Home": "He hums the rustic tune of the woodman and plays the simple songs of the village children. Astride the Ox's back, he gazes serenely at the clouds above".<sup>21</sup>

And perhaps I should hum the rustic tune of the second word of metaphysics and identify materially our corner kor and our crisis corner of this *Cantower*.

But, no. A twenty hour pause finds that just another doctrinal direction. What to do?

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<sup>19</sup>Hebrew, *kor*, cousin to *homer* from *hamar*, to surge, to swell up. It is, in fact, a unit of measure. No doubt I am straining here, tying *kor* in with the Greek *nomos*.

<sup>20</sup>I am, of course, in trouble here. I could use the word *understand* but it is a tired word. I could rightly call in Lonergan's slogan "thoroughly understand what it is to understand" (*Insight*, xxviii[22]), and it would be correct here: thoroughly understand that core insight of language and you have taken the measure of language, the *kor*, the heart of prime matter. Instead I am making an attempt to rescue the word *appreciate*, which seems to have a better chance of resonating up and down the layers of living. "Our poetry is haunted by the music it has left behind" (George Steiner, *Errata*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1977, 66), but are there some words, like *appreciate*, that can be resouled? As you may know - say, from the first section of *Cantower XVII* - my goal is a resouling, a haunting, of all words as they brim out of lung and brain, flow into brail or belly. Is the word *appreciate* a probable? Teenagers may learn the calculus and supposedly **understand** it, but *appreciate*? That could be a calculus of a different colour.

<sup>21</sup>Quoting the sixth Oxherding Picture commentary, from Kapleau, *op. cit.*, 319. And if you like you can try the substitution, *Wordswoman* for *woodsman* *voxheard* for *voxherd*.



Perhaps I must ask you to go back and contemplate the challenge indicated in *Cantower IX*. The asking that I am concerned with is an asking that is an advanced asking, someone who has risen to the Keller Kor pointed to by the second word of metaphysics, the W2 of *Cantower XVII*.

But that word points to much more, of course. One aspect of that complex more, paradoxically, brings out the simple hearty issue of describing: the aspect captured in one of my favorite quotations from *Insight*: “Study [ - self-study - ] of the organism begins from the thing-for-us, from the organism as exhibited to our senses. A first step is a descriptive differentiation”.<sup>22</sup> But how deceitful that first step can be! Yes, its sophistication can give rise to the mindful and molecular rhythms and resonances of poems and prayers; but another sophistication can ground the banal embossing of “papmongers of or propagandists of whatever stripe...power’s windowdressers everywhere”,<sup>23</sup> be they priests or politicians. So, the second and third steps, heartheld, need to be communally cultivated if we are to mediate the question, What is describing?, towards a redemptive luminosity that would show it, streetwise, to be our edge of the galactic glory.

### 23.5 What, What, What, is Describing?

But that cultivation cannot be effective without the prior cultivation of the vortex motion that is the concern of these 117 *Cantowers*: The goal is a third stage of meaning, an open edging of the exigence that is the spark in our clod, releasing in “the world of sense .... its yearning”.<sup>24</sup> To reach that goal is to lift, with cunning and embarrassment, the frail failed efforts of describing describing to a new tonality, a new poise. It is to give operative meaning to the three ‘What’s’ of the title.

I have been describing compactly levels of describing: the upper levels of describing give

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<sup>22</sup>*Insight*, 464[489]. I have been trying to draw attention to this shocking page for forty years, without success.

<sup>23</sup>Seamus Heaney, *The Government of the Tongue*, Faber and Faber, London, 1988, 61.

<sup>24</sup>*Insight*, 725[745].

release; the lower levels, as existentialist writings intimate, exanimate. The question then arises, What is describing? And a variety of answers, of method of answering, emerge that also exanimate - unless they be cast in an upper level of describing.<sup>25</sup> To the spontaneity of human linguistic expression is added further reflective expression which is opaque to its own source of luminescence.

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<sup>25</sup>This is an enormously tricky question, a question for precise dialectic: perhaps illustrated sufficiently by the implications of the note on Seamus Heaney's work, note 48 of *Cantower VIII*. One may think in this context, for instance, of Heidegger's work.