

*Cantower XXXII***The Empirical Residence**

November 2004

**32.1 A Strange Question**

I have tried beginning in various ways, and sense now that I must somehow mesh different approaches. What is our problem? I might start right now talking to you, from my empirical residence to yours, drawing attention - but that is at the heart of our problem - to print in your eye or in your head. Are you attending luminously to that head-print? Then you don't have the problem but the answer: then read on and enjoy! But you may find that question strange: what could I possibly mean by head-print? What could McShane possibly mean by "empirical residence"? So let us begin again there.

I have had the name *empirical residence* nudging my neurochemicals for more than a year. Perhaps it is pretty evident to you that it is a play on a topic in chapter one of *Insight*: the empirical residue. What is the empirical residue? When I dealt with chapter one of *Insight* a few essays back I claimed that this was one of the tricky questions of the chapter. I suppose I might say that it is not at all tricky and deal with it merely by adding some further illustrations to what Lonergan says in that chapter.

In the previous *Cantower* I wrote of musical performances, Beethoven and Bellini played and sung. In both those performances we had occasion to move the pianos around. Why move the pianos? Because the performances would be enhanced. They would not be enhanced by the mere shifting, but by something about the acoustics, the lighting, the view. That 'about' added to the conception of the performance, a conception which included - and perhaps this was a surprise to you - the full conceptualization of the Beethoven or the Bellini, in subtle ways.<sup>1</sup> Mere shifting

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<sup>1</sup>What I was battling in the previous essay was any simple-minded notion of a concept such as the concept of Chopin's third *Ballade*. The fullest conceptualization possible to the performer is the central control of the performance. But it is added to on

is of no consequence: but what is meant by you and me when we speak of mere shifting? We are in and into the problem of chapter one of *Insight*, but the *in* and *into* can vary enormously depending on where one is in the philosophic struggle. I sometimes draw attention to this in commenting on "The problem" as it is expressed in *Insight*, for it is expressed there twice, and I find that it can be a cause of discomfort to students to find that in the second occurrence of the problem they do not find themselves in any significantly new poise when they meet the problem this second time, five hundred pages on in the struggle. Perhaps, up to now, this was your experience? Or perhaps you have been at the stuff long enough to have a Proustian sense of meeting again, tasting again, re-membering?

Well, at least now you begin to sense one piece of my problem.<sup>2</sup> To whom am I writing this essay on the Empirical Residue or Residence?

But I am twisting round my title again and thus, perhaps, answering my own question. When does the empirical residue become a residence? It might become a residence of some sort if one's climb up through the five-hundred pages was reasonably successful. But, from my own experience of decades of struggle, and from my efforts of teaching, it is quite evident to me that "reasonably successful" climbing is just not on in the present culture, at this stage of the axial period. As you well know by now, I have some favorite texts in the book *Insight* - how often have you found me

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the particular occasion by e.g. piano selection, the performer's tone of mind and body, etc. The astute reader will notice that I am skimming past all the complexities of reaching the particular, such are discussed by Lonergan in *Verbum*.

<sup>2</sup>A problem of communication, but the topic remains the same. "I might write here, with Suzanne Langer, of the piano as a living presence in a room (Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 1953, 100, note). I write thus, meaning the real piano in the real room and its artistic import. But perhaps you find that spontaneously you think about the large brown object out there in the corner?" (*Wealth of Self*, 78)

talking of the self-study of the organism beginning....?<sup>3</sup>

So, there is a text some few pages after the second occurrence of the ABC problem that brings out, for me, on the one hand the solitude of the climber that typed *Insight* and on the other hand the remoteness of the achievement that he describes. The text I am thinking of here begins with the word "so it comes about". *What* comes about? Do I come about? I think of the momentum of the vessel of the human psyche: it does not just come about, it must be brought about. But what is it brought about from, brought about to? "So it comes about that the extroverted subject visualizing extensions and experiencing duration gives place to the subject oriented to the objective of the unrestricted desire to know and affirming beings differentiated by certain conjugate potencies, forms, and acts grounding certain laws and frequencies."<sup>4</sup> Isn't that a piece of craziness?

In my seventy second year I began again this morning trying to "bring myself about", grappling in a shockingly elementary way with the pre-dawn trees outside my window, freshening edgily my "visualizing extensions and experiencing durations". I was operating very advertently as a whatas, whereas, whenas: names and topics I introduce to you in the past few months. My particular problem this morning: the shift of eye-attention that can occur, that can be brought about, when "thinking" about the seen or the scene, takes one away - away where? - from the seen, the scene. You are familiar with something like this?<sup>5</sup> But my problem was not just the eye-attention but

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<sup>3</sup>*Insight*, 464[489]. The beginning becomes a more discomforting doctrine when it is tied in with the central phrase of the center of page 287 of : "one can go on....".

<sup>4</sup>*Insight*, 514[537].

<sup>5</sup>A useful tip that I regularly gave my students. Attend to the performance of others. So, here, you easily notice the far-away look in the eye of an engaged singer. Or in the eye of someone not really listening to you! In the latter case, you can work your way up through the levels of quest to note that there is precious little 'meeting'. You are not in conversation with Cosmo or Cosma Polis!

the possibilities of a control of such attention that would leave me master in my own house, my own residence. I am writing here loosely, existentially: do not expect to promote my words easily into their metaphysical equivalents.

There is, then, the residence of my total sensibility. Binocularity, and various other neurodynamic factors, cast it into the tonality of what is called "extroversion". But my total sensibility is all me, and can become a powerfully imposing me in the terrors of sweaty nightmares, the easing teasing of my dreams of morning.

In earlier *Cantowers* I wrote of the battle with the modern equivalent - which I did not seek to make heuristically precise - of the *vis cogitativa*.<sup>6</sup> It is part of the dynamics of bio-survival that is being studied under new names, and it may well have such strange zones of operation as the neurodynamics of phantom limbs.<sup>7</sup>

But I had best avoid sophistication here by turning to a standard class presentation of mine when dealing with the "already-out-there-now" issue, especially in the context of the chapter I wrote about it in *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations*.<sup>8</sup> I would warn the class near its conclusion - especially if it was one of those two and a half hour classes - not to carry on the reflection as they drove home. See the problem? Think again of the far-away look in a person's eyes when they are not "with it" or not with you. That is not the look in your eye that would be welcomed by in on-coming driver!

You begin to see, glimpse (how tied we are to sight-words!) The problem? You

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<sup>6</sup>In particular I would draw attention to note 48 on p. 17 of *Cantower IIX*, where I relate problems of Seamus Heaney's critical writings to the issue of modernizing reflection on the *vis cogitativa*, the estimative sense. The classic Thomist source on this topic is the work of Julien Peghaire: leads are in the index to *Verbum*, under Peghaire.

<sup>7</sup>The context here is the work of Ramachandran: see V.S.Ramachandran and Sandra Blake, *Phantoms of the Brain. Probing the Mysteries of the Human Mind*, William Morrow and Company, New York, 1998. I discussed this work in *Cantower IX*.

<sup>8</sup>Chapter five of that book. Chapter five of *A Brief History of Tongue* gives another slant on the struggle.

might be helped by thinking of it as the existential problem of getting round, over, about, the problem described at the end of the first page of chapter fourteen of *Insight*. And yes, we have been here before, especially in *Cantower IX*. It is the problem of maintaining **The Position** by an existential shift to **The Poosition**. Does that shift involve the shift in eye-attention that I am writing about? What do you think? What do you sense? Psyche yourself out-and-in. Try working it with a friend or colleague, edging thus towards some sense of Proto-possession.<sup>9</sup> If you have such a friend or colleague you are very lucky, and we shall return to this question of luck later. But at the moment you are stuck with me and this print: so let us see where we stand, sit, come about and go about reading and writing.

First, I would be enormously surprised if were reading right from the beginning here in the poosition: especially if it were a habitual control of what I am calling your empirical residence. It is certainly not an impossibility. You may have a quite different background from me - oriental, drug-scene, whatever - so that you shifted the position-memory into a poosition-embodiment within a decade of its first shock. Might you have done it sooner? You may well be the Mozart of such control, but for most of us it is a slow Proustian cherishing. And I shall say no more about that possibility or that climb until we move to section 4.

So, I write to you now as someone who wasn't reading thus, someone who faced into this *Cantower* as a 'normal' reader, page or computer screen already out there and "dealing with things that are 'really out there'." O.K? Perhaps you have even got this far in your reading without troubling too much about the craziness, or worse, thinking that you had arrived at this realism of position and poosition in some undergraduate classwork or through some private struggle? Some professor taught about the meaning of "is" and the key steps in self-appropriation; indeed you may have taught it to classes yourself, written about it. You may even have joined those who might say, What is

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<sup>9</sup>Proto-possession was a topic in *Cantower IX*.

McShane fussing about?

### 32.2 A Strange Lacuna

Let us presume that I am wrong about this business, about the difficulty of coming to the position and the position. The Position? What Lonergan suggest, in chapter 14 of *Insight*, as a stand to be taken.<sup>10</sup> The Position? What he talks of at the end of the first page of the same chapter as something difficult to achieve or unachievable: “no man remains in it permanently.”<sup>11</sup> In what way am I wrong? I have to presume that we are in some agreement about what is called critical realism, between which and materialism there is the halfway house of idealism. That is such a strange line up that it led me way-back to use the name “extreme realism”: literally far-out realism that allows for no happy foggy realism that somehow lets the empirical residence escape into at least some outer darkness. Am I troubling you here?

Anyway, I think that I can claim that you, or colleagues in this Lonergan tradition, would not be prepared to counterclaim that the road to extreme realism is easy, quite teachable, say, at the undergraduate level? Perhaps I might more modestly say that if you so counterclaim, then you are in a minority?

So: my problem is, Why is there no literature of any significance about this

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<sup>10</sup>*Insight*, 388[413]. No harm in recalling the presentation (which I quote from the first edition: why did the editors correct the author’s judged arrangement in the new edition? This ‘lay out’ is the heart of the book).

“It will be a basic position

- (1) if the real is the concrete universe of being and not a subdivision of the ‘already out there now’;
- (2) if the subject becomes known when it affirms itself intelligently and reasonably and so is not known yet in any prior ‘existential’ state; and
- (3) if objectivity is conceived as a consequence of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, and not as a property of vital anticipation, extroversion, and satisfaction.”

<sup>11</sup>*Insight*, 385[410].

aspect of the difficulty of what is called “intellectual conversion”? I am not now thinking about the refined focus that can bring luminosity to one’s use of the three words “is?”, “is!”, “is.”. I am talking about the more elementary business that lurks around the discussion of the early part of chapter 8 of *Insight*. My pre-dawn tree, or your daylight tree, “The tree, in so far as it is considered as a thing itself, stands within a pattern of intelligible relations, and offers no foothold for the imagination.”<sup>12</sup> Are we offered, then, a life of no footholds in imagination, a sort of psychic suicide? In my teaching, I used to quote a piece of Tennessee Williams here and talk around it, about all of us being condemned to solitary confinement within our own skins. Not that that brought a rush of my students out of Plato’s Cave. And certainly there was no chance, and no classroom effort on my part, of bringing them to cherish their cave, their empirical residence, and the patterns of their autonomic intussusception of the given of the cave.

At all events, the preliminary self-identification that I am on about here is prior to the subtleties of illumining is-ing. You know that you are making progress with a class when some of them get tilted towards some shade of unrealism, scepticism, idealism. I recall dealing with this possibility in a lecture during a Halifax Lonergan conference in the mid-1970s. I pointed out that if you can push or pull a student into some sort of idealism you are making progress. Lonergan, sitting at the back of the auditorium smilingly nodded: some learned colleagues in the front, who shall not be named, frowned. But my point is that the progress here to real assent, or ascent, is tricky: we are boned and bonded into a spontaneous realism, and a verbal competence in talking about The Position or the self-appropriation that constitutes intellectual conversion just doesn’t cut it. Why, then, is nobody writing about the preliminary work as difficult? I have perused introductions to Lonergan in various languages and found the lacuna of which I write.

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<sup>12</sup>*Insight*, 250[275].

We may take another angle on the matter. Lonergan students seem to be in agreement that Lonergan's view on knowing is relatively isolated, if not solitary. It does not take mastery in this area to check out the meaning, or use, of "is?", "is!", "is." in other schools of thought. Or the meaning of truth, or existence, or some related meaning. As a rambling back-up here you might venture into the index of *Phenomenology and Logic*, under *Is it, True, Truth, Existence*. The volume gives a good indication of the mood, the ethos, on the topic, in two definite areas in the mid-twentieth century, and, as the notes in the Introduction show, the situation did not improve seriously as we moved into the twenty first century. A naive realism or Platonism haunts the hunt for the meaning of "is" in these zones. Could it be possible that a small school of philosophy - and theology - has beaten the odds by sitting at the feet of a unique Christian master? But the master himself, in these lectures, is quite emphatic about the grim climb towards this core enlightenment.

"It is an extremely difficult matter, a matter of making the subject *leap*, to move him from the first level, the level of sensism, materialism, and so on, to the second, to bring him up to the level of the idealist. And it is another leap to bring him from the idealist position to the realist position"<sup>13</sup>

"The problem in philosophy is the problem of a development in the student of philosophy, in one's raising himself up from whatever level he may happen to be on to the level of a Plato, and then an Aristotle, and then an Augustine, and then an Aquinas. You have to do an awful lot of stretching to get up that ladder."<sup>14</sup>

I am not doing research here, nor interpretation: this is a popular ramble, a plea, and if it has any relation to the functional specialties it is an invitation towards your popular ramble down page 250 of *Method in Theology*, towards your honest private

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<sup>13</sup>*Phenomenology and Logic*, 110.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 137-8.



effort at what I call narrative positioning.<sup>15</sup> As I continually point out, that is a high point in Lonergan's procedural challenge, subtle, merciless, embarrassing. One of my favorite quotations from *Method in Theology* comes to mind: "Doctrines that are embarrassing will not be mentioned in polite company."<sup>16</sup> My doctrine is that intellectual conversion is a rare and difficult achievement. Would you like statistics? What is relevant here is, not statistics, but a stand. I am making intellectual conversion a topic<sup>17</sup> for you.

If you stand bewildered, not only are you not alone but the next section will indicate that you are in the best of company. As far as I recall, I related in *Cantower IX* the story of a friendly colleague that I once addressed about this topic, and about the face to face situating of intellectual conversion. His honest reply: "Phil, I don't know what the hell you're talking about". I recall another occasion, in Dublin, getting into the topic of the shock of realism with a chap returning from Rome with a good doctorate in Lonergan studies. I still remember his bewilderment when I pointed to a little dog coming round a corner and hinting that "that is not the real dog".<sup>18</sup>

But here there is an invitation to a preliminary stand. Are you with me with

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<sup>15</sup>I raised this question in various ways in *Cantowers XXIII - XXVI*. We will return to it in fuller contexts in *Cantowers XXXIX, L, LIII*. In popular parlance one is asking about one's actual story of reaching for luminosity regarding one's aesthetic life, one's life of *theoria*, one's cultivation of poision, one's adventurous fantasies, one's place, palace, residence, resilience, in the symphony of history: one's communal weaving with the divine.

<sup>16</sup>*Method in Theology*, 299.

<sup>17</sup>*Method in Theology*, 253.

<sup>18</sup>See note 20, below, and the corresponding text. There is also the dog-talk of "Insight revisited" (*Collection*) to be placed in that context. I am reminded here also of my discussion of Emma Bovary and the dogs on pp. 76-7 of *Lonergan's Challenge to the University and the Economy*. It was in that context (see *ibid.*, p. 76) that I first used the image of consciousness as a one-sided Moebius strip as a support to extreme realism. You might find useful my comment on it in *Cantower IX*, p. 13.

regard to the surprising lacuna? If your reaction is a recollection of your own struggle, or your struggle in teaching, then you probably share my surprise that the transition I write of is not a topic. I have found a companion on the dark road. But your reaction may be, "I have been teaching this comfortably for years. McShane is just a troublemaker". But then, how are you reading this print?

And for those who are wavering, I would recall the way in which I ended the previous *Cantower*: how I was reading Deshil Alles Eamus", how after many years I SAW that the 's' could be moved to Eamus to give sEamus, to bring home James. The 's', instead of being attached to All, suits and becomes James, a homely heimlich presence. Might there be a bump on your psychic road that is similar? So that the 's' that is sensibility is just that, the home of your as-ing, your Empirical Residence?

### **32.3 A Previous Beginning**

Properly now I would turn back to me, the typer, to talk of my end of this strange conversation: which, unless you are making a mighty effort or you are habitually in the Poisition, is not too strange, not something in the dark of your sensibility, but simply a screen or a page comfortably out there. But a previous beginning to this ramble catches my attention, and ....

It seems appropriate to turn in this second-last gestation *Cantower* to, and in, the dark of my first, and what was probably my last (face-to-face), conversations with Lonergan. In the dark? What sticks in my mind of that first conversation was Lonergan pacing his small room in the Jesuit House of Leeson St., Dublin, Easter 1961, answering my question about "startling strangeness" with such edgy comments as "when I got that I just had to go and ask somebody!" We were edging round the question, the questioners, two actual contexts of questions and answers, of the darkness of The Empirical Residence.

The second conversation, about twenty years later, was in his room in the Jesuit house of Boston College, and he was asking the question now: about Goedel's theorem. Oddly, I have given the question and the theorem some serious attention throughout

the two summers surrounding that first meeting in 1961, but I really gave him no great light on that day, rambling a little about uncrystalizable insights. I was “in the dark” and the theorem was also still an opaqueness for him. I am making a little progress at present, but the context has obviously grown, as will appear in this and the following *Cantower*.

In the dark? I shall not speak for Lonergan, but I was certainly not luminously present, in either conversation, with the luminous presence the layers of which I wrote of in *Cantower IX*. In that first conversation I was 29, only three years out in the adventure of *Insight*, only two years re-discovering “the startling strangeness”<sup>19</sup> that had struck me forcibly in an eyeful of farmyard seen from my window in a third year of philosophical studies. The memory is still there, yet so different, over forty years later, a Proustian presence. I was not reading *Insight* at the time but a copy of the first *Verbum* article. And there it was, the simple pointing that twisted me and my six years of mathematics, physics and philosophy through the door of the empirical residence, into the dark. I had turned from my reading of the passage in *Verbum* where Lonergan writes of dogs knowing other dogs.<sup>20</sup> I looked out the window, at a country yard, eyes

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<sup>19</sup>*Insight*, xxviii[25].

<sup>20</sup>This was, of course, a radically unforgettable experience: the passage may seem so simple, yet it was then **adequate** (a most difficulty topic of *Insight* chapter 17!). Here, at all events, is the passage. “A useful preliminary is to note that animals know, not merely phenomena, but things: dogs know their masters, bone, other dogs, and not merely the appearances of these things. Now this sensitive integration of sensible data also exists in the human animal and even in the human philosopher. Take it as knowledge of reality, and there results the secular contrast between the solid sense of reality and the bloodless categories of the mind. Accept the sense of reality as criterion of reality, and you are a materialist, sensist, positivist, pragmatist, sentimentalist, and so on, as you please. Accept reason as a criterion but retain the sense of reality as what give meaning to the term ‘real,’ and you are an idealist; for, like the sense of reality, the reality defined by it is nonrational. Insofar as I grasp it, the Thomist position is the clearheaded third position: reason is the criterion and, as well, it is reason - not the sense of reality - that gives meaning to the term ‘real.’ The real is what is; and ‘what is’

ambiguously focused. The farmyard slid behind my eyes and disappeared.

Unlike Lonergan, I did not go to ask someone: rather I began to share the pointing with others, a Jack and Jill face-to-face experience of gesturing and words and mutual self-mediations that struggled against our skinstincts and, I suspect, against each our *vis cogitativa*, to flame the flicker of what I now recognize and name as proto-possession. It is, I think, in the present culture of self-intussusception, still a rare experience and reality that Jack-face and Jill-face<sup>21</sup> slide behind eyes in a room that is real in the darkness of being primate spirits.

In the dark? We are - and certainly in these mad axial times - in the dark of the first page of chapter 14 of *Insight*. And I am talking about a struggle that is not everyone's calling. It was not a calling of Jesus or his Jewish disciples. Certainly it was a calling of Socrates and his few odd Greek disciples. Certainly it was and is an Oriental calling.<sup>22</sup> Is it a calling of history beyond axiality? We must return to that question later. But meantime I am distracted by a memory of another evening conversation with Lonergan, already recalled in these essays and elsewhere: but you must be patient with this old fogy.

Fogy? I do not think that I fit the dictionary definition of fogy: "a person who is old-fashioned or highly conservative in ideas and actions". What I speak of is in fact no old fashion, but not even fashionable enough to be unfashionable. If highly

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is known in the rational act, judgment". (*Verbum*,20)

<sup>21</sup>The relevant reference is to Lonergan's reflection on Jack and Jill in *Collection*, 216-9.

<sup>22</sup>The book cited in note 7, by Ramachandran, lifts this search into a new context. More about the various contexts of searching in *Cantower L* ("The Bridge of Categorical Integrity") and *Cantower LIII* ("The International search fo Enlightenment"). But very directly on the point there is Shankara (788-820), quoted in this book on p. 39: "You never identify yourself with the shadow cast by your body, or with its reflection, or with the body you see in a dream or in your imagination. Therefore, you should not identify yourself with this living body, either"

conservative means desperately trying to conserve history's human experiment through a strange cultural luminosity, then I do fit the bill. But the idea, and the action of writing into the dark: no, that is not conservative at all in the other sense.

Jesus was in the dark about the faces of his friends, living with the legitimate symbol of Galilean reality. And are you in the dark about this, about Jesus not being what you probably call a "critical realist", what I prefer to think of as being in a position, a position, of "extreme realism"? Or are you of the view, a view that seemed to prevail that day during a Boston Workshop of nearly thirty years ago, when it was proposed that Jesus was intellectually converted, and indeed so too were his disciples? I recall musing quaintly to Lonergan, in the evening of that day, about the contrary view: "When Jesus spent the forty days on the hill, he was not reading *Insight*." Lonergan's response was "Exactly!", and he went on to talk about the core of human life, of meeting and greeting, of Dante and Beatrice and their 'hello'. "That's what life's about: saying 'Hello'!"

Ordinary people are neither naive realists not extreme realists: even when we reach to be extreme realists, we are just primates beyond mere primates, desperate to say hello. Rilke writes of solitudes greeting one another. The greetings come in all shades of neurosis and chemical imbalance, and even perhaps the ego of Jesus,"with his message for mankind, is linked to a diffident anima".<sup>23</sup> And was Mary's child existentially, molecularly, bewildered in his efforts to say hello to other little boys and girls, to his mother? But the bewilderment would not have been, and did not become, a diffident shadow of a Plato or a Plotinus. The bewilderment of Jesus would have simply

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<sup>23</sup>*Insight*, 194[217]. On the margin of the original typescript there is added "it would seem to be ultimately the same phenomena that are named ambivalence by the Freudians, bipolarity by Stekel, and an alternation of opposites by Adler". (see the University of Toronto Press edition, under o, pp. 791-2. All this stuff requires transposition into the new heuristic, fully explanatory, context mentioned in section 3.5: a topic for later *Cantowers*).

been “the native bewilderment of the existential subject”<sup>24</sup> in the culture of his place and time. That is a native bewilderment that we can and do share with him, in the mystery of the mutual mediation of our cosmic lives together.<sup>25</sup>

But the important element to notice here is that the bewilderment I speak of is not the bewilderment of the philosophic initiate whose attention is being “cajoled or forced”.<sup>26</sup> Our bewilderment, West, East or South, is more twisted than the bewilderment of Galilee or mediaeval China or eighteenth century Africa. It is, increasingly, the bewilderment of refined psychothymia, a fermenting invitation to move to the end of the axial period of history. We are, of course, now reaching to share my reading of the first page of chapter 14 of *Insight*, and I regular point out to fellow-students of the book that is what the book is all about: it is not an answer to Kant or Ryle or Heidegger. It is an answer to some few crazies such as myself and, I hope, yourself. And perhaps I am helping you here to realize that it is, perhaps, not your answer and that you don’t have to pretend it is: even if you managed to get a university position teaching the stuff. But do keep up some pretense until you get tenure: then you can startle your students by being honest, even perhaps by sharing the climb together, with a Husserlian honesty: “How I long to live on the heights! But at 45 I am a miserable beginner!”<sup>27</sup>

Then the climbing becomes merely doing your job as best you can. Your *dynamis*, your dyneotype, may call you elsewhere, to the intimations of some aesthetic

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<sup>24</sup>*Insight*, 385[410].

<sup>25</sup>This topic must pick up all the riches of Lonergan’s reflections on Christ in his Latin works, placing chapter 19 of *Insight* in full context. Some further comments on this at the conclusion of *Cantower XXXVIII*.

<sup>26</sup>*Insight*, 398[423].

<sup>27</sup>I am quoting from memory, I hope with sufficient accuracy, a letter that Husserl wrote to Brentano on his 45<sup>th</sup> birthday.

pattern, to the quiet of anaphatic contemplation. Yet the doing of your job may slowly blossom into a transposition of either your aesthetic or your prayer. Thus you could become rounded, Deshil Alles, a microcosm of history's climb.

### 32.4 The Sargawit<sup>28</sup>

So we come back to the reflections of the end of the first section about my writing to you, writing about about about. What about? Which about?

It would seem reasonable that if you are to take a stand, state your position, narrate your struggle or absence of struggle, then so should I. A cluster of problems lurk here, and I had best approach them by the simple device of my favorite analogy between physics and philosophy. On that basis we should have more success in envisaging the fuller problematic. I have used the parallel with physics throughout the *Cantowers*, so it is familiar. A first year student of physics would find a summary of the content of the next class in the course bewildering, never mind the content of graduate courses. However, the parallel lifts, in the present context, to a new degree of difficulty and significance - which of course is a class of content beyond the present lesson! But let me ramble obscurely.

I as whatas, whereas, whenas, view, read, the empirical residue - or my empirical residence - quite differently from most of my readers. The 117 *Cantowers* are indeed an effort to read my empirical residence, and we shall ramble around that reading further here. What, for instance, has the Principle of Least Action to do with the empirical residue?<sup>29</sup>; and is Feynman's path integral approach to Quantumelectrodynamics

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<sup>28</sup>*Sargawit* is the title of a previous section: ,*Cantower XXV*, section 4, which picks up on the first introduction of the word in chapter 6 of *Process: Introducing Themselves to Young (Christian) Minds*. A marginal note in the "Triv and Qoud" section of *FinnegansWake* 294 reads : "Sarga, or the process of outgoing". *Sarga* is the Sanskrit word for "process of world creation or emanation".

<sup>29</sup>Lindsay and Margenau, *Foundations of Physics*, pp. 128-36, will get you started on this question. Feynman II, Chapter 19, gives a readable account of the Principle. We will return to the problem in later *Cantowers*. It obviously carries forward *Cantower*

revelatory of characteristics of both its limitations and its finality?<sup>30</sup> Does not this change my using and asking **about** my empirical residence? Might it not change the tower community's using and asking, in the manner described by *Lack in the Beingstalk's* fourth chapter?

The topic there was the Calculus of Variation, dealing with both the mathematics of Least Action and the Variations of using and asking in metaphysics. It was a matter of envisaging in fantasy [technically defined as the proper function of foundational thinking] a future sophistication of the tower people and their talk.<sup>31</sup> Obviously, my task would be simpler if there was even a flicker of the needed development within the tradition represented by Lonergan's followers. One gets a self-taste of the long axial period of undifferentiatedness if one broods sufficiently over Lonergan's sweep on the problem of expression. It is worth quoting the passage substantially: it acts as a sort of bridge between the reflections of *CantowerXXXI*, section MMM and *CantowerXXXIII*, section 3, where the problem of inventing adequate languages is firmly raised, pointing forwards to the work of *Cantowers LXVI - LXXXI*.

"Besides levels of expression, there also are sequences. Development in general is a process from the undifferentiated to the differentiated, from the generic to the specific, from the global and awkward to the expert and precise. It would simplify enormously the task of the interpreter if, from the beginning of human speech and writing, there existed and were recognized the full range of specialized modes of expression. But the fact is that the specializations had to be invented, and the use of the inventions presupposes a corresponding development or education of prospective audiences or readers. Some early Greek philosophers wrote verse; Plato employed a

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XXX's considerations of energy.

<sup>30</sup>A context is R.P.Feynman and A.R.Hibbs, *Quantum Mechanics and Path Integrals*, McGraw-Hill, 1965.

<sup>31</sup>That future sophistication is a topic in chapter 4 of *Lack in the Beingstalk*.



highly literary dialogue; Aristotle proceeded in the manner of descriptive science; the medieval writers, in their *quaestiones*, developed a compound of the dialogue and the dogmatic decision; Spinoza and Kant molded philosophy in the form of a scientific treatise; Hegelian dialectic seems the initial essay in philosophic writing that envisaged the totality of possible position. If there is any truth in this hurried and rough indication of the evolution of philosophic expression, then there will be a complimentary truth inasmuch as scientific writing will pass through a period in which its difference from philosophy will be obscure (so Newton's main work was entitled *Principia mathematica philosophiae naturalis*) and, similarly, literary writing will have its period of fusion or confusion with scientific and philosophic concerns"<sup>32</sup>

I do not wish us to get into the full sweep of that paragraph yet, but to notice local ills. The interpreter? In the present instance that is myself as teacher. The inventions needed for the education of the prospective audience? Well, they hang on the framework of metaphysical words such as I have been introducing now for some decades and throughout these *Cantowers*. But literary writing prevails: for did not Lonergan lead the way with the swing of his prose in two languages? Yet he could mark with triple-line approval my quotation of Beckett's pointing to the demands of Joyce's new language, *Joyce's Work in Progress*. I already referred to this<sup>33</sup> but Beckett's comment is certainly worth a re-read:

"Here is direct expression - pages and pages of it. And if you don't understand it, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is because you are too decadent to receive it. You are not satisfied unless form is so strictly divorced from content that you can comprehend the one almost without bothering to read the other. This rapid skimming and absorption of the scant cream of sense is made possible by what I may call a continuous process of

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<sup>32</sup>*Insight*, 571-2[594-5].

<sup>33</sup>*Cantower XXVIII*, conclusion of section 1.

copious intellectual salivation”<sup>34</sup>

If we are to reach **being** in our empirical residence we need layer upon layer of as-talk, a transfinite<sup>35</sup> empirical barrier between us and the other primates. It is not to be mere talk, but talk lifted in as controlled a fashion as any age permits and invites, lifted by slim leaps towards the distant forms, forms of syllogisms and systems and water and sunflowers and sons and daughters. So, for instance, that controlling new language will face us with the difference between the first reading of the ABC puzzle and the second, 500 pages later. What is the empirical residue and what is the empirical residence that is the echo of its dynamism in certain higher organisms?

Only the primate that is both intelligible and intelligent - whatever that means, for its luminousness pirouettes on the lights of lower layers - can ask and slowly move to layer the residence with as-tec pointers.

I had thought, as I struggled with the many aspects of the topic, that I might merge two previous bridges of mine, the bridge of Oxen and the bridge of strangeness - in an a integral complex image of crossing place-time in our pilgrim progress. But at all events it is no harm to recall those bridges and point you vaguely towards their interweaving. So I shall risk a distant view, self-viewing.

### 32.5 Self-reference

“Multitudes of finite yet total self-reference is seeded, in an emergent probability’s offspring, sourced by the Infinite Triple-Self-Reference. The seed is identifiable in the autonomic form that is the patterned reaching of *potentia activa*,

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<sup>34</sup>Samuel Beckett, “Dante...Bruno. Vico...Joyce”, *Our Exagmination Round His Factification For Incamination of Work in Progress*, A New Directions Book, New York, 1972, (first published in 1929), p.13.

<sup>35</sup>The question of the transfinite (see *Phenomenology and Logic*, index, under *Transfinite*) in relation to our human language-potentials will emerge in section 3 of *Cantower XXXIII*.

performance-capacity.<sup>36</sup> Its highest realization is a doubly-discontinuous leap to the human forms of neurodynamism, but the prior botanical and zoological automating with the cosmos is already a negentropic wonder of being both comfortably all-absorbing and self-promulgative. The human chemodynamic peaks that emergence-climb in a bisexualizing of Space and Time that includes the performance-capacities to the full limit of finite being and self-reference. The pilgrimage becomes a peek in so far as forms of communal progress layer and decorate each private empirical residence with all-tentacling signs and designs. The peek finds ontic height in the tall-small walk of the Pilgrim of the second stage of meaning, spinning on the axial act of history, turning now and always every molecule of Space and Time.<sup>37</sup> And in the third stage of meaning, the second time of finite subjectivity's cosmic worthiness, the Word becomes fresh with a freshness of new molecular hope. Quarks and nerves flex the empirical residence to nourish impossible dreams".

A quotation? I am quoting myself of yesterday, a less wise self, for the words were made fresh this morning. Is it evident to you that the words, the word that is the paragraph, is self-referent? Of course you may regard it primarily as an out-reach. To quote myself again from that August conference of 2003, "Immortal diamond reaches out to immortal diamonds in our uncommon common, but unshared, darkness."<sup>38</sup> And you may be trapped, in that regarding, anywhere between McKinnon and Jaspers, or you may be with me at least to the extent that you too are luminously alone in the self-

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<sup>36</sup>You notice here my implicit call for metaphysical equivalence: but it is a call for the refinements of later *Cantowers*, beginning at *Cantower LXVI*.

<sup>37</sup>All this is a central topic of "Grace: The Final Frontier", the fifth chapter of *The Redress of Poise*, available on the Website.

<sup>38</sup>I am, of course, recalling Hopkins, "That nature is a heraciltean fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection", which rises to the conclusion that this "joke, poor potshed, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond / Is immortal diamond". The key point in mind at the time was the reality and the image of each of us as an integral molecular reality, darkly sparkling.

reference that is the reading of the paragraph in the loneliness of your empirical residence. What does my paragraph say to you, in that residence? Depending on your degree of luminousness and your belief-poise in relation to my marks, my re-marks, there is the invitation, "face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher",<sup>39</sup> "to view the last of me, a living frame for one more picture."<sup>40</sup>

But certainly, if you take Lonergan's invitation to a new culture of general empirical method, what I have been calling GEMb, than the words, the word, is self-referent, to be nourished in womb of your empirical residence. That nourishing of decades can bring forth a Proustian taste that is an inner word of luminous self-digestion and self-expression and self-reference. Will the slow nourishing carry you into the reference and self-reference of Thomas referencing of ultimate self-referencing that is *Contra Gentiles* book IV, chapter 11?<sup>41</sup> I am merely updating his wonderous climb to the Lost Horizon of his 1260s inner word. It is the kataphatic climb that is the vocation of us all, the call within our "loonly in me loneness"<sup>42</sup> empirical residence. And why do I quote, discomfortingly, James Joyce's "Book of the Dark"?<sup>43</sup> Is not the book a generous offer of a design for the halls and faults of **Here Comes Everybody's** empirical residence?<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>I am quoting Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, XII,

<sup>40</sup>I quote the final stanza of Robert Browning's "Childe Harold to the Dark Tower Came", recalling the symbolic struggle in *Cantower V*.

<sup>41</sup>This is a massively rich piece of Thomas' writing, a context for reaching on and up.

<sup>42</sup>*Finnegans Wake*, 627.

<sup>43</sup>I am recalling the work of John Bishop, *Joyce's Book of the Dark: Finnegans Wake*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1986. A serious introduction to this strange work. See the next note.

<sup>44</sup>**HCE** and **ALP** (Anna Livia Pluabelle) are the male and female searchers in *Finnegans Wake*. The handiest introduction to this Wake business is, I would say, Joseph

And Goedel is in there too, in seemingly colder design of metalogical theorems, but in the existential weave of the child in us all, *Herr Warum*,<sup>45</sup> that can blossom into Lonergan out-reach to me in his mid-seventies, “what of Goedel’s theorem?”.

“The formula whose Goedel number is K is not decidable.”<sup>46</sup> And **this** is the formula, shouting out “I am undecidable”! So we have another comet in the skyview of modern paradoxes of self-reference. And from this lower ground of loneliness we can leap together, yet differently in our private residences, to take fright and hope in the upper ground of loneliness. Then the *Entscheidungsproblem* pirouettes into the heart of my empirical residence, my almost-continuum of decision problems, and I am faced with the mystery of ultimate Selves-Reference’s invitation to each resident to chose in each choice a totally different cosmos out of the positive infinity of possible universes cherished within Infinity’s Self-referential Idea. And that cherishing reaches me in my empirical residence, with longing and promise : “To those who win the victory I will give each a white stone on which a new name is written” .<sup>47</sup>

And will that whiteness and brightness re-design my empirical residence? Might I not survive without my arms, my legs, with artificial heart? But what of my empirical

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Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson, *Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake*, Viking Press, New York. At the end of the previous *Cantower* I referred to Joseph Campbell’s broader sweep

<sup>45</sup>‘Mr.Why’: This was Kurt Goedel’s name within the family when a child. (Hao Wang, *Reflections on Kurt Goedel*, MIT Press, 1988, xix). It is sad that the culture of his time and bones never permitted him to reach for its deeper meaning.

<sup>46</sup>There is no way I can enter into this question here. In *Phenomenology and Logic* I gave a set of references (note 30, p. 53) which could be followed up, but it is very heavy advanced work. However, it is eventually going to be relevant to the total project of an explanatory metaphysics. You might follow up the index of *Phenomenology and Logic*, under *Goedel* , for a general view of the situation.

<sup>47</sup>*Revelations*, 2:17. A context for digesting this is *Process*, chapter 5.

residence, the core chemical zone of my self-reference? Is there to be a merging of molecules, or just no molecules at all but simply the minded residue? Or might we not expect the Ulti-mates of Self-Referees to settle, infinitely dynamic, in an Empirical Residence that is *Kabod Yahweh*, Bethel eternally and surprisingly recycled, redesigned?<sup>48</sup>

### 32.6 The Bright Ages

So I return to us herenow therethen. Might we share some time, as we end this celebration-year of Lonergan's gestation year of 1904, in the double darkness of the axial empirical residence private to each of us? I like to think that Chesterton would be pleased with my section-title, which points to the Neon Gods of Paul Simon's song, to the simple daylight clarity of our Western life, its Christian vision, its Global corruptiveness, to the brightness of contemporary busyness and business and War. My topic, after all, is the dark axial millennia and the longer cycling out of it.

My first sentence here was of inviting you to spend the rest of the *Cantower* Space-Time of the year 2004 "in the dark". It brought to mind - but I postponed the explicit recollection until now - the beginning of our first session at the West Dublin Conference of August 2003. Both these Cantowers were written in the month that followed it. That conference beginning pivoted on a short sentence that I quoted from my Japanese New Testament, recently acquired from Nagasaki. I knew from the good donor, my old colleague Fr. Dermot Brangan S.J., that a memorial service of the bombing of Nagasaki was being held as we began our August Conference, and the quotation seemed multiply appropriate: "Toki wa yoru datta" (John 13: 30. "It was night"). The brightness of clear-headed and command terrorism hung over Japan that August morning.

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<sup>48</sup>Bethel = House of God. You might find it worthwhile to return to the poem that surrounds my first reaching towards the present project, the second *Cantower*: What might that "annotaste of throat" be? What is the cosmic spoken home in which each HCE and ALP are finally home-spun?

I spoke with some eloquence on that conference morning of the continued night after the departure of Judas, a night that was not lit-up magnificently by Resurrection or Ascension<sup>49</sup> but flowed on through ecumenic ages to our day and beyond, through Paul's run-around and Peter's Rome, through a male clerical effort to weave a seamless garment of an obvious Jesus round about each empirical residence. I did not speak of my old colleague, Charles Davis, whose early reaction to *Insight's* cosmopolis was horror at a possible identification of it with the Roman Church, but his horror is worth recalling now. For, I am drawing attention to an identification: the institutional identification of a divine cosmic reaching with an axial world. The identification, and its promulgative arrogance, has failed and faded into a parochial fringe tenuously connected to committedly second-rate thought. Aquinas is lauded because he is alone, ranger about the full spectrum of human searchings, and in the main, since Trent, there are just "big frogs in little ponds."<sup>50</sup> Could the Word be made fresh?

No doubt I offend, and shall continue to offend.<sup>51</sup> I am being radically secular about the answer to my question: my answer is a secular pragmatism, an identification of the core of cosmopolis as a Tower Community, The Tower, perhaps, of Able, echoing the name of an early rejected shepherd.

There is no point in my enlarging on my view, spun out so often elsewhere. Nor is there any point in summarily pointing to Lonergan's expressions of his sense of

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<sup>49</sup>I cannot help recalling one of my favorite sermons, on *Acts* ch.1, v.6, when the disciples nudge Jesus to 'move on' by squabbling about splitting the running of 'their' new kingdom, with jobs for all twelve.

<sup>50</sup>A Dublin after-dinner comment of Lonergan, Easter 1961, talking about the shrinkage and confinement of clerical studies after Trent.

<sup>51</sup>I took a stand on a vocation to offend early in *Lack in the Beingstalk* (see section 3 of the Prologue), recalling my teenaged preoccupation with a speech of Prince Henry (*Henry IV, Part One, Act I, scene ii, lines 188-9, 208-9*) which begins "I know you all and will awhile uphold / The unyoked humour of your idleness" and ends "I'll so offend to make offence a skill / Redeeming time when men think least I will".

large-scale decay, of the settledness of conventional wisdom, of the subtlety of evil, of the alliance of righteousness and stupidity, of thin popularization.<sup>52</sup> If I am to continue efficiently my offensive offense within the zone of our reflections, then I should focus and invite reflection on the participation, in all this, of Lonergan's disciples, through their bright inattention to their own empirical residence. Now you may say, is this not just going too far in offense?

There are two aspects to the offensive issue. First, I am not looking for miracles, but for some modest push against inattention to what I consider as the key tone, the keystone, of the critical realism that, one might say, is taken to be creedal among Lonergan *aficionados*. I see no such modest push. Indeed, I cannot recall it being a definite topic at any conference I have been at in thirty three years. Nor is it written about. The Florida conference of 1970 produced about seventy papers<sup>53</sup>: none homed in on the empirical residence that is each one's darkness of human being. The conference, indeed, was in the bright axial darkness of the obvious. What of other conferences in the past few decades? Perhaps it has been a hot topic here and there (I am rarely invited to such gatherings): do you personal recall that communal dark experience, inviting a stand against the brightness of axial darkness? Is it not rather the case that we gather comfortably in already-out-there rooms to talk in comfortably naive about this or that dimension of meaning?

I recall again that meeting where Jesus as critical realist was a topic: the broad problem of his self-appropriation of his is-ing was not at all envisaged much less his bewildering native extroversion. Obviously, I cannot speak of classroom focus: perhaps I am then quite wrong, perhaps it is a topic that dominates weeks of undergraduate

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<sup>52</sup>As well as the usual sources in Latin and English, I would draw attention to the early lectures in *Topics in Education*.

<sup>53</sup>Of seventy papers and a projected six volumes, two volumes of essays were published by Gill-McMillan in the early 1970s, edited by P.McShane: *Foundations of Theology, Language, Truth and Meaning*.



self-searching? But then, why does this dominance not flow into papers and presentations? If one has spent undergraduate months grappling with the startling strangeness of one's psychic solitude, why is its radiance absent from the communal ethos?

The second aspect of my offense relates to the present evil of that absence in philosophic discourse. Now certainly there is the evil of its absence in the general community of philosophers, though it seems to turn up as a topic there more than in the sub-group of those interested in Lonergan's work: I recall now listening to Strawson address a large gathering of undergraduates on the problem of knowing that/if there was a brown bear in the corner of the classroom. He ended up, of course, gallantly hanging on to some certainty about a doubtfully-brown impression. The students enjoyed his romp round the problem of knowledge from the vantage zone of a large bright real room in Schools.

But I speak of a different level of evil, of vincible ignorance, when I switch to those who profess interest in, even allegiance to, Lonergan's "Position". Real allegiance to that Position invites one on to a very different road, *Tao*. For the total philosophic group the invitation to attend to that heartscord of the human condition is in-your-face in modernity - or if you wish post-modernity. It is there in the pressures of particle physics and in the precisions of neurochemistry. But Lonergan would seem to have made it an unavoidable topic. Why, then, do so few of his followers speak out of the darkness of their empirical residence about that empirical residence, about that luminous lift in their humanity, about the home they have found and cherished, in which they strive to live and move and reach for being?

### 32.7 At Home<sup>54</sup>, In Residence

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<sup>54</sup>Being "at home in transcendental method" (*Method in Theology*, 14) properly is to arrive home. Aquinas died before he got round to freshening his heuristics of that arrival. There are scraps at the end of, and in the Supplement to the *Summa Theologica* that patches together his earlier searchings.

Might we end the bright ages of Lonergan studies, come home out of the axial philosophic darkness to be, both alone and together, articulate in a factual humility and openness of self-reference? It could lead to another instance of a providential Christian philosophy.<sup>55</sup> The global ferment of science and scholarship is a general one, but this particular sub-group has been given an extra nudge, within Faith. In a millennium the empirical residence may be as obvious to the community of culture as the need for laboratories in research: does the human group have to drag the Christian tradition along, breathless and late?

The section above, on Self-Reference, enlarged the invitation, an invitation running through my four decades of writing, and I shall have fresh words about it in the next and final gestation *Cantower*, opening out to the fresh darkness of the 84 *Cantowers* to follow. But I do wish to repeat that the invitation to the larger climb is not for everyone. It is for those few crazies who cannot rest in an empirical residence that lacks heuristic luminosity, those few crazies who are persistent about reaching the explanatory viewpoint on being and becoming so allusively pointed to in chapter sixteen of *Insight*, those few crazies who wish to “come about” in integral orgasm. Are you one of them? If not, might you encourage them, your children perhaps, your spouse? Our future pivots on the emergence of a few and a few more, not content with a zen poise, or even a ken poise, but reaching for a symphonic THEN poise that would align them to the unity, beauty and efficiency of a metaphysics that is a breath of fresh heirs to Selves-revelations’ tense empirical reach.

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<sup>55</sup>The old question of “Christian philosophy” is complex but for the present it is best taken in a minimal sense as ‘just factual’: methodological shifts are *de facto* associated with Christians like Aquinas and Lonergan.