

Cantower XLI
Functional Policy

August 1st 2005

41.1 Functional Policy

I continue to circle round, and to invite you to circle round, that section 5 of chapter 10 of *Method* identified as page 250 but now with an insertion of the poise of the investigator Lonergan as expressed on those other pages 286-7. The invitation is doctrinal, and the mood of the conclusion of the previous *Cantower* was towards your intussusception of the distinction between doctrinal reading and foundational or systematic reading. It was not a problem in my days of teaching physics, but it seems to be a problem there now.¹ It is certainly a problem in theology and philosophy. Is it a problem to be handled in a single *Cantower* on Doctrine? Recall the last footnote of *Cantower XL*: this problem has the same difficulty as the problem of "Metaphysics THEN". Still, had I kept to my schedule of writing this in 18 months time, my present essay would have tackled that problem more vigorously, and would have invited a struggle towards a precision regarding the meaning of function in this context: how is the Indigo community to track through efficiently from foundations to systematics?

Now, however, I write to help us towards our goal of reading 250 creatively, each group-member perhaps with a different bent. I presume you have been round it (*Roundoll*) a few waketimes already and here you will find at least two more rounds! But a common feature of our efforts is a stepping towards a better glimpse of the nature of doctrinal reading, getting us beyond the simple metaphor based on such distinctions as that between map-reading and mountaineering. One might say that the better

¹ I talk, in *Cantower XXVIII*, about the problem of teaching the last grades of school chemistry and later - *Cantower LIV* - I tackle the problem more broadly. But you get a decent line on the problem from Lonergan on physics in *Topics in Education*, 145. Tie it in with what he has to say about *haute vulgarization* on pages 121, 155 of Volume 6 of *The Collected Works* and you will find yourself enlightened on aspects of the problem of doctrinal reading, doctrinal talking.

glimpse comes by way of the old Latin tag, *solvitur ambulando* (it is solved by walking), but we are not here talking about spontaneous or first-order consciousness,² we are talking about about about luminous self-assembly. And, unless you are a very tranquil person, this reminder is annoying! We, axial creatures, dearly wish to imagine that we know about the me-what that goes about talking about.

So: here we are faced with the reading of this page (with the 'two pages' inserted) of doctrinal writing: the key policy pages at the heart of *Method in Theology*. They are policy pages for millennia, but they will not be known as such in communal luminosity (about about about) for a generation or two. Or three or four or many more: depending on you.³ Now, doesn't that make you feel important ... or at least responsible?! Or excited? We are halted at the last word of page 249, "Assembly" - and have been pretty well so for the past two *Cantowers* - and now I am holding you at the first word of page 250: "includes". Includes?

So: I wish you thus darkly poised as we, you, start section 2. And how long will you pause, as a group, over the second word, the same word that ends *Finnegans Wake*, "the"? I doubt if you are tuned, toned, yet, to the metaphysical stance that is totally concrete, as the 'good always is concrete',⁴ in its integral heuristic structured reach.

²By now you know what this refers to: Lonergan's distinction between spontaneous consciousness, a second level that comes to grips with its operations in art, science and common sense, to formulate method, a third level that comes to grips with methods historically etc. It is that third level that merits the name *methodology*. It is a distant culture, and it is to that distant culture of culture of cultures that I refer in my regularly repeated 'about about about', or in the oddness of talking about discernments of discernments of discernments.

³I am recalling Lonergan's pointing towards recurrence-scheming in the drive against the longer cycle of decline: *Insight* chapter 7, section 8.1.

⁴*Method in Theology*, 27. Later (earlier, in fact, but in the last section to be written in these three essays: in the sentence at note 51 of *Cantower LX*) I turn you round the third word on page 250, pointing to the street-tasting activity of metaphysical sensibility

There: I am nudging you Zenlike THENlike beyond doctrinal reading to a self-digestive meaning that is to be the heirs you breed in later cultural reflection, heirs that “protect the future”⁵ by striving, always “repentant,”⁶ to be a “psychic force that sweeps living human bodies, linked in charity, to the joyful courageous, whole-hearted, yet intelligently controlled performance of the tasks set by world order in which the problem of evil is not suppressed but transcended”.⁷

So, the large reach of the unknown and mysterious cosmopolis of *Insight* comes down, or up, to a humdrum cycling of the institution described in our page, a “specialized auxiliary”⁸ that controls the track-run, the performance, of the fourth hodic leg. But the high tone of the future described at the end of the last paragraph is - mercifully! - replaced for us by a hit and miss attending. Before we further characterize that attending in the next four sections it is as well to pause over the notion of *function* again. It has been a topic since *Cantower XXXIV*, but some of our present group may not have got round to brooding over those previous essays.

You may check the index to *Method* under *function* or *functional* and find little beyond generic pointings. Function, and the hand-over strategies it requires, were not the center of attention in the book. For us they must become a focus of attention if we are to conceive of efficiency and implementation in an efficient manner. Nor is it easy to do this. For example, I mentioned in the previous essay how I have been preoccupied with the problem of efficiently interpreting influential error: I continue to struggle with it. How does one hand on to historians such an interpretation as will make their run easier, so that the dialectic group “includes”, picks up and twists forward, that piece of

⁵*Insight*, 240[265].

⁶*Insight*, 701, line 1[722, line 3].

⁷*Insight*, 723-4[745, top].

⁸*Insight*, 726[747, end].

the baton of meaning in a manner that best helps their swing towards “operating”⁹

One can ask the same question about the handing on by the dialectic community to foundational people. Is there a clear answer in *Method*? You have noted that I moved to clearing up the answer by meshing the pages 250 and 286-7 and by specifying a precise role for foundational thinking. Here the image of runners links in beautifully. A really good hand-over is done without the front runner looking back. The foundations people are the beginnings of the full facing of the future: what they are to receive is the best sifting of the drive towards becoming, and their *per se* burden is concrete and efficient, relatively invariant, fantasy. That fuller foundations is to be passed on to the doctrinal thinkers, who reach within that lift of fantasy for high policy. Their reach pivots on a complex of conversations, but especially those specified by the matrix element C₄₆. There are, for instance, dynamic elements of culture found in “*Classifications* which have other grounds” than fundamental horizon differences. They are put aside, “dismissed”¹⁰, by dialectic and foundational work, only to be merged with the heart-reach towards the future that becomes increasingly rich as one moves up through doctrinal and systematic thinking towards the final speciality of Communications.

But we cannot get into this richness here, though some few facets of it will turn up in section 3, on Lonergan’s “doctrinal fantasies”. You can face that challenge in the decades to come. Our next move, in section 2, is to ramble round about about about page 250. (Finally, sez you !) In section 41.4 I bring together for your perusal some of

⁹*Method in Theology*, 250, line 17. See 249, 2nd last line.

¹⁰*Method in Theology*, 250. Selection “dismisses” think this out. These affinities are not to be lost. This relates to Lonergan’s central puzzle of the late 1950s and the early 1960s: the relation of system etc to history. How do you pick-up the meaning of the past in a fully rich yet controlled fashion? Think of the parallel between onto-therapy (Jung or Stekel or Sullivan or Progoff) and phylo-therapy: both part of what I called, at the end of that strange first chapter of *The Shaping of the Foundations*, “philotherapy”! Does this give a lift to our struggle with *Assembly* and *Self-Assembly*?

my own fantasies. Finally, in section 5, we come back to the heart of the matter, the challenge of Self-Assembly.

41.2 Assembly

I used the word *peruse* just now. A strange mix of Latin and earlier English. You may think of it with the contemporary meaning of “skim over” or with an older meaning of using thoroughly. Our full concern is with using thoroughly - the global community in history being on the job - that page 250. But here minimalism is the order of the day. Is that it, you may say, after all this build up? But already you are tuned to the reasons. You have a suspicion, nudged by my wondrous persuasive powers, that this is *the* page in the book that lifts into brutal practicality the article in *Gregorianum* 1969 that became chapter 5.

I am just - or sadly - kidding about my wondrous persuasive powers. I have impressed no serious Lonergan scholar, at least enough to do anything about the page. So: I look now to a minimalism that consists in you noticing that I, and the page, have a point. We shall peruse the rest of the chapter in the next section, backing up my point, pointing to some sad facts about these chapters of *Method*. But what I would appreciate is common sense taking my side, like those enthusiasts who marched down O’Connell St. in Dublin, Easter Monday 1916, with their old German rifles, following the odd enthusiastic school teacher, Patrick Pearse.

So, a first perusal of the page, a first level of Assembly, is done just like a non-climber reading a page of guiding-points to K2 or Everest. You may know nothing about the levels of the camps or the challenge of “thin air”, but you can recognize a pretty decent plan when you read it. Especially if you are what in Ireland they call “the hurler in the ditch”, watching the hurling game as a non-player - I think the USA folk talk about a Monday morning quarter-back? Still, there is the extra element here; you are interested in this particular climbing plan, because its success or failure relates globally to all our futures. That extra element is important, and its present

commonsense cultivation needs to flow into academic veins.¹¹ But I am not pushing that now, in my minimalism.

You may find this direction, directing, of mine unexpected. I have hinted at the massive task, of taking tuckoo to the task, of sensing that assembly is a mighty business of moving from seeing the page to seizing the page, begin seized by the page. And this is all true. But it is important to peruse the page almost like as if it was newsprint, "I heard the news today, oh boy...."¹² The writer uses italics, starting with the last word on page 249. He goes round the same six pre-operation tasks several times ... not five, not seven: this guy must be serious. Do you think he is serious? Do you think he had, has, a plan?

It is quite another thing to get a sense of the six steps. I mentioned already the help one might get from thinking autobiographically. Try that, unless you find it too discomfoting. In the previous decades I pushed a classroom illustration which caught the attention of the young Nova Scotian ladies, since many of them had suffered the folly of fixed family holiday misery: the illustration of twenty summers going to the family cottage.¹³ If you try either of these, you will find that it is quite tricky trying to distinguish the steps. That sort of distinguishing has to come from empirical messing. I look at my old notes now of twenty years ago: what would the point be of adding sketches of such sketchings to Lonergan's sketching? Let us rather putter along together: we might even end up with our own decent sketchings.

¹¹The mood of *Praxis* and of global care fermented forward in the twentieth century. Grass-roots movements, NGOs, etc, seem quite ahead of academic organizations.

¹²Couple this Beatle-mood, with its identification of seating in the Albert Hall, with the Proustian tasting of tea of section 6 of *Cantower XL*. The existential problem is to reach towards living in a mode of expectation regarding the ordinary which of course is not ordinary but all-encompassed.

¹³See note 56 below.

Such decent sketchings come from messing forward in old data, the old tired¹⁴ data of the history of philosophy or theology or psychology or sociology. But you'll find that you are driven to a more concrete viewing of these, to the "events, statements, movements, to which **they** refer",¹⁵ where they are the performers and proposers only implicitly mentioned on the first line of page 250. You get my concrete, concerned, drift? Method in theology is not a problem in a book or in an academic department: it is about the shocking fiddling, laced with sophistications of bowing and bowing and scraping in the rhythms of conventional standards and needs, about departments and hierarchies of Church, Government, Academy.

I have been battling this light-weight pretentious destructive fiddling for more than fifty years, but now I am not asking you to attempt the climb to sharing my view: I am asking you to dig into your own present common sense. Certainly it helps to push the illustrations, to push for the meaning of the page line by line, to push on and on to glimpse how a functional differentiation of consciousness might emerge in later generations. But all I ask is that you keep the push concrete, by which I mean -

¹⁴It is important to stretch the imagination concerning this, so that there is an increasing sense of the missing "fresh data" (*Method in Theology*, 249, six lines from end). The work of fantasy is not easy. An illustration here of my own slowness could help. It was years before I reached a smell of the abomination of present texts in economics. The normal texts have nothing to say about the local economy. I recall finding a text in Texas - quite a big spot - which had nothing in it about Texas. But the idiocy continues. Neither government departments nor academic departments are tuned in to the concrete rhythms of local economic structures. So who is running the show? Foundational reaching comes up with a fantasy of of micro- and meso- economic structures to be dealt with in texts from grade ten on. Imagine a school class studying the rhythms of the surrounding ten blocks (especially if they had entry into the underground economy!). That illustrates a piece of the foundational task. But fantasy has also to reach out to envisage heuristically how that imagining could reach the schools and the streets: the other forward specialties have to lift the imagination into hearts and hearths.

¹⁵*Method in Theology*, 250.

surprize! surprize! - metaphysical.¹⁶ So, recall my own concretization of the end part of the page, with ten investigators having to read the ten books written by themselves. Fantasize it out, like a hurler on the ditch, and smile. Now there, you will agree, is a process that “deprecates their short-comings”¹⁷, that “reveal themselves”¹⁸, “in the style of a crucial experiment”¹⁹.

Perhaps a year of conversation together will carry us much further? This year of 2004 there will be gatherings in honour of Lonergan’s hundredth birthday: some group may well do what we are doing much better. Then we will rejoice. But there is also the possibility that the same old same old will roll along, “effete”, “a slum”²⁰.

Are you surprised at this modest middle section of the *Cantower*, when you perhaps expected that when I came to the point, the central point, I would be eloquently detailed? But you shall see, as you venture into the next section, that I may be taking a subtle cue from the elder Lonergan.

41.3 Lonergan’s Doctrinal Fantasy

Am I reading the past as “something better than was the reality”²¹ when I note

¹⁶But perhaps at this stage you are not surprised. Metaphysics is not at all abstractive. It is a lift of luminosity to the concrete intention of becoming that moves us daily. We are heuristic structures of becoming: but to be tentatively integral we must struggle self-digestively towards the distant luminosity called metaphysics or methodology. See note 2 above.

¹⁷*Method in Theology*, 252, line 4.

¹⁸*Method in Theology*, 253, lines 13-14.

¹⁹*Method in Theology*, 253, line 17.

²⁰*Method in Theology*, 99, lines 10, 17.

²¹*Method in Theology*, 251.

this cue from the elder Lonergan?

What cue?

In *Cantower I* I drew attention to Lonergan's 'bent', 'dynetypology': he seemed to be temperamentally a creative retriever of the past and present. But he was also massively visionary: one cannot miss that mood if one takes seriously his writings in the 1930s, reaching for a world in which lamb and lion lie down together.²² Despite the massive discouragements of his life, he held to that vision, walking his elder giant-stilt walk across common rooms.²³ He wrote of *Method* as taking shape in 1954, shot into seeing its shape a decade later, sketched that shape badly in those difficult years of the late 1960s.

Yet how badly did he do? Is there not a wisdom in the magnificent minimalism of his twisting towards the end of *Method* after page 250? The minimalism is at its maximum, so to speak, when he comes to write about Systematics. He had struggled for and towards an adequate view of theological system all through his life, had it by the tadpole²⁴ tale in *Insight*, battled on to find a control of its genetic lifting of history through the next decade. Yet, he cuts back his pointing when he gets to the 13th chapter of *Method*: yes, systematic theology is difficult, elitist, but even if you are not in that ball park we can at least close the option on the pretenses of a pervasive conceptualism and open the door to understanding. Again, he had more to say about Communications as

²²I have not tracked this down: it is at the conclusion of a 1930s essay.

²³I refer to the final page of Proust's work.

²⁴I return to the problem of a heuristics of development in *Cantowers LIIIX* and *LIX*, "Tadpoles, Tell us Talling Tales" and "Developments and Evolutions". It was already a topic in *Cantower VII*, "Systematics and General Systems Theory". Lonergan's followers display a massive block in this area, yet, it seems so obvious that the new systematics has to be a genetic system of systems, does it not? The article mentioned in the next footnote may help: it will be meshed into the later *Cantowers*, (*LI*: "Functional Systematics"; *LII*: "Functional Communications").

he had more to say about Research. But the second shortest section of the book says it all too compactly: we need Towering characters to carry and curry meaning.²⁵

Nor does the chapter on doctrines reach out in fantasy as I would like to give a distinctive forward-look of trans-Christian *Pragma* edging towards freshness. The chapter has the same patchiness that I noted in regard to the chapter on Dialectic. But I would draw attention to what I might call a great flash of fantasy that lurks in sections 8,9, and 10. Certainly one could mistake these sections for re-hashes, with the usual emphasis on dogma instead of *Pragma*. But what if one views them as methodological hinting on how to tackle freshly, within²⁶ his impossibly-remote foundations, the task of the second and third specialties? Indeed, without that tackling in this century the brilliant and precise methodological claims about the status of dogma may remain simply a matter of trusting Lonergan's personal achievement - or continuing the tiresome debates. This is certainly not the place to tackle the issues involved: the massive heuristic transposition of the canons of hermeneutics into the hodic context, enriched by a character-sublation of the earlier canons demanded by the policies of page 287 of *Method*. Am I exaggerating here?

The paragraph that leads into these section, at the end of page 318, leaves no doubt. Lonergan has swung up through a presentation of ongoing contexts and discoveries of mind, "quite beyond the horizon of ancient Greece and medieval Europe"²⁷ and contemporary America, Australia, Africa, Anywhere. The paragraph picks up on the lack of intellectual conversion in Barth and Bultmann, but please note

²⁵In "Systematics, Communications, Actual Contexts" (*Lonergan WorkshOp Vol. 6*, ed. F.Lawrence, Scholars Press, 1986, I reflect on the early sections of chapter 14 of *Method*, suggesting as title for the first section:"passionate subjectivity in the lucid closed options of the finality of implementation" (pp. 146-7).

²⁶Need I remind you of the cheeky-tongued phrase, "one can go on"? (*Method in Theology*, 287).

²⁷*Method in Theology*, 317.

that his context is clear. Lonergan never wrote of theoretic conversion: he took for granted its need. "Intellectual conversion is not enough"²⁸: one need to be up to using, as Tower character, the riches of his suggested general and special categories.

So: what we have is a fantasy of doing the early specialties in a quite new manner. Only in so far as that is done will the tower-task spiral up, through "cumulative and progressive results"²⁹, "developed and integrated with fresh data and further discovery"³⁰. And what we also have here, in our little enterprize, is another boost in our entry into page 250.

I have given just one illustration of the cyclic reading round page 250. It could be further spiced and curried by picking up on those nudges Lonergan gives regularly regarding the shift from content to method and to the ongoing genesis of a method which he took for granted to be the generalized empirical method of his richest definition. But perhaps I have said sufficient to boost your suspicion that page 250 resonates with all the disturbing challenges of *Insight*.

41.4 Some Methodological Doctrines

In section 40.5, which centered attention on some aspects of *Lack in the Beingstalk*, I made the point about the remoteness of serious theological meaning, or more generally, the meaning that is to be generated with and within the Able-Tower, the Salvific Tower, of culture. How seriously did you take me? Obviously, we are back round again with the second half of page 250. What is your stand, really? The 'really' recalls for me - and I recall it for you now - the distinction Lonergan makes at the end of chapter 14 of *Insight*: you find out where your molecules stand when you move away from the 'heavy stuff' and move to the relaxed interpersonal. It brings to mind for me, if

²⁸*Method in Theology*, 318.

²⁹*Method in Theology*, 4.

³⁰*Method in Theology*, 249.

I remember rightly, the first of C.S.Lewis' *Screwtape Letters*, where conviction mounts through reading in the British Museum, but it dissolves as one walks down the steps within the sights and sounds of London.

Which frame of minding were you in when you read the previous section, or for that matter when you previously read Lonergan's chapter on Doctrines? Were you miraculously in the real world, print pressing on your inner nerves? Or were you at least tuned to the fact that when one is talking in and about the sixth specialty one is - normatively - very distant from commonsense meaning and - wow! - one might even be distant from naive realistic reading. Do I have you smiling, blushing at your naive reading? Fear not: you too may walk on water: or rather, in a few generations, people writing and reading about doctrines in *Theological Studies* or specialized treatises will be in the same mood and mode as in serious physics. But at present, as we know, we are trying to get the show on the roll, hoping that in later generations the "Rolling Stone Gathers *Nomos*".

So: let me make here, take here my stand on, a central point with regard to doctrines or policies within the Tower. Whether one is doing the second or third specialty, or this sixth specialty, the meaning of any doctrine is - or is to be, when we lift ourselves out of axial times - discontinuously remote from its street-meaning. How its street and pew meaning is to be tinged and molecularized by the cyclically-enriched remote meaning: that is quite another and difficult topic, and that topic is only part of the problem of the operative distinction between elite-meaning and street-meaning: the press towards a revolutionary cultural adventure.

I now name some of my methodological doctrines. 'Name some': you are clear at this stage on the struggle to rise beyond names, the turning about about about in your reading of them, a mood that needs to spread globally towards the sublated restoration of compacted meaning and mystery.

The 'policies' are not systematically arranged: such an arranging is a task of fantasy operating with the control of the words of metaphysics. I give seven: why?

Because I like the number seven.

Let me give you my curious list and then comment on it.

- [1] the Policy of No-Go, or: My No-Go Theorem
- [2] the Policy of Adequate Expression
- [3] the Chlldoubt Policy/ Principle
- [4] the Tomega Policy/Principle
- [5] the Policy of Accelerating Adult Growth
- [6] the Policy of Transcendental Modesty
- [7] the Policy of Transcendental Fantasy

My first comment is that the list could well be the titles of chapters in a very big book. Are you up to writing it, or a chapter of it?

I already wrote of my NoGo Theorem in the context of the work of Lochlainn O’Raifeartaigh.³¹ It is the central topic of this section. It is the central problem of contemporary theology, a problem not of belief but of culture. Need I go on? At its bluntest it claims that if you are talking serious theology it is incomprehensible to common sense. At its most discomfoting it accuses theology of being operationally in the diabolical possession of general bias.

The second Principle is a help: the control of meaning given by sophisticated expression. Perhaps section 40.4 has been a sufficient introduction to the policy, but the developmental illustration of it is the task of the *Cantowers* of 2008. So, brooding over it can help come to grips with [7], the policy of transcendental fantasy.

You have already noted, no doubt, that the 7 policies are linked, like the axioms of a geometry: thought I have not tried to order them in dependence-sequence or establish varieties of independence. Still, I suppose the centre-stage is occupied by [3]. Chlldoubt? It refers compactly to various pragmatisms. Originally, there was the Childout Principle, which for me is the heart of the massive transformation of education

³¹Introduced at note 100 of *Cantower XXXIX*.

that is our present desperate need. I have talked about it before and referenced it.³² My first version of it was “When teaching children geometry one is teaching children children”. Again, it needs a book, showing how self-teaching is involved, or teaching anything, or thinking of it in the fullness of interpersonal dialogue, biography meeting biography in history: a new tuckoo Proust and you luminous to each other, luminously lifting each other to and in each other’s age of growing.

So, I point you to the 5th Policy. [5] certainly calls for [7], transcendental fantasy. In my weeks of writing these three *Cantowers* to / for/ with / you I have accelerated beyond myself of last year, accelerated more than you in your lesser years. I am more distant from you as a human adult. Does this acceleration continue? There was the assumption in pre-axial cultures that the elder might even enlighten on a deathbed. Yet this does not fit into our present recurrence-schemes of living and learning. Besides, brain-experts tell us that those cells fade and die. All that I can say is that, at 72, I have the sense of only warming up. Perhaps I was too odd, weird, crazy, for the axial culture to get at me?

I come now to [4], the Tomega Principle. You will find the principle formulated for the first time in my writings in *Cantower IV* of July 2002, although it was part of my dynamic from ... way back! And perhaps my drawing attention to this, by inviting you to pause over this, will help you to “handle”, hearthold, get your molecular head around about about about this doctrine and these doctrines.

The Tomega Principle is printed out on page 7 of *Cantower IV*, and I read now my comments there. I meant just to quote the definition and move on, but, my my, that page was worth my reading again for the first time with its burst of fresh meaning nudging me along my dark galactic trail. So, I will type the whole page in here, thus talking to myself again, beginning again to taste the tease of Lonergan’s marvelous leaf

³²It is simply a teaching version of the full (*A Third Collection*, top of page 141) definition of generalized empirical method. “Be growingly self-luminous in teaching and evoke the equivalent stance in your students”.

417[442] of *Insight*. To think that I missed the key pointing of it in my readings of forty years! So: let me give you the beginning of section 1.2 of that *Cantower*, titled "A Pert Direction".

"What we are reaching for, THEN, is a can-tower self-luminosity of molecular intelligence implementing its explanatory self-tasting in an efficient spin-in and spin-off of noo-feedback.

There you have it, in foundational fantasy, but not yet in doctrinal bluntness.

Here, then, you have a pert -saucy - attempt at doctrinal bluntness. That gives you one of my senses of *pert*. The dictionary may also give you PERT, initials for Program Evaluation and Review Technique, and that also pertains here. But the central meaning is the naming of Candace Pert.³³

I am not settling here into a particular functional specialization - indeed the *Cantowers* in general can be read as popularizations, literary invitations, C₅₉,³⁴ pointing towards the later hodic adventures. But it may be as well to be saucy up-front with a metadoctrinal statement of Lonergan that I make my own. Let us isolate it boldly, titling it *Tomega*.³⁵

Tomega: Theoretical understanding, then, seeks to solve problems, to erect syntheses, to embrace the universe in a single view".³⁶

This sentence begins a powerful paragraph, a powerful stand, against

³³Candace Pert, *Molecules of Emotion*, Touchstone, New York, 1999.

³⁴See *A Brief History of Tongue*, 108, for the relevant matrix. The "9" signifies that the communication reaches beyond the matrix of collaboration: see the diagrams on 109, 124.

³⁵'To Omega' brings to mind, perhaps, Chardin's vision of an Omega point. But I have in mind also Aristotle's view of the finest life, and Thomas' view of human happiness, and Lonergan's view of the significance of leisure, and my own view of the radical failure of contemplative traditions East, West, and South.

³⁶*Insight*, 417[442].

commonsense eclecticism. Only a few years ago I began to grasp its significance as a foundational statement, a statement of general categorial orientation relevant to all human inquiry and life, a claim that goes counter to an accepted culture of specialization, a consequence of the fact that organisms live in a habitat but the human organism lives in the universe. Furthermore, in these last few years, the sentence has been further lifted, embraced, molecularly braced in a self-mediation - like a luminous watch³⁷ - by work that merges with and transposes the efforts of Candace Pert. And now I read, with fresh strange eyes, the last paragraph of my effort of 1989:

'The third stage of global meaning, with its mutual self-mediation of an academic presence, is a distant probability, needing pain-filled solitary reaching towards a hearing of hearing,³⁸ a touching of touching, 'in the far ear'³⁹, 'sanscreed'⁴⁰, making luminously present - in focal darkness - our bloodwashed bloodstream. It is a new audacity, a new hapticity, to which we must aspire, for which we must pray.'⁴¹

This fresh strangeness is remote from you, something for your late adulthood, part of the quest for the Black Tower - to be spoken of later - that shall throw its

³⁷The implicit reference here is to Lonergan's discussion of the mediation of Christ in prayer, where he moves up through analogy with the workings of a watch.

³⁸"Merced Mulde" "Yssel that the limmat?" (*Finnegans Wake*, 212, line 26; 198, line 13). The strange reduplicative process is the central drive and fantasy of this *Cantower*.

³⁹See John Bishop, *Joyce's Book of the Dark: Finnegans Wake*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1986, 343-46.

⁴⁰*Finnegans Wake*, 215, line 26.

⁴¹P. McShane, *Process. Introducing Themselves to Young (Christian) Minders*, 1989, 162-3. Available, of course, on this Website. The notes internal to this passage are from the original.

illuminating shadow over the third stage of meaning".⁴²

Now that, I think, deserved another reading, another typing! Might it type-caste the future? I would like to think so.

It seems to be a doctrine about theoretical understanding but it is not merely that. It points to a deep cultural shift. I could put that shift in terms of the transposition of the culture of Zen, but perhaps it is best to keep it in the familiar zone of Christian contemplation. Then you should, alas, go ramble to and in *Cantower XXI*, which corresponds to the Epilogue ("chapter 21") of *Insight*: its title "Epilodge". Briefly, there is a need to institutionalize, make operative and mood-acceptable as normal, the pattern of kataphatic contemplation in Christian life. I am not here speaking against mystic bents of negative orientation - though they need the context of which I write here in order to be decisively luminous! - I am speaking about a desperate Christian need. But, go read that *Cantower* yourself, and self-assemble in its regard. I am claiming that Aristotle's point about the theoretic life ties in with axiality, with emergent probability, with new possibilities of leisure and common meaning etc etc etc. But in its simpler form I point to a need to change our chats with God, our hymns to God, become adult enough to be interested in the whos we speak to and the what we speak to them about (about about), while paradoxically bone-cherishing the sense of the Soundless Melody-Makers.⁴³

Policy [6] is a key piece of a humanism that yet remains triply-tense.⁴⁴ It is the topic of the third chapter of *Pastkeynes Pastmodern Economics: A Fresh Pragmatism*. It is the matter of the Ignatian slogan that asks us to behave like atheists. It meshes with

⁴²The quotation is from pages 7-8 of *Cantower IV*, "Molecules of Description and Explanation".

⁴³"Song of the Adorable" is the title of a relevant context, section 4 of chapter 5 of *Process. Introducing Themselves to Young (Christian) Minders*.

⁴⁴*Insight*, 727-9[748-750].

emergent probability and with cunning efficiency. "Aim low", in both the sense of theory and the sense of morality. How do we get the show on the roll? There is the principle of embarrassment: again, a blossom from a sentence in *Method*,⁴⁵ that I only read seriously in the past few of years. How do we get the show on the road? By identifying that every area of culture is gasping for a division of labour. I am not going to enlarge on it phylogenetically here, and its ontogenetic aspect will occupy us in the final section on Self-assembly. But it is no harm in reminding you of the two-pronged strategy that I recommended in that chapter of *Pastkeynes*. It can be taken as a minimalist foundations: (1) promote the division of labour, so that the discipline gets, so to speak, "on track" - even if only in a red-coloured fashion. (2) aim low regarding the transcendentals, thus pushing the minimalist compact idea "be sensible".⁴⁶

The final Principle, [7]. Again, a book is needed. It has many aspects, and perhaps I can best cut my remarks down to page size by connecting it with the frontispiece quotation from Aristotle in *Insight*. "the faculty of thinking thinks the forms in the images". What a magnificent shot in the dark!⁴⁷ I am beginning to make sense of it. What sense do you make of it? Let me be shocking by pointing to two mis-leaders in the matter: Bernard Lonergan and Frederick Crowe. Wow! Have I got your attention? And what do you mean by 'got' and 'attention'?

Let's take 'got'. How about Lonergan's slogan about 'getting' a thorough understanding of understanding"? I have no doubt that what Lonergan had 'got' when he wrote that at 45 is way beyond me as I struggle in my early seventies. Still, could he

⁴⁵No harm in repeating it I suppose: "Doctrines that are embarrassing will not be mentioned in polite company" (*Method in Theology*, 299).

⁴⁶'Sensible' is a word that I coined in the past decade to give an integral pointer to human questing.

⁴⁷I recall Lonergan's remark, "You just have to admire Aristotle". My translation of the remark, in a relevant context, Appendix B, "The Experience of Science", *Phenomenology and Logic*, 325, note 4.

not have found a more fantastically realistic slogan, like “if you get a serious glimmer of glimmers you get then....”?⁴⁸ Of course, Lonergan knew what he meant by “thorough”: he ends the book talking about “the error of those that forget man to be potency in the realm of intelligence”; he ends chapter 19 by talking of critical method cutting us down to size. Still, if tuckoo is not remembering, like Proust, the taste of nescience, he or she may all too easily be dragged down by the colours and the rhythms of description.⁴⁹ Are not some of his disciples dressed in that drag, constitutional monarchs⁵⁰ pouting over the sweat of science?

My disagreement with Fr. Crowe is, I think, more than verbal. We turn from ‘got’ to ‘attention’. What do you mean by “attention”? Well, we all know the first transcendental: be attentive.

We do not.

I have disagreed with Fr. Crowe since the late 1960s regarding what I may call the accessibility of human meaning. Because we are human does not mean that we are somehow more competent in reaching explanation of human reality than we are in reaching explanation in physics or zoology. I recall vividly my last disagreement with Crowe, in a seminar at Regis College in 1998. Our disagreement was about the meaning of “attention”. What is it to attend? To understand human attention is to tackle its physics and chemistry and botany and zoology. To miss that point is to settle for an old-style philosophy that is disdained by those who labour over the lower aggregates involved in attending or in deficit-attention. Yet that old-style philosophy seems

⁴⁸Later interpretation, I suspect, will show a need to open up a parallel question with regard to Aristotle and Aquinas. You may get some light on this by reflecting on my dealings with Archimedes’ *On Floating Bodies* in *Cantower XXVII*.

⁴⁹*Cantower XXIII*, “Redoubt Describing” reflects on the problems of rich, artistic and sophisticated description.

⁵⁰Lonergan comments on the various attitudes of the Queen of Sciences in *Phenomenology and Logic* 126-7, 130.

prevalent in much of the work of Lonergan's disciples, debating such things as the interplay of intelligence and emotion.⁵¹ Still, here surely is a zone where *solvitur ambulando* will apply: the sciences dealing with images and feelings push on. Aristotle's interest-laden "phantasms" dance on a chemistry of thinking.

And - to swing once again back to our little task of reading page 250 of *Method* - that chemistry belongs with the "events" of line 2.

41.5 Self-Assembly

And that chemistry belongs to the "events" of your conversations. But I figured out finally this morning that there is where I should end my rambles regarding our struggle. There? *Dasein* stuff? The problem of axial *bavardage quotidien*? But, practically speaking, I am talking about the final section to be written by me when I finish this section, the section of *Cantower XL* entitled "*Lack in the Beingstalk*". There you can find my final nudging about the group problem in its existential, and perhaps very hidden, reach beyond the pleasant brutality of present norms of academic talk. But in the present "end" section I wish to hold back from such larger and deeper issues in an odd realism about this "far out" stuff.

And it is far out. At an earlier stage in my planning of this last section I was aiming to heighten the effort and the tension by going back to an effort of almost thirty years ago, and lifting it up up up imaged perhaps in the Windhover battling the big wind⁵², or perhaps in Philip Larkin's "Now I'll be fine, / like a sunflower".⁵³ That earlier

⁵¹The discussion around note 55 of "Our Journaling Lonelinesses: A Response", *Journal of Macrodynamical Analysis*, 3(2003) is relevant here, indeed the article gives a context for our efforts. However, the references at the end of the note bring out the problem and it is as well to give them here. I refer to two articles in *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 53 (2002): Dylan Evans, "The Search Hypothesis of Emotions", 497-509; Louis C. Charland "The Natural Kinds States of Emotions" 511-537.

⁵²I refer to Hopkin's Poem, *The Windhover.*, considered in some detail in the Editorial Conclusion to *Music That Is Soundless. A Fine Way for the Lonely Bud A, Axial*

effort was the Epilogue of *The Shaping of the Foundations*, “Authentic Subjectivity and International Growth”, where I first located us in our creative entrapment between the lower and the upper grounds of loneliness. Located, locate? The location invites, heart-seethings, its own sunflower wind-buffed growth: but now I am twisting up the beingstalk of that other section, still to be written, of the previous *Cantower*.

Back then to the humdrum of self-assembly and my optimism about the humdrum of your response.

First, then, do I surprise you by taking a stand on optimism? The “events” of our reading together, however humdrum, are still humdrum events that give rise to expression, however humdrum. We have made page 250, or section 5 of the chapter on Dialectic, a topic, a topic to write homely about about about.

The homeliness may be minimal, but that is enough for my optimism. I have asked you for your impression of SOFD.⁵⁴ Even if only a few of you expressed that impression, with a willingness to let it appear in volume 5 of *Journal of Macrodynamic Analysis*, and to let it be commented on, then, yes, we will have done something worth doing badly, or not so badly, or extremely well. Let’s take it in steps.⁵⁵

To the question, What is your impression of SOFD?, your answer need only be a commonsense response on a perusal of the section. “It looks like a good plan, strategy”.

Press, 2004.

⁵³I quote from his poem, “The Dead”. A context for all this, pointing towards that final flight of *Lack in the Beingstalk*, is the chapter by Seamus Heaney, “Joy or Night: Last Things in the Poetry of W.B. Yeats and Philip Larkin”, pp. 146-63 of *The Redress of Poetry*, Farrar Straus and Giroux, New York, 1995. But of course you might prefer images from your own Australian Patrick White: the mad lady in *The Aunt’s Story*, or Stan Parker in *The Tree of Man*, chemistries craving the cosmos.

⁵⁴A handy way of talking about our problem, the Structure OF Dialectic and the hardware of SOFD-ware, **Skipped Over For Decades**. Not any more, Mates!

⁵⁵The group will come up with far more steps. I am simply giving an indication of some modest directions, realizable goals.

“It seems too far out for busy people in theology”. Notice that the second response, however brief, takes a position: the busy people should not be distracted or imposed upon. But perhaps, someone might respond, the busy people should not be so busy, or too busy for this business. There is here the making of a commonsense discussion that is at least humdrum: a buzz. And this much, without taking into account anything of the suggestions that I made in these three *Cantowers*.

But we might get further, following Tom Halloran’s suggestions. Some of us might try out, summarily, privately, the strategy of SOFD on our own lives. Does it seem useful? Etc.

Or some might try it out in relation to that weird Toronto family I wrote about⁵⁶, or their own family trapped in stale patterns of living or holiday-making. Does it seem useful: better than just muddling along? Or some might do something like I did with a decade of *Theological Studies* in *CantowerXXXV*: review some other journal, or annual conference, or whatever - Lonerganesque or not, philosophy etc or not - and see how SOFD might effect the product. Or some might go further to tackle a whole history of a zone, sketching out, however badly, how SOFD might shape up the area. And note that all this can be done without venturing into the strange problems raised by McShane, about axially, about neglect of theory, about about about about.

But let me point a little further. Above I noted the taking of a position⁵⁷ regarding busy people or business. Tie this in with the idea of “shaping up the area”, a shaping up in readiness for the key twist of SOFD. The key twist carries the respondent beyond commonsense comment and response to “being operated on”.⁵⁸ I find it useful, in all

⁵⁶See *A Brief History of Tongue*, 100-104 or *Economics For Everyone*, 149-52.

⁵⁷I regularly use the word *position* in a looser sense than Lonergan. His precision makes it awkward to write easily: but I obviously accept his distinction.

⁵⁸*Method in Theology*, 249, 2nd last line. Connect with “operating from” and “operates on” of p. 250 (lines 17, 25).

this, to think in terms of a book (however short... even a one-liner) written by each investigator, each participant. There are chapters labeled from A to Z. The last two chapters are the “crucial experiment”, the operating theatre. From reading page 250 one can come up with various suggestions about these two chapters: e.g. Y: What do I think is progress; Z: what do I think are the grounds of that progress, any progress.

Now to get the discomfiting “further objectification of horizon”⁵⁹ properly out into the open one has to pause over that loose word “think”. I am taking a stand. So it is not really “think” but.... ? “live to promote”? Tuckoo took off on a trail and a tale, and the stand has a narrative.

It is important to pause over the phrase “live to promote”, although we have been round about it before: one can promote performance by applauding. But one needs vigilance here - and an honest friend is useful. Return to the paragraph that opens with the Tomega Principle and soak in what I mean. “Emphatically it would not discourage”⁶⁰ has some horrid shades of meaning.

But back to our Group Tearapart: might we have got as far as Y and Z in some form? Then we each - or those who ventured that far - have supplied “a book” to be read by all: we have arrived at that final sentence of SOFD. We now face all the books, including our own⁶¹, struggling to come up with a new Y and a new Z. **We:** I may or

⁵⁹*Method in Theology*, 250, line 24.

⁶⁰*Insight*, 417[442].

⁶¹This concluding section aims at SOFT as opposed to SOFD practicality, but you all may rise to great heights here, to glimpse Self-Assembly at new levels of subtlety. It can go way beyond all the conventions of present therapy and past literature. The narrative of one’s life, or our history, can be turned in a triple ‘about’. Each of us is “about” the reach for being and becoming, but the root “about”, spontaneously operative and partially thematized, changes with each horizon shift. So, there is a sequence of “abouts” - what business I am about, Father’s or otherwise - to be sifted by the about-turn of a discernment of quasi-roots and routes, taken or not taken. The untapped root, the foundational reality of energy-exigence, roots about in the sequence of self-systems that hazarded the reality and the narrative of a cosmic life, reaching for

may not be included; Lonergan may or may not be included. Indeed, at a first go-round you might ignore both the “inserted page” from *Method*, (the extract from 286-7) and suggestions from these three *Cantowers*, or from any other similar source. Of course, while you can dodge McShane’s odd views on “events”, stages of meaning, axiality, etc, you cannot dodge Lonergan. He took a stand on, lived to promote, that page, the crowning point of his work on *Method in Theology*.

the about-turn that will meet tomorrow’s dawn.