

Locating Teresa of Avila

The task of locating Teresa of Avila, taken in full seriousness, ferments forward into the full challenge of sublating the enterprise of chapter 17 of *Insight* into a heuristics of what I symbolize as $\{M(W_3)^{\theta\Phi T}\}^4$.¹ There is the much smaller task that I can share more easily with a general audience: solving the puzzle expressed by me in various ways over the decades.² Why is it that prayerful people take the climb expressed by *The Interior Castle* as a serious commitment of perhaps a decade or a life, yet the task I have been hovering over for sixty years, which I recently expressed under the title *The Interior Lighthouse*, as somehow not at all as serious, not really worthy of a parallel dedication?³ Have you a solution to this puzzle? Is your solution even, perhaps, a life style?

It seems useful to give a general vague image of the contemplative life as a spectrum of poises ranging from one extreme that I loosely call *The Interior Castle* to the extreme titled *The Interior Lighthouse*. At one extreme there is a full quiet of being unquestioningly in a divine presence: at the other there is a luminous self-attention in that divine presence that indeed is luminous regarding that divine presence not being an object but a weave of finite and infinite subjects that constitutes all beings in a radically mysterious oneness.

That last 56-word sentence of mine has the peculiarity that it is somehow not comprehensible to one living, even in a thin-air high form, in either extreme. Yet there is a comprehension of it and the two previous sentences in the extreme of *The Interior Lighthouse* that massively eludes those in the poise of *The Interior Castle*.

¹ A discomfiting distant heuristic. See [Journal of Macrodynamic Analysis](#) (2018) for my article “Method in Theology: From $[1 + 1/n]^n$ to $\{M(W_3)^{\theta\Phi T}\}^4$ ”.

² I began work on the character of intellectual growth in the in the later 1950s. Dense expressions of my findings over the years are, e.g., the beginning of chapter two of [Process: Introducing Themselves to Young \(Christian\) Minders](#) and pages 161–63 of [Lack in the Beingstalk: A Giants Causeway](#), (Axial Publishing, 2006).

³ I simply repeat here, on the task of kataphatic climbing, note 41 of my first article in *Divyadaan* 30/1 (2019): [HOW 13](#), “The Interior Lighthouse” (available at: <http://www.philipmcschane.org/how>) introduced the topic, *Interior Lighthouse*, under that title. [Disputing Quests 12](#), “The Interior Lighthouse II” continued the reflection, as did [Disputing Quests 13](#), “The Interior Lighthouse Zero” (available at: <http://www.philipmcschane.org/disputing-quests>). Those essays were followed by [Interpretation 4](#), “The Interior Lighthouse III,” [Interpretation 16](#), “The Interior Lighthouse IV: Twenty Seventh Lea,” and [Interpretation 17](#), “The Interior Lighthouse V: Interpreting God” (available at: <http://www.philipmcschane.org/interpretation>). The topic, however, goes back to [Process: Introducing Themselves to Young \(Christian\) Minders](#) (1989, available at: <http://www.philipmcschane.org/website-books>) and the broad challenge is made explicit in the five essays, [Prehumous 4–8](#), on “Foundational Prayer” (available at: <http://www.philipmcschane.org/prehumous>). It is the heart of the matter in my recent book, *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History*. The drive of that series was towards an appreciation of the need for a contemplative ingestion of *Insight* if we are to arrive at a sub-population competent “Tower-wise” “to be a resolute and effective intervention in the historical process” (*Phenomenology and Logic*, 306).

To whom, then, am I writing in a spectrum of bio-levels of communication and comprehensibility, as I putter and stutter along in my strange Lighthouse height? Certainly—and is this not shockingly offensive?—I am not writing to the likes of Teresa of Avila. I am writing in a room, an overarching situation room, of self-knowledge. And I am not writing to Peter Tyler. Indeed, I would trample—but brevity is my aim and joy here—on the page and a half that he wrote under the title **The Mansion of Self Knowledge**.⁴ Am I trampling, too, on Teresa of Avila’s meaning? There you have a massively tortuous question that can only be answered in a mature science of the mystical. Think, for example of the puzzle about mystical insights. Are these incommunicable achievements of grace that bypass the human questing of insights in phantasm? Or are they—again I talk of an extreme—not actually shifts in insight but shifts in sensibility, psychic tonalities that help to ground the contemplative in the Truth of Being?

So, focus this puzzle’s possible answers—only perhaps nominally grasped by you: a shock of present self-attentive reading—on Teresa’s words:

Oh, but if it is in that (the room) of self-knowledge! (*U, que si es en el propio conocimiento*). How necessary this room is – see that you understand me – even for those whom the Lord has brought into the very dwelling place where he abides. For never, however exalted the soul may be, is anything else necessary for it, and this it will never be able to neglect even if it desire to do so.

What, might we not ask, is Teresa talking about here? Is it a Spirit-gifted version of the answer to Lonergan’s demand, “one has not only to read *Insight* but also to discover oneself in oneself”?⁵ Or is it an echo of John of the Cross’s “fiestas of the Holy Spirit”?⁶ “As with John, though, Teresa is at pains to use her whole battery of *gustos, regalos, gozos* and *deleites* to convey the experience of the ‘whistling of love stirring breezes’ that refreshes these mansions of the soul.”⁷

Might we not ask? Indeed we might and should, and ask with all the self-willing repentant backing of “nature’s priest,”⁸ as in us, *Æconomically*, “good will wills the order of the universe, and so it wills with that order’s dynamic joy and zeal.”⁹

⁴ In note 7 of *Æconomics 13* I referred first to Peter Tyler, *Teresa of Avila: Doctor of the Soul* (Bloomsbury, 2013) and indicated there that “I intend to return to this faltering book in a later *Æconomics* essay—likely number 16—on the needed science of mysticism.” That remains my aim here, but, in growing Lighthouse luminosity, I have cut my expression down to an increasingly strange suggestiveness. The pages I refer to, titled as indicated above in bold face and without hyphenation of self-knowledge, are pages 162–3. It illustrates, to the wise, the shambling state of such studies.

⁵ *Method in Theology*, 260. This ends a powerful paragraph, the beginning of which you can twist round our present enterprise, Teresa’s enterprise, Lonergan’s enterprise of that paragraph: “such speech, however, is found clear and accurate and explanatory only by those who have done their apprenticeship.” Puzzle over my odd question here: What apprenticeship am I writing about? Is it perhaps the apprenticeship of closing, ontically and phyletically, the existential gap touched on in the final two chapters of CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic*?

⁶ I quote the phrase from Tyler, p. 89.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ CWL 10, *Topics in Education*, 225, top line.

⁹ *Insight*, 722. Repentance is mentioned six times on that page.

What is that all of self-willed repentance? My claim, to be an *Assembly* business in later generations, is that the all lurks in the mysterious symbol that ends my first sentence above: $\{M(W_3)^{\theta\Phi_T}\}^4$.

The issue is to grapple with “understanding the object”¹⁰ of contemplation, which includes its activities adequately. What is that adequacy? It is the adequacy of science properly conceived in the struggle of history’s lonely whats. And that proper conception is itself an ongoing grappling problem.¹¹ But let me not twist and turn further, but rise to a brief pointing about interpreting T and H: whether we are thinking of Teresa and Hildegard, or Thomas and Heidegger. Or Tyler, as he talks in those two pages in his messy pre-scientific fashion, even suggesting about his own complex cautioning identified in those pages to “throw this hermeneutic caution to the wind when reading Teresa as so much of her writing emphasizes the ‘quest for self.’”¹²

The book is—yes I dare say it of this expert—like phlogiston chemistry. Might I sing out “*Frère Pierre ... Dormez-vous?*”

So I come to my concluding point, weaved round [Æcornomics 15](#) yet reaching back to [Æcornomics 3](#), “A Common Quest Manifesto.” My singing and dancing has had no effect, in particular no effect on the reading, the performative reading, of that mad section 3 of *Insight*’s 17th chapter.¹³ What will have effect, slowly slowly, is some few gutsy folk *Assembling* the two texts quoted at notes 77 and 78 of [Æcornomics 3](#). I repeat them here.

[a] The explanatory differentiation of the protean notion of being involves three elements. First, there is the genetic sequence in which insights gradually are accumulated by man. Secondly, there are the dialectic alternatives in which accumulated insights are formulated, with positions inviting further development and counterpositions shifting their ground to avoid the reversal they demand. Thirdly, with the advance of culture and of effective education, there arises the possibility of the differentiation and specialization of modes of expression; and since this development conditions not only the exact communication of insights but also the discoverer’s own grasp of his discovery, since such grasp and its communication intimately are connected with the advance of positions and the reversal of

¹⁰ *Method in Theology*, 156. We have to face the task of coherently weaving this project round a genetics of finitude, a cherishing, for theology, of the layered hopes of the symphony of Jesus. Add the context provided by note 11 below, and by Article 44 (pp. 625–631) of *CWL 9, The Redemption*, “The purpose of the Incarnation.” What is it to be “fused into a single” Explanation? “What, then, is being?” (*Insight*, 665, line 15).

¹¹ We are up against the problem—is it oxymoronic?—of a genetics of a genetic logic of the field in its normal and its larger sense (*CWL 18, Phenomenology and Logic*, 199). Recall the long section in that 18th volume, 121–133, which ends thus: “So much, then, for that second and main question, the main question perhaps of this week. Is Scholasticism to be expressed as an axiomatic system?” (133). Is there a type of logic that holds together, in genetic adjustment, the journey from acorn to oak, from Eve to Eschaton? In what sense does the minding of the pilgrim climb “fuse into a single explanation”? (*Insight*, 610: see note 14).

¹² *Tyler*, 163.

¹³ In [Fuse Zero](#), “A Simple Appeal for Functional Collaboration,” at note 18, I compare *Insight* to Donazetti’s Opera *Lucia di Lammermoor*, mainly because there is the “mad scene” near the end of the Opera which I like to associate with the madness of Lonergan’s treatment of interpretation in section 3 of *Insight* 17. Callas and Southerland did performative justice to the Donizetti Aria: might we seed a singer’s emergence in this century for Lonergan’s tune?

counterpositions, the three elements in the explanatory differentiation of the protean notion of being fuse into a single explanation.¹⁴

[b] One may expect the diligent authors of highly specialized monographs to be somewhat bewildered and dismayed when they find that instead of singly following the bent of their genius, their aptitudes, and their acquired skills, they are to collaborate in the light of common but abstruse principles and to have their results checked by general requirements that envisage simultaneously the totality of results. Still, this is the minor resistance in the field of interpretation and it should cause no greater difficulty in the field of interpretation than its analogue does in physics.¹⁵

The few gutsy folk will struggle initially with *Lonergan's 1833 Overture*, finding or inventing, in the third objectification, the stands taken by the opposition—even when that opposition is “*voraussetzungslos*.”¹⁶ I would note the strategic importance of being clear that the immediate issue is not functional collaboration. It is the challenge “if interpretation is to be a science”¹⁷ faced and positioned affirmatively by Lonergan in *Insight*. The science will take generations to emerge, so that it comes to live and progress and care and engineer in a Tower world of

pure formulations. They proceed from the immanent sources of meaning to determine differentiations of the protean notion of being. Such differentiations may be either the contents of single judgments or the contexts constituted by more or less coherent aggregates of judgments. In either case they are pure formulations if they proceed from an interpreter that grasps the universal viewpoint and if they are addressed to an audience that similarly grasps the universal viewpoint.¹⁸

On the way, the collaborative needs talked about in [Æcornomics 3](#) will emerge and be faced and phased into an eschatological vortex. Jacques and Jill, Pierre and Nanette,¹⁹ shall dance in a

¹⁴ *Insight*, 609–10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 604.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 600. I would note that the gutsy folk are also, certainly in the seeding process, pretty but prettily *voraussetzungslos*. They cling to images such as my sequence W_i (see [Prehumus 2](#), “Metagrams and Metaphysics”) and the images cling controllingly to their neurodynamics to give them a depth of *voraussetzung*. Might it help to tune beginners psychically, shifting the tonality of their struggle away from myths towards mysteries, by adding the odd claim, “to such images, then, let us give the name of mysteries.” (*Insight*, 571). Is there not, for example, something quite *InWithTo* mysterious—an exigence for the Eschaton’s *InWithIn*—about W_3 , “Double You Three,” and the explanatory reach beyond the mission-focused section 6 of CWL 12, *The Triune God: Systematics*, lurking in the associated prayer: “Double You Three in me, in all, Claspings, Cherishing, Cauling, Craving, Christing”?

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 587.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 602. This, I hope, gloriously baffles you. Might you find yourself thinking of a tower community in heuristic control of the situations gripped by single judgments or by aggregates of judgments? We are back at, or forward to, the challenge of note 1 above.

¹⁹ I am recalling the musical *No No Nanette* introduced in [Æcornomics 3](#), from which my end-chorus of this essay comes.

world where the fundamental pilgrim “existential gap”²⁰ is luminously and effectively identified and “the earth and every common sight take on the glory and the freshness of a dream.”²¹

Take a little one-step, two-step, three-step.
Come a little closer, please,
like a rose that blows in every breeze.
Take a little one-step, two-step, three-step,
then a little dip, like this.
Here’s a step we can’t afford to miss!

²⁰ I point here first to the particular existential gap dealt with by Lonergan in the final two chapters of *Phenomenology and Logic*. One can move to the broader identification—so far ineffective, awaiting the X of Cosmopolis—of the gap of general bias in chapter 7 of *Insight*. I have referred here and there to the neat initial identification that emerges by brooding on lines 11, 15, and 22 of *Insight* 498.

²¹ *Insight*, 556.