

Field Nocturnes 10

Noise-Infolding

“The struggle is to take note of the turns of our own interest and thinking as we read and think about hearing. Do you find yourself thinking, with the text-book writer, in a way that subtly denies the organic forms and has recourse to mythic information-passing?

I invite slow brooding moving here, and so cut off my comments, only asking you to read a little more of whatever text you have on hearing, and find yourself thinking, find your thinking in the superego of its cultural performance. My suspicion is that you will find that thinking muddled. There is one tendency that holds to a commonsense view that, yes, you know what hearing is.¹ But what then is the stuff in the text about, the chemistry and topology of sub-structures? Is it an explaining away? So you find a mixed general bias in your thinking. Or do you, in the hour or two after this question mark? “²

I return here, from the apparent distraction of the second half of the previous nocturne, to the concluding remarks of the first section there. The distraction is only apparent of course: I am trying to hold us in the embrace - an unpleasant clutch - of the an axial cultural crisis. Part of that unpleasantness bubbles up in your psyche as you read the last two sentences of the quotation: it there such a finding of bias? And did you pause, an hour or two?

¹*Insight* 505[528]. “the substitution of a pseudometaphysical mythmaking for scientific inquiry”. Bring the possibility of such mythic thinking to bear on the reading of the word hearing in the fourth last line of page 6 of *Method in Theology*. Did you, perhaps, assume that you knew what he was talking about?

²I am quoting the concluding sentences of the first section of the previous essay, *Field Nocturne 9*.

1. To Whom Am I Writing?

This was and is my question as I move forward now. In the weeks between writing *Field Nocturne 9* and beginning the present one I have written *Field Nocturne 13*, on “Horse Sense”, and another Nocturne, numbered then *Field Nocturne 20*, “Self-Appropriating the Inner Parts”, both giving larger contexts, both related to a Conference to be held in Halifax at the end of May, 2008.³ Here my question regards the small-scale withdrawal carried by the invitation to pause. In *Nocturne 9* you may well have slipped past that invitation, but are you tempted to take it seriously now, herenow, or definitely soon? Are you going to resist the temptation, or are you going to risk a little zen-ken-ven madness? If you thus risk, then I am writing to you. I think now of various Zen stories, most especially of the Zen of archery, when a patient initiate embrace the bow for five years without handling an arrow. What is it to shoot an arrow? First, embrace autonomously the bow. What is it to infold a noise? I wish now that some few of you would embrace the infolding with a Ven madness - but at least to nurse some fantasy about the embrace. It is to be the embrace of the Standard Model of the next century, but that Tower embrace requires the emergence, in these 21st century decades, of a semi-luminous self-embracing of the third form of generalized empirical method by some few.⁴

³I left the text as it was here, when I came to take up the task again. There was a question bubbling up, as it does here, of the context of this work and of the degree of withdrawal need to push forward. FN 13 became FN 11 and FN 20 became FN 12.. I will make clear what was and is going on at the end of this short essay.

⁴*Joistings 21*, “Research, Communications, Stages of Method”, and *Joistings 22*, “Reviewing Mathews’ *Loneragan’s Quest*, and Ours”, treat of the four meanings of generalized empirical method. The essay *Field Nocturnes CanTower 44*, one of a new later series, but already posted on the Website, locates the effective flowering of the third mode of generalized empirical method as being within a fourth stage of meaning.

2. Self-study of the hearing organism

Think of you and me now reading that first paragraph of *Insight* with the apparently trivial question, “What is my hearing?” heart-held. I have my text, **Neuroscience**, and you too have it, or some equivalent. You are poised with me, even if only in a toe-dipping stance guarding and regarding the ocean of being, anticipating the terror of the **comeabout**. The toe-dipping is perhaps a reluctant and uneasy step away from the bloodstream cultural presence of. “the substitution of a pseudo-metaphysical mythmaking for scientific inquiry.”⁵ Our odd title, “Noise Infolding”, is in itself a counter to that mythmaking, opening our questioning to strange larger reach. The word infolding, so to speak, keeps our toe in the ocean of being, linking our thinking to energy’s paradoxically zeal. Might I, do I, capture the cosmic vibrations through my bilateral pair of hear-shells?

Do you find yourself herenow tinged and singed by the mood of GEM3: eyes in diagrams, diagrams in eyes, my eroplans? Perhaps not yet, but let us aim gently at getting there.

3. The Full Context: the Mind-Body Problem and Solution

I halted this essay there, at the end of April 2008, since there was the conference in Halifax to prepare for, beginning on May 30th. There seems no harm in putting in here the report of that conference which the organizer, J.R.Henman, sent to the Lonergan Newsletter of September 2008:

“In an effort to focus on one of Lonergan’s Leading Ideas - functional specialization - a Halifax Lonergan Conference was held at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax from May

⁵ *Insight* 505[528]. The dominant culture of present Lonerganism, for which enriched description merits cherishing beyond seemingly dull domains of “mere” explanation. I tackled the problem of rich description and its menace in **Cantower XXIII**, “Redoubt Description”, an essay used as a sort of undertow for the book *Lonergan’s Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*, which is available on the Website.

30th to June 4th, 2008 in commemoration of Lonergan's Halifax Lectures in 1958 on *INSIGHT*. The conference format consisted of brief presentations of people's teaching and research, and summaries of pre-conference read papers submitted by participants, bracketed by McShane's lectures and group seminars on the role and need of functional collaboration. The participants, involved in various pursuits ranging from mathematics to psychology, came together in pursuit of support, direction, and collaboration. The various presentations highlighted the ongoing need for emphasis on theoretic education, functional collaboration as well as a mood of blunt honesty expressed as not understanding rather than a proliferation of a truncated misunderstanding of Lonergan's Leading Ideas."

The Conference resulted in the beginning of fresh conversations in Lonergan studies, the result perhaps of both the relaxed pace and of my insistence that papers not be read at one another. The benefits are emerging through various collaborations, increasingly evident now, as the month of July moves forward: [more] about this here and there as we go along, but especially in Part One of *Field Nocturne 13*, with the odd sub-title, "A More or Less Clear Discontinuity". What discontinuity am I writing about? The discontinuity is relates to what each of us thinks initially of the meaning of the title of that same *Field Nocturne 13*: "The Mind-Body Problem and Solution". But, I hope that it is to some degree obvious that we are, all along here, dealing with the reality of mind-body.

The Conference in Halifax was followed by my attendance at the usual Lonergan Workshop in Boston, where further conversations occurred relating both to the mood of the Halifax gathering and to the content of the Workshop papers. During these weeks I was sketching what was to follow the Field Nocturnes. They were to end at number 41, as the Cantowers did, in order that a final integral series might appear, each essay conveniently titled *Field Nocturnes CanTower* - the Capital T pointing to the deeper project of the Tower of Able. This lasts series is intended to move forward to *Field Nocturnes CanTower 117*, thus fulfilling the promise of 117 Cantowers, a bow to Ezra

Pound and his 117 Cantos. I sketched the first two of this next series, numbers 42 and 43, prior to traveling to Boston but after the Boston Workshop there is a deviation that needs mention, since it adds a context to the continuation of the Field Nocturne series. Bear with me.

Two essays were written at this stage belonging to the later series, titled Field Nocturnes CanTower 44 and 45. They are already posted on the Website, so may well be read as providing a fuller context for the series Field Nocturnes that I now continue with Field Nocturne 13. But what of Field Nocturne 11, "Horse-Sense", and Field Nocturne 12, "Self-Appropriating the Inner Parts"? These had been already written prior to the Halifax Conference, indeed prior to the halt at the end of April. They were numbered, respectively, 13 and 20. I give this catalogue of events so that the expansion of meaning that occurred in me could be better shared with readers. That sharing, of course, is a curious reality, since it brings up those strange topics of growth and adult growth. Young readers - say under fifty - do not share that expanding meaning except in a heuristic and inspirational sense. The point is made obscurely clear by my recalling my first efforts at indicating the dynamics of adult growth.⁶ How might I, of July 12th in my 77th year, share with me, of April 29th - were I magically to get my younger self into class - the meaning now reached? I could not. Yes, I could shorten the mind-body journey with fresh twists of words and images (that is the task of generations generating generations⁷), but there is no magic way of sharing the later vision with the younger me. I have accelerated away from that younger me, as you too may do with

⁶That first effort, luminous then and increasing so over the past six years, forms the pages titled *BACCHUSPIECE* at the end of *Lack in the Beingstalk. A Giants Causeway*, written before 2002, but not published in Axial Press, until 2007. Later comments on the same challenge norm are in *Eldorede 4*, "Meaning-Growing".

⁷I am recalling here the conclusion of Quodlibet 8, "The Dialectic of My Town, *Ma Vlast*", which is an invitation to the reader to do walkabout in their own town, their own neighborhood, in order the generate themselves as generator.

your younger self, holding to a newly-discovered old normativity,⁸ making yourself of today a stranger to yourself of last week. And with the mention of that massive unacknowledged problem of being human I halt here abruptly.

⁸In the periods of compact consciousness there were elders respected for what they meant. The old lady, telling the tale of the tribe in the fading evening light was listened to, and would be listened to again another evening, Proustwise.