

Joistings 27

“In the Twenty Seventh Place”

This final *Joistings* is a follow-up on *Joistings 23*, which is an invitation to follow-up on Lonergan’s reachings in Trinitarian theology. By follow-up I mean that prayerful puzzling that may be solemnly called kataphatic theology.¹ The central question of such puzzling was given at the conclusion of the first section of that previous *Joistings*: Who are These Three who sing me and sing with me, a “Song of the Adorable”²?

The title has multiple references. It recalls my first venture into publishing on the topic of These Three. It was an article for *Theological Studies* of 1962 whose take-off point was the 27th question of Thomas’ *Summa Theologica*, “The Hypothesis of Intelligible Emanations in God”, and that article still remains a good starting point for the central question. That hypothesis fits nicely into the context of Lonergan’s effort to sketch the climb to understanding God: I am thinking of the sketch of section 9 of chapter 19 of *Insight*. The sketch ends in the 26th place. Then there are the reachings of Lonergan’s 20th chapter of *Insight* which has 31 places in its climb. “In the 27th place” there adds a further context emphasizing that our desire is molecular, the fermenting forward of organic desire towards embracing the universe.

That embracing is a life-work, a possibility of a growth of cherishing whose rate of enrichment is equal to its present achievement. This is the remarkable claim that you might think of in relation to Lonergan’s comment on theology in his fiftieth year, quoted below at note 7. That life-work, of course, only begins in the life-state of our

¹“If there is to be an affirmative or kataphatic, as well as a negative or apophatic, theology, there must be confronted the question whether God is an object” *Method in Theology*, 341. The confronting is the climb of *Insight*.

²See [on the website www.philipmeshane.ca] *Process: Introducing Themselves to Young (Christian) Minds*, chapter 1 section 4, “Bhagavad Gita: Song of the Adorable” and section 4 of chapter 5: “Song of the Adorable”.

global pilgrimage. What of the full blossoming? There has not been enough thinking about it, not enough writing about it. Yes, it is in a glass dark, but there is the oddity of understanding's glimmer-focusing of that darkness.

So, our puzzling opens out even as I wish to close off.

In Joisting 23 I mentioned, as one element of that closing, the effort to finish the book *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*, the title of which I have recently considered changing to *Finitude's Glorious Incompleteness: Structuring Cosmic Enlightenment*. So, luck has it that my wish to close off here, at the end of my 75th year, coincides with the completion of the final chapter of that book. And that completion, in its 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th points, is neatly poised as an incompleteness: pointing, I would suggest, to three unwritten books. Is not that a nice way to halt?

Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry:

Chapter 14. "Communications: An Outreach to Lonergan Students", the final sections:

10. Phenomenology Again and A Gain

"Out of history we have come
With great hatred and little room"³

That final chapter of *ChrISt in History* is certainly a natural follow-up to the previous section. But there are others, some written, some unwritten, some beyond me but bubbling up in you of this new millennium. There is the earlier written push of *Lack in the Beingstalk*, with its central attention on Husserl's contribution to the Calculus of Variation as related to a marvelous analogue to the deeper calculus of variation that, in

³From the tenth song of Sinead O'Connor's *Faith and Courage* CD.

spite of local hates, is to springtime its Way into a Global sisterhood and fellowship of history, into a larger *Lebensraum*, a healing room.⁴

11. The Fundamental Incompleteness Theorem

“Made my heart so sore
I just couldn’t think any more”⁵

I have had this problem before, of course, and a previous answer might will be meshed in here, the answer of the final chapter of *Process: Introducing themselves to Young (Christian) Minders*, a book written in peculiar isolation in Oxford 1988-89. There, the answer was to wind together an italicized climb beyond present dreams and screams with a discomfoting “advance” back through the early chapters of *Insight* that asked for a return to, a re-turning of, the first page of the first chapter of *Insight*.⁶

⁴So ends the first of four quite evidently incomplete reflections, symbolic of the incompleteness of this book, yet with hopefilled symbolism. That, indeed is the meaning of the fuller parallel work “of conclusion” to which these four short reflections also belong, *Loneragan’s Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry* and a hopefilled symbolism there is the incomplete list of seven metagrams, W_i , distributed throughout this book, metagrams that control our slippings into rich description below the demands of the two canons of explanation. Perhaps the best of my analogies regarding the history and future of the healing *Raum* of hedics, is the paralleling of “The Calculus of Variation” in physics with “The Calculus of Variation” of hedics, done in chapter 4 of *Lack in the Beingstalk*, Neither Husserl scholars not Loneragan students pay much attention to Husserl’s push forward, described there, in the company of the great Berlin mathematicians: that locates my analogy as quite futuristic as well as fantastic. So perhaps you might at first nudge your fantasy more gently with a comparison of Plato’s planning of the running of a city with my take on Loneragan’s planning of the running of the globe (see the end two notes of the Introduction to *Loneragan’s Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*). The issue is the same as that of the frontispiece. And this ends the first of four footnotes to our four end-sections. (The other three notes are notes 7, 10 and 13 below.)

⁵From the eleventh song of Sinead O’Connor’s *Faith and Courage* CD.

⁶This re-turning is related to the project of *Cantowers 27-31*, which we have considered at various levels previously. The 5 Cantowers parallel the first 5 chapters of *Insight* but also the

But if I was to push forward freshly here towards an Incompleteness Theorem, one that would sublimate the achievements of Goedel and Fermat-Wiles, a sublimation that would make hearts sore and soar, it would pivot on what I might consider a final theorem of *Insight*, contextualizing the effort of that book, a theorem presented by Lonergan in the summer of 1954.

"The Method in theology is coming into perspective. For the Trinity: Imago Dei in homine and proceed to the limit as in evaluating $[1 + 1/n]^n$ as n approaches infinity. For the rest: ordo universi. From the viewpoint of theology, it is a manifold of unities developing in relation to one another and in relation to God."⁷

first 5 chapters of Feynman's 3-volume *Lectures on Physics*, so that the emphasis is on the shift from doctrinal reading - like reading about mountain climbing - to climbing reading. This is a key challenge of these next generations, a challenging of descriptive contentment. I would recall here another page turning, from the word *assembly* of page 249 of *Method* to the word *includes* at the top of page 250. (On that precise turning, see SOFDAWARE 4, "Care: from Name to *Nomos*"). On *includes* see in particular the quotation from Le Carre in note 10 below, with its reference to chapter 6 of *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*, on economics. Page 250 is the crisis page for the future of theology and philosophy and the particular pointing here is to the fact that the foundational person without a thematic economic position is a fraud. For fuller reflections on the crisis one needs the mountain climbing of the 200 pages regarding that single page 250 that is SOFAWARE 1-8 and *Quodlibets* 1-12.

⁷Letter of Lonergan to Fr. Crowe, May 1954. I doubt if Crowe had much idea what Lonergan was talking about. Do you? So, we are at our second note in our third-last end section. Back then, or forward, to the come-about text of the frontispiece, repeated more than once. Keep it, and the quotation above, as best you can "in your intellectual paws" (PL, 357) and consider that only in this context is a serious thinker in a **position** (take the word seriously!) to push on to ask in what way is the human spirit spirit? That is where Lonergan places the question of **the spiritual**. In *Lack in the Beingstalk*, (see note 105 of chapter 4 and notes 87 and 94 of chapter 3), I have noted the difficulty of that question. One does not skip through *Insight* to find a short proof for the immortality of the soul; the human group climbs towards that self-explanation with massive slowness, ontogenetically and phylogenetically. *Insight* must be read in later millennia with all the climbing subtlety of the third and fourth definitions of generalized empirical method (see sections 2 and 3 of chapter 14 of *Lonergan's Standard of Effective Global Inquiry*). This throws (when done!) magnificent light both on the significance of the lift of global supernaturality and on the stumblings and rumblings of both Aquinas and Lonergan in the area of the goings-on [literally] of the genetic reaching of the posthumous spirit. But perhaps it would be easier to contemplate an earlier central difficulty, one manifested by the muddles on truth of the views of phenomenology and logic presented in the book of that name (PL).

12. Divergent Convergence on Encouraging Tolerance

“But the great goddess
Has us blessed”⁸

“A manifold of unities developing in relation to one another and in relation to God,” a development blossoming in luminous spiraling foundational tolerance, a Gaia blessing that would remove from global “action the widespread impression of complacent irrelevance and futility.”⁹ “Song becomes a more personal lyric and the cosmic whole summons philosophy to venture on its speculative way.”¹⁰

Lonergan’s stand is The Position, but like scholasticism in its use of axioms, he does not push for an axiomatics. This is a topic I have dealt with occasionally, noting the incompleteness of Lonergan’s statement in *Insight* 388[413]. There are missing axioms I have noted previously: of intentionality, of infinity. But there are also deeper axioms of incompleteness: an axiom of slow genetic achievement both ontogenetic and phylogenetic; an axiom of posthumous beatific incompleteness; an axiom of eternal incompleteness. It is the first of these that is to gradually incarnate, in the Tower and in plane meaning, the street mystery of tolerance. The other two have to do with “infinite surprize”, and that leads us to the final section and the final long footnote, note 13 below. But first, note 10 and the second last section, and the quest for global tolerance.

⁸From the twelfth song of Sinead O’Connor’s *Faith and Courage* CD.

⁹Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 367. The blessing, unjust-steward-wise, has to ferment out of “the far more arduous task (1) of effecting an advance in scientific knowledge, (2) of persuading eminent and influential people to consider the advance both thoroughly and fairly, and (3)” (ibid., 366-7)

¹⁰*Insight*, 536[560]. So we venture on the way of the third note in this our second-last section. That note centres on the long-term incarnation of the axiom of genetic and phylogenetic incompleteness that is to be the possession and the possessing of the Standard Modelers, the Tower People, a possession mediating global life, religious living certainly but obviously including its macro-, micro- and meso- economic relating. “Where to begin? Everywhere! Which path to follow? All of them” (see the first and last notes of chapter 6 above, taken from John Le Carre’s novel, *The Constant Gardiner*). By what fantasy might we envisage such tolerance and care, such non-harvesting in the blooming of goodwill, a mystery of lamb and lion together?

“The last time I saw you / I fought with you / I fought with
 you / I didn’t mean to, I didn’t mean to / Oh say you’ll see
 me / Let me say sorry / The next time I see you / I’ll love
 you / I’ll be sweet to you / I’ll take you to my healing room.”¹¹

Endtropy

“Lord have mercy”¹²

13.7 billion entropic years on its knees of finality, with 4 million years of dedicated souls posing as angels within a cosmic unity that escaped Aquinas and his predecessors, that escaped the tired attention of Lonergan: this indeed would be an endtropy, swinging it all into a larger actual unity of layered improbabilities, the restoration of “infinite surprize”.¹³ “It”? “Swinging into”?

¹¹From the twelfth song of Sinead O’Connor’s *Faith and Courage* CD.

¹² From the thirteenth and final song of Sinead O’Connor’s *Faith and Courage* CD. There is background talk to this singing, to which I add the foreground of *Finnegans Wake*: “Lord, heap miseries upon us yet entwine our arts with laughters low!” (FW 259); the subtle wondrous of the Divine Comedy that loft us to our knees; “Sandhyas! Sandhyas! Sandhyas!” (FW 593)

¹³These words end the book *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations*, written thirty five years ago. A great part of the challenge, in this present culture, is to lift Proust’s view of growth from aesthetic apprehension to the full zone of explanatory living, kataphatic contemplation that meshes with road living. The paragraph above is just a dense invitation, a bit of a Philmac last theorem, something that might have been said thirty five years - or forty years - later. Wile’s proof of Fermat’s last theorem (“Modular Elliptic Curves and Fermat’s Last Theorem”, *The Annals of Mathematics*, 2nd Ser., Vol. 141, no. 3 (May, 1995), pp. 443-551) runs 109 pages, 102 months thinking, starting with what for non-specialists is an incomprehensible sentence: “An elliptic curve over \mathbf{Q} is said to be modular if it has a finite covering by a modular curve of form $\mathbf{X}_0(N)$.” What incomprehensible sentence about an infinite covering of the human \mathbf{Q} might I begin with, matching and sublating Joyce’s “riverrun past Eve and Adam ...” of *Finnegans Wake*? It would have to twist into energy’s finality Aquinas’ suggestion of a divine boost of separated spirits’ knowledge, Eve’s and Adam’s (see *Summa Theologica*, Ia, q. 89, a.1, ad 3m), and lift that reflection into a context that improves both his struggle with angel’s living and his

“Not an isolated atom detached from all context, but precisely as part of a context, loaded with the relations that belong to it in virtue of a source which is equally the source of other concepts.”¹⁴

Aristotle-trapped reach for cosmic integrity and circumincessionality. His suspicions regarding natural resultance (see *Verbum*, 143-48) would then rise towards convictions regarding supernatural open achievements: something of an eternal exigence (see **PL**, index under *exigence*) paradoxically fulfilling. Something on the explanatory level that would echo in full grandeur the poem (see *Cantower2*: “Sunflowers Speak to us of Growing”) of the *Cantowers*: “Sun flowers, Son-flowered, / Speak to us of growth / Seed cauled, cribbed, / Kabod yet confined, / Crossed with dark earth, / Light-refined, / Rill open-ends a trill / Annotaste of Throat.”

¹⁴Lonergan, *Verbum*, 238.