

## *Eldorede 0*

### *Paradiso Unearthed, Earthed*

The twelve *Eldorede*, which make up this final series, are now finished, and this aims at being little more than a table of contents: despite the odd title. That title, related to Dante and to *Eldorado*, is commented on in the first *Eldorede*. There, too, it's relation to the life-work of James Joyce is a topic. But do not let this trouble you. We will say no more about Dante or his *Paradiso*, except perhaps that you are invited into something beyond Dante's 7<sup>th</sup> sphere of paradise, the sphere of contemplation, by these twelve essays. Immediately we have trouble in heaven: the contemplation that I have in mind is a reaching towards the ongoing cosmos precisely as collaborating in its own genesis: something that gives a meaning to the word and activity of contemplation different than it normally has.<sup>1</sup>

But my Australian audience for these essays will recognize immediately that we are, perhaps, sliding into the perspective of Ignatius Loyola? And I note immediately that my primary audience is the community of the Jesuit College at Riverview, Sydney, Australia. Our interest, together, is in the meaning and implementation of Ignatius' notions of *oratio* and *ratio*, especially the *ratio* of teaching and studying. Prayer and thinking, then, are my central topics. Yet, there is a further shock in store here: for I would have you reduce the topic to one: thinking. Further, I would note that thinking is a topic here, not then something to be commended by these essay, nor something to be cultivated, but something to be studied, reasoned about. This twist, in our present culture, is a massive stumbling block: it is surprising - or it is not, indeed! - how few

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<sup>1</sup>Obviously, I am associating contemplation in these essays with teaching, an association which seems to run counter to Thomas Aquinas musings: see *Summa Theologica, Secunda Secundae*, q.181, a.3, "whether teaching is an activity of the active or the contemplative life". There are enormously complex questions here regarding a cultural shift to Praxis, but also a cultural shift to an enlightened contemplation of contemplation.

people can take their own efforts to think as something that merits or needs serious empirical investigation. Certainly the Paris or Oxford of Ignatius' time did not, nor do present Paris or Oxford.

There now, that is a claim to raise the hackles! But have I not caught your attention by ruffling feathers? And perhaps we enter here into our wit's beginning, shedding fetters in a *Purgatorio*, all of a piece with a comedy of thinking thinking, thinking about thinking, thinking about the thinking that turns *kinder* into kinder global thinkers?

Enough! Let's take quick stock of where we go in the next twelve pieces.

The centre pieces of my venture are Eldorede 7 - 10. They offer a summary perspective on education and its needs, while at the same time being an elementary introduction to the perspective on thinking that is associated with the Jesuit philosopher, Bernard Lonergan. Those four presentations were prepared for an audience of Korean teachers in March 2007. The sessions aim at giving an introduction that leaves the group with little doubt about the drive being introductory, yet at the same time pointing out immediate practicalities, for the classroom, for collaborations on different levels. This will be true also, I would hope, for other readers, and in particular for the audiences in Australia.

I pause here to comment on coincidences that contextualize this series.

First, I mentioned above that this is a final series: does it not deserve to be, as I chug towards 75?! The context of that series is itself relevant, since that context is two unpublished books, both relevant to the long-term solution to the problems of contemplation and education.<sup>2</sup>

The relation to a final unwritten work of James Joyce, "in plain English", is a topic of Eldorede 1, but the parallels may stop there. My own efforts in the past fifty

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<sup>2</sup>The two books are *Method in Theology and Botany* and *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*. They will be available shortly.

years do not track along in a planned fashion, though a surprising providential unity puts in its appearance. At all events, that context of unpublished books adds hope to the present series in that grass-roots efforts related to this series will eventually have a fuller supportive institutional context.

But there is the proximate context of the essays in two audiences that beckon me this spring, in Korea, in Australia, and the line-up of topics here come from suggestions of and about those audiences. Both groups are interested in education, and in Lonergan's contribution to a fresh vision of education. The Korean group includes people directly interested in Lonergan's work, and some desired a focus on economics. Among that Korean audience, too, there was a group that was formally religious who wished for light on the place and character of prayer in their religious commitment. Has Lonergan something to say on this?

When I turn now to the audience in Riverview College, I note a remarkable coincidence of interests with the Korean groups - in education, in economics, in spirituality - but now with a more definite focus: for the education and the spirituality that characterizes the Jesuit College is obviously that of Ignatius of Loyola. I do now wish to enlarge on present interests among Jesuits at large in the revitalization of education and spirituality. The interest here is in simply noting a coincidence of interest in two quite different traditions and the manner in which I puttered towards a beginning of sharing creative suggestions from Lonergan. Both Lonergan's background and mine are Jesuit, and so that background is very much to the fore. I have no doubt that other traditions will be more evident in Korea, especially the Buddhist bent in contemplation and aesthetics.<sup>3</sup> Such orientations will be part of ongoing searchings and collaboration. Still, neither do I have any doubt but that both Korea and Australia are battered by a present deadly sameness of the teaching and practice of economics. So, the

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<sup>3</sup>My short book of 1968, *Music That is Soundless*, recently republished, (Axial Press, 2006) has an appendix relating the searchings of Dogen to the tradition of **ratio** that I wish to cultivate.

same radical stand of Lonergan on that topic is urgently relevant in the same core form in both regions. That core will, I hope, be a topic during both visits. Such topics will emerge and even be carried forward in later collaboration. What I put together here, then, is just a collection of relevant pointers: some may help, some may distract.<sup>4</sup> But it seemed better than not, to make some such pointings available. And the pointing effort helped the masonry of my final crazy wall!

On then, to a sketch of content that should help. Following the core essays in education there are the two final essays, the first is on prayer, the second on *ratio* as in *ratio studiorum*. They are both relatively elementary reflections, but with a peculiar twist that emphasizes, as you might expect by then, the place of reasoning in both areas. The dominant prayer of the third stage of meaning is to be that associated with the old expression, "Faith seeking Understanding"; the dominant meaning of *ratio* in the context of reflection on education is to be the full heuristic of *ratio* that emerges out of that prior dominance, a towering global illumination. Rather a broad finish to introductory reflections! But really the broadening of reflection occurs prior to the core content of Eldorede 7-10. Eldorede 2 gives a fuller sweep of the problem of economic education than does Eldorede 10; Eldorede 3 is a much fuller reflection on spirituality than Eldorede 11. In Eldorede 1, the point of sections 1 and 3 is to give the mood and the meaning of the title, but between those two sections there is a pre-presentation of Eldorede 7. And Eldorede 5 has the cheek to re-present large sections of the first four Eldorede. Why this oddness? Because, on the road to Australia is a meeting in Los

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<sup>4</sup>I conclude these odd essays by pointing to where you might start. You may not wish to start here at all. You might well wish to start with what is a quite formal tackling of the problem of introducing the new culture of education: it is a course for grade 12 students in Canada, *Introducing Critical Thinking*, by John Benton, Sandra Drage and Philip McShane, Axial Publishing, 2005. You may wish to express your own view to someone who may seem to know where this is going - like perhaps myself. But do give some of these options a whirl!

Angeles, where the same pointing can be done, with similar hopes of collaboration.<sup>5</sup>

That, really, is my aspiration for and in and forward from this final series.

But what is important is the general oddness just mentioned, the oddness of repetition. It is an oddness of the being of time's finitude, but now the being of mind, mindings finitude: it lifts Heraclitus' problem into the *riverrun*<sup>6</sup> of mind. Is there such a reality as repetition? And is the answer caught in such a simple statement as "you don't step into the same river twice"? Can meaning of non-repeatability be thus caught, or is human growing of meaning normatively a growing reality, a Proustian business of non-busyness, perhaps an exponential thing: quite beyond present fantasy? What then is it to pass on meaning, what is the gap between a pedagogy of education and a cult of popularization that is a current dominant evil: *haute vulgarization*? So we arrive at the questions of Eldorede 6.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The April 2007 meeting at Loyola Mary Mount University, Los Angeles. There are also meetings being arranged by the Lonergan community in Melbourne.

<sup>6</sup> I am recalling the multi-meanings of the first word of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*.

<sup>7</sup> Such a simple sentence to arrive at! Suppose I changed it to read, be read as, "So it comes about" thus, echoing another sentence from *Insight* 514[537]. What is your meaning of arrival in the first or in the modified sentence? One must twist and turn to reach further glimpses of the meaning of "the oddness of repetition". Some twists are relatively simple. For example, the reader is in a quite different attitude in reading Eldorede 7 as it this and as it is when located, as section 2, in Eldorede 1. The asking of the section 2 is predominantly, 'is this plain speaking?'. That is not the asking the dominates in the reading or hearing of Eldorede 7 as it leans us towards a context for Eldorede 8. Are each of these attitudes present in the reading-attitude of the other reading? Is there a way, a WAY, in which both attitudes might be luminously self-possessed in those and other readings? These are not elementary questions, they are questions to be passed over here: but they are certainly evidence of needs and problems of repetition. At some repeated stage they may lead to an arrival at the meaning of Lonergan's strange claim: "the concept emerges from understanding, not an isolated atom detached from all contexts 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." (*Verbum. Word and Idea in Aquinas*, University of Toronto Press, 1997, 238). And then there is the context of note 12 of *Eldorede* 8, which surely invites repeating the reading of this note. I would note that these notes, and the notes throughout, are only intended for repeat readers!

These questions bring us to the context of last *Eldorede* that I draw attention to here, the only one not so far mentioned: *Eldorede 4*. This *Eldorede* points, I would claim, to the major cultural block of axial times, whether one is attending to **ratio** or **oratio**. But why, to what purpose, should I summarize its five minutes reading, since it signals at present a fifty year trek, and in a hundred years or so may well be a shorter undergraduate climb to a Standard Cultural Model?

So I have wandered, an elder hood, way beyond tabling contents. Why not get back to that, a fitting ending to the beginning of an end that, surely, wrinkled your eyes?

A final pointing: where to start? I would say that *Eldorede 7* is the place to begin. You find it deceptively simple, or disturbingly elusive? In either case, add in the context of *Eldorede 4*. Then ramble as you please.

So I table some motions.

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