

## Field Nocturnes CanTower 115

### Ontogenesis

So it comes about that the extroverted subject visualizing extensions and experiencing duration gives place to the subject oriented to the objective of the unrestricted desire to know and affirming beings differentiated by certain conjugate potencies, forms and acts grounding certain laws and frequencies.”<sup>1</sup>

But how does it come about? And go endlessly beyond?

It seems to me now fitting that I should conclude this long effort of mine at coming about with three short essays. For one thing, I have way exceeded the million words promised at the beginning of the enterprise in 2002. Also I added in an extra side-climb of 41 essays with a focus on that single paragraph of *Insight* which I like to think I may have made, or may eventually make, familiar if not famous. The essays were a failure, but at least doors were opened, doors even to a fuller future eschatology that I shall point towards at the end here and in the next essay.

I talked of my long climbing effort: but was it not also an invitation to others, to you, to climb, to climb with me? Here I must insist on homing in on a main disturbing doctrine of adult growth that has haunted me since its thematization came to me seven years ago, at seventy, ecstatic yet obvious. It is a Bacchus Piece, a revelry of the oddness of being human, and its short expression is under that title at the conclusion to *Lack in the Beingstalk*. Should I repeat it now, and bring forth for you at least the expression of the puzzle that is you in so far as you aspire to be a member of the culture of the Tower? And why not. Proustian questions bubble out of the repetition but first let us read the ramble, presented boldface:

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<sup>1</sup>*Insight*, 514[537].

“My Bacchuspiece, my final little dance,<sup>2</sup> is a going-back to the pirouette from the mid-point of *The Shaping of the Foundations*, ‘completed, as it happens, on my 45<sup>th</sup> birthday, like Husserl, a beginner.’<sup>3</sup>

The going-back is obviously not a simple going-back for me: that you must surely have noticed is my claim in this book. But is it a claim that you can agree with, or even perhaps tolerate? So, I give a final simple image of ontogenetic and phylogenetic growth of meaning: the curve  $y = x^2$ . The phylogenetic of meaning is the deeply complex puzzle about the dialectics of history and the pragmatics of hope about which this book danced: we focus here now simply on you and me as growing in meaning. The arbitrary curve gives an impression of increase of  $y$ , of meaning, with  $x$ , age: the primary illustration throughout the book has been increase in mathematical meaning. One can generate more, and more comprehensive insights in a fourth year student than in a first year student. One can make more meaning-progress - allowing for luck, distractions, moments *moleculaire* - at fifty than at forty. As I type I listen to Beethoven’s Emperor Concerto and recall his reply to the remark that there was more applause for his eighth symphony than his seventh: ‘that’s because it is much better.’ If you are on that crazy type of growth pattern, then you become a stranger to your younger self, can become a stranger to yourself of yesterday.

How then do I read my Bacchus page after twenty five years?

I could not tell me of twenty five years ago.

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<sup>2</sup>The reference is to “only a little dance” in *Lack in the Beingstalk*, Axial Publishing, 2007, 115, where I am dealing with “The Field and its Guardians”: it is George Steiner’s handling of the Volk dance in the world of Adolph Hitler (*The Portage to San Cristobel of A.H.*, Faber and Faber, London, 1981, 121).

<sup>3</sup>The concluding page of that book. I was referring there to a letter from Husserl to Brentano on his 45<sup>th</sup> birthday, when he referred to himself as a miserable beginner.

I could not tell me of last year.

Do you agree?

But the issue here is, How are you to read that page, or the book of yourself, towards molecular enlightenment? The eye of your storm is the Upanishadic or Zulu desire that winds around all our genitaled molecules.

But that I and that storm are in an Axial Pericular sea. You are incessantly invited to settle down. You are invited to call for plain meaning in a necrophiliac obviousness. You are invited to expect to eventually meet yourself of last year, of twenty five years ago, as an obvious equal.

You would be older but not Elder.

What does your I desire? "<sup>4</sup>

Back, Back us, Bacchus, to that earlier question: "I talked of my long climbing effort: but was it not also an invitation to others, to you, to climb, to climb with me?" The answer is **no** if the image is a shared same-time mountain climb. Normatively, age matters. My invitation is to you as potential climber at your slower pace, so that you come eventually, a comeabout person, to the accelerated climbing that is fitting to your level of elderhood. But my markings, if they are worth their salt, are a component in phylogenetic acceleration. My climb, week by week, up through these million words, are to be footprints in the snows of an Everest that mark the way for later Sunday excursions of the Tower community. It took me fifty year to climb the steps marked by Lonergan: eventually, in a hundred years or so, it is to be a mere ten year climb in the

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<sup>4</sup>*Lack in the Beingstalk*, 162-3.

good company of Cosmopolitan Minders.

But I would have you, in this final invitation, pause over the paradox of human communication in any of the many ways that you can climb about and up in.<sup>5</sup> The Zen traditions have the point of slow growth, but it is an anaphatic way. The western, the Ken, ways, are kataphatic<sup>6</sup> but commonly in a deluded way of settling down to the silly assumption of having and sharing an essential view. The THEN, the Ven, tradition is to lift each and all of us forward to a mysterious globality quite beyond present imagination, elders always disappearing into fresh fleshed molecularity. Instead of the Axial Pericular sea there is to be the sea seen by Pericles, and the music heard, “the Music of the Spheres.”<sup>7</sup> Might you imagine the stuff of Goldmund’s dreams in an abundance, a dance, of garden varieties?

“I believe,” he [Goldmund] said to him [Narziss] once, “that the cup of a flower, or a little slithering worm on a garden path, says more, and has more to hide, than all the thousand books in a library. Often, as I write some Greek letter, Theta or Omega, I have only to give my pen a twist, and the letter spreads out to become a fish, and I, in an instant, am set thinking of all the streams and rivers in the world, of all that is wet

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<sup>5</sup>The study of these ways is only in its infancy. You might make a beginning by reflecting on the parts of the popular book by Rita Carter, *Mapping the Mind*, Phoenix paperback, 2002, where she discusses, in chapter 7, layered molecularizations in memory. There is a growing literature on the patterned molecules of religiosity: see, for example, E.G.d’Aquili and A.B. Newberg, *The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1999. I am here not talking about the practice, but a pausing over the dynamic zeal of the cosmos that Lonergan wrote of at the conclusion of *Insight* 700[722]. We end here by mentioning the *exigence* (see *Phenomenology and Logic*, the index under *Exigence*) within that zeal for neurodynamic eschatological ecstasy within language. See also note 9 below.

<sup>6</sup>I write here of normal Western searchings and talkings, but when one moves to consider contemplative traditions in the West the dominant orientation is found to be anaphatic. On this see the five essay on the Website on Foundational Prayer: *Prehumous* 4 - 8. There is a desperate need, at present, for the emergence of kataphatic contemplation in both Western, Eastern and Southern traditions.

<sup>7</sup>Shakespeare, *Pericles*, V. ii. 231. Shakespeare’s elderhood and Pericles’ are the topic of the conclusion of chapter two of *Lack in the Beingstalk*.

and cold; of Homer's sea, and the waters on which Peter walked to Christ. Or else the letter becomes a bird, grows a tail, ruffles out his feathers, and flies off. Well, Narziss, I suppose you think nothing of such letters. But I tell you this: God writes this world with them." <sup>8</sup>

All of each of us somehow, some **HOW**, twined in each our words? In and through a how- language that is a **Home Of Wonder**?<sup>9</sup> The word would be made fresh. But we are reaching towards a glimpse of the endless growth of the *Eschaton* into a circumcessional within of the molecular words of the Word. We reach with mind and molecule, with mind in molecule. "What then is needed is a qualitative change in me, a shift in the centre of my existing from the concerns manifested in the *bavardage quotidien* towards the participated yet never in this life completely established eternity that is tasted in aesthetic experience."<sup>10</sup>

" 'All we know is somehow with us ... it lurks behind the scenes.'<sup>11</sup> Skin-within are molecules of cos mi c all, cauled, calling. The rill of her mouth can become the thrill,

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<sup>8</sup>Herman Hesse, *Narziss and Goldmund*, Penguin, 61.

<sup>9</sup>See note 5 above for context. Here I add the contexts of chapters 1, 2 and 4 of *A Brief History of Tongue. From Big Bang to Coloured Wholes*, Axial Publishing, 1997. Chapter 2 has the title "How-Language: Works?" but I had no idea then of **HOW** in the meaning to which I hint above. I would note that the heuristic of words dominant in this present essay is that pointed to by the Metaword, W2, first proposed in chapter 4 of *A Brief History of Tongue*:

$$V\{ W(p_i; c_j; b_k; z_l; u_m; r_n) > HS(p_i; c_j; b_k; z_l; u_m; r_n) \}.$$

It is located in a fuller context of other Metawords in *Prehumous 2*, "Metagrams and Metaphysics". It expresses compactly, but still insufficiently, a highly technical but necessary heuristic of the full hetararchy of neurophysicochemical patterns that is the reality of language. Eschatology must pick up on this heuristic and its exigent openness, as lived in aesthetic experience. The living is the possibility of an authentic thematic. See also the quotation below, referred to in the following footnote 10.

<sup>10</sup>I quote from a review by Lonergan in *Gregorianum* 36 ( 1956), 138, of Jules Chaise-Ruy, *Les dimensions de l'être et du temps*. The review has been reprinted in volume 20 of Lonergan's *Collected Works*.

<sup>11</sup>*Insight*, the conclusion of chapter 9.

the trill, of a life-time, the word made fresh. Might we inspire and expire with the lungs of history? But the hole story is you and I, with and within global humanity, upsetting Love's Sweet Mystery into a new mouthing, in anastomotic<sup>12</sup> spiral way of birthing better the buds of Mother."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>*Ana-* again, *stomein*, to provide with a mouth. "Using the device of *anastomosis*, Joyce attempts, in the last chapter of his last work, to bridge all the great ontological chasms"(Margaret Norris, 'The Last Chapter of *Finnegans Wake*: Stephen meets his Mother', *James Joyce Quarterly* (25) 1987-8, 11. The device layers into the transition to my concluding page above. Think of the French for *sea* and *mother*, and move to the final page of *Finnegans Wake*.

<sup>13</sup>*Lack in the Beingstalk*, 66.