

**Field Nocturnes CanTower 49**  
**Desire Undistanced, Part One.<sup>1</sup>**

The book *Desire and Distance*<sup>2</sup> is the springboard for the present reflective dive. But what are you and I diving into, what is this pool, or is it a pull or a poise?

We have a problem here of beginning, and I have a problem of having to repeat myself, for I cannot expect that you have fought your way up through the two series that led to the venture forward that is *Field Nocturnes CanTower 42-117*. Is it somewhat like the problem I had at the beginning of the Cantowers, when in Cantower 1 I quoted Voegelin's question, "Where does the beginning begin?"<sup>3</sup> It certainly is not the same beginning that Voegelin chose, in that I take a stand on a very complex pool of convictions that Voegelin did not share, convictions named by Lonergan in his list in *Method in Theology*, pp. 286-7, but with needed additions. What are these additions? Obviously the additions include some parallel to the set of special categories. And they also include that tenth general category, (10),<sup>4</sup> added to the nine given in the two pages mentioned, 286-7. But less obviously to you perhaps, they include the disturbing

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<sup>1</sup>The title "Desire Undistanced" was originally to be that of a single essay, but it has now two parts. "Desire Undistanced, Part Two" is the title of *Field Nocturnes CanTower 116*. See, further, note 23 below. What, briefly, is being reached for?: a geohistorical heuristic of "*Eo Magis Unum*" (See *Verbum*, 204) in its eschatological genetic fullness. But the primary reach at this stage is a beginner's grasp of functional research.

<sup>2</sup>*Le desir et la distance* by Renaud Barbaras was published in 1999 (Paris, Vrin). The English translation, *Desire and Distance*, was published in 2006 by Stanford University Press.

<sup>3</sup>"Where does the Beginning Begin? As I am putting down these word on an empty page I have begun to write a sentence that, when it is finished, will be the beginning of a chapter on certain problems of beginning." (Eric Voegelin, *In Search of Order*, vol. 5 Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1987, 13). Voegelin's beginning, sadly, lacked, in that final book as in the others, the venture of that first question of Lonergan. See note 53 below.

<sup>4</sup>I have drawn attention to this regularly. Functional collaboration needs to be added to the list. Lonergan was too tired and too close to the book to weave into that foundational stand.

complexification of the entire list of general and special categories that come from the fantastic and funny second sentence of the paragraph that follow the last listing, (9), on that page 287. There is certainly no harm in quoting the entire paragraph here.

**“Such differentiation vastly enrich the initial nest of terms and relations. From such a broadened basis one can go on to a developed account of the human good, values, beliefs, to the carriers, elements, functions, realms, and stages of meaning, to the question of God, of religious experience, its expressions, its dialectic development.”**

And, of course, you cannot but notice that I have put it in boldface. But you may not have adverted, unless you have been reading earlier boldfaced efforts, that the strategy of boldfacing is an elementary effort at linguistic feedback.<sup>5</sup> It is as if I were saying: when boldfaced print is used, it points to the reading subject; **when boldfaced print is used it points to the reading subject whathere**. The **whathere** is a repetition of my first shot, in the Later *Field Nocturnes*, at this strategy. **Whathere** is, so to speak, you there, but **herenow whatting**.

But you will be glad to know that the pool into which we dive, herenow, is not the massive pool of the general and special categories weaved into the perspective of a functional collaboration. It is a much simpler pond, or should I not say pull or poise? I suppose I could go on immediately to a type of simple doctrinal statement: the pond is a particular type of research, the pull is towards new expression dictated by a poise that needs and breeds an explanatory heuristic pivoting on linguistic feed-back. That statement, I suspect, is a bafflement. Furthermore, its brevity and simplicity is part of the present problem: but there you have it in its compendious simplicity.

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<sup>5</sup>I have referred to this regularly, but perhaps it is as well to repeat, from *Method in Theology*, note 34 of page 88: “At a higher level of linguistic development, the possibility of insight is achieved by linguistic feed-back, by expressing the subjective experience in words and as subjective. This is the only mention of linguistic feed-back in the published book. For a second occurrence missed in the transition from typescript, see note 28 below. For the eschatological significance of the pilgrim move, see notes 28 and 36 below.

I might well have made Merleau-Ponty's last incomplete book, *The Visible and the Invisible*,<sup>6</sup> the centre of our reflections here. Indeed, you are more likely to have it than Barbaras recent contributions. *The Visible and the Invisible* already had that attention in the *Field Nocturnes*, especially numbers 24 and 28, respectively "Merleau-Ponty and Other Mudfish", "A Touching of Touching: Getting on Your Nerves". The initial interest was in what I called the incomplete project of *Phenomenology and Logic*. I had already dealt with one major incompleteness of the Logic: Lonergan's late, perhaps last, question to me was about Goedel, and I eventually dealt with it summarily in some sixty pages of chapter one, "Goedel's Incompleteness Theorems", of *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*. The other major incompleteness is tied in both with that book of Merleau-Ponty, anticipated by Lonergan,<sup>7</sup> and with Lonergan's concluding pointing to the need for a venture into the subject-as-subject.<sup>8</sup> The concluding pointing of his pre-lecture notes is perhaps worth quoting in full here as a lead into what I am myself grappling with, what we all need to grapple with in future work.

Before I quote that concluding pointing of Lonergan, I should remark - helpfully, I hope, in my ongoing effort to bring functional collaboration to the fore - that this essay, like the previous one, is about research. Think of me as a researcher approaching the general literature on phenomenology, on the hunt for anomalies good or bad. That, indeed, is the function of research: think of the new cyclotron on the French-Swiss border, as we did in the previous essay. The team of data-readers is well-enough up on the Standard Model to notice oddities in the output: this just might be a trace of a Higgs

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<sup>6</sup>*The Visible and the Invisible*, translated by Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern, 1968). It was published as *Le visible et l'invisible* in 1964 (Paris, Gallimard, 1964). Merleau-Ponty's notes for the uncompleted parts are given in the work. The book was edited by Claude Lefort, who adds an enlightening Editorial Foreword.

<sup>7</sup>"Merleau-Ponty is busy writing a book on the origin of truth", a remark of Lonergan during the lectures on Existentialism in 1957, *Phenomenology and Logic*, 278.

<sup>8</sup>*Phenomenology and Logic*, 313-317: the conclusion of his last lecture on existentialism.

particle! Well, here I am, with a decent grip - after over fifty years now! - on the Standard Model, poking round in the data, the **given**<sup>9</sup> that is either *The Visible and the Invisible* or *Desire and Distance*. But of course, they are there among other data. I mused yesterday over the problem of what to think of as the data of my research, and at one stage was being self-pressured to add to my title so that it might become, "Desire Undistanced: Potting Seven Books". Potting has a whole range of meanings, one indeed associated with pool: you could find the range, in a decent dictionary, meaningful in all sorts of ways here. Even "pot.", as my dictionary gives it, "potential". What are the seven books? We'll come to that slowly. The main feature to notice at present is that the researcher, in physics or in any other inquiry, should bring to bear the best he or she has on the flow from past to present and from present to present. That is the character of the cycle of collaboration. There is a potential for progress or decline in every turn of the human heart or the human hand.

So, in *Field Nocturne 28* I was watching in fantasy and fascination three pairs of human hands: the hands of Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan, but also the hands and hand-writing of a very patient Merleau-Ponty in those last years. I had written previously of the patient hands of Annie Sullivan over those strange five weeks in 1882, and indeed can draw your attention to them now as a researcher, but that would be

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<sup>9</sup>This is a boldfaced problematic word and reality of **youthere** and of phenomenological reflection. I raised questions about the difficulty of reading properly Lonergan's dense passage on the matter (*Insight*, section 4 of chapter 13) in section 4, "The Given" of *Field Nocturne 21* "Observing Brains". It is one aspect of the problem that emerges in note 54 below, the problem of existential and phenomenological spacetime.

another essay.<sup>10</sup> But what was the common potential that struck me, ecstaticed<sup>11</sup> me, in my data-attending? It was the data on patience in the face of the problematic. Annie hung patiently in there with Helen: Helen herself was not exactly a bundle of patience! So, also, Maurice hung in there, powerfully patient. And there are various odd parallel in the two struggles that were part of my ecstasy. Both Maurice and Helen held in their hand and mind the question - inarticulate in Helen - what is this **touch, touching**?<sup>12</sup> And Annie, knowing the pot. of touching, patiently fingered her silent melody of water music, five notes that I think of as turning up over those weeks in different contexts like the five great notes that echo through Bruckner's Eight Symphony, doh, me, fah, so, so, till finally they are heard, gloriously.

Maurice did not have that glorious leap, nor does Renaud Barbaras: Desire does not become somehow freshly undistanced, the visible does not become, in some strange way, a liberating invisible. Yet, it seems to us - to Barbaras and me - that Merleau-Ponty's ontology, his beingstalk, has a future pointing, beyond what Barbaras points to in the last words of his recent book: "It seems to us that one has to give to Merleau-Ponty's ontology the place it deserves: a place beyond Husserl and Heidegger. For this

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<sup>10</sup>Indeed, it is to be another culture, with a quite new differentiated meaning of "draw your attention to". Communicating with you, **whathere**, towards a fantasy of that culture was the core effort of the two website books, *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations* and *Loneragan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*. There is a neat illustration of what I mean by this **functional drawing to attention** in footnote 54 below.

<sup>11</sup>My odd word may help towards a lift in the search for a larger view of history, of which this essay is a small part."Ecstasy" is a regular word in Loneragan's discussion of history in *Method in Theology*, but the chapters do not contain his ecstatic efforts. There are scattered notes in the Archives that point further. But even those notes do not reach towards functionality, nor do they reach for a full explanatory heuristic of pilgrim process. A full heuristic of finitude's spacetime dispersedness and its everlasting overcoming through an absolute supernatural layered infolding: now that is quite a further question. See notes 28 and 36 below.

<sup>12</sup>This is, eventually, a central question that emerges for Merleau-Ponty, laced through his notes for the completion of *The Visible and the Invisible*. They are available in the published texts mentioned above in note 6.

very reason, phenomenology can read its own future in Merleau-Ponty's ontology."<sup>13</sup> Barbaras continues that struggle in *Desire and Distance*, still reaching with and beyond Merleau-Ponty, and some concluding words from his final chapter, "Desire as the Essence of Subjectivity" are worth quoting substantially: they lead us forward, skinward, to our own **flesh**.<sup>14</sup> They give us, with the quotation to follow, a certain focus for our musings.

"There is desire only as life because there is constituted being of the world only as all-encompassing and therefore simultaneously unconstitutable; the passivity of desire corresponds to the untotalizable transcendence of the world. Thus, opening conjoined with the manifestation and with its withdrawal in the distance, desire is the originary unity of passivity and activity; it possesses the world only as what dispossesses it. Because the living subject exists only by remaining within its being, it unfolds the totality only in the form of what negates it and therefore contains the world only as what contains it: desire is the fact of the transcendental, or rather the transcendental as fact, the concrete form of its originary delay. Such is, in our view, the true significance of the chiasma by which in the final analysis Merleau-Ponty defined phenomenality. If the flesh is indeed what is itself affected only by being affected by

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<sup>13</sup>Renaud Barbaras, *The Being of the Phenomenon. Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, translated by Ted Roadvine and Leonard Lawlor, Indiana University Press, 2004, 320. The original French version was published in 1991.

<sup>14</sup>I have been traveling round this topic, this reality of self in you and me, for some months now, pushed by Merleau-Ponty and by the eccentric French woman, Colette (1873-1954). I was led to the latter by the doctorate work of Christine Jamieson on Julia Kristeva, the third part of whose trilogy on Hannah Arendt, Melanie Klein, and Colette is titled *Colette or the world's flesh* (translated by Jane Marie Todd, Columbia University Press, New York, 2004). The context of my struggle is the context of this and the following essays: the problem of enfleshing aggreformism as a linguistic luminosity of loneliness to itself. It is, of course, a very old topic for me, first introduced when I lectured in the early 1970s at Cork University, Ireland, on the night my acquaintance Richard Power, the author, died. His last book was *The Hungry Grass*, the ending of which is a permanent resonance in me. The title of the lecture was "Being and Loneliness". It is available on the website as the Epilogue of *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations: Self Axis of the Great Ascent*, written in 1973..

another, this 'encompassing-encompassed' that contains what contains it, then desire constitutes the sense of being proper to the flesh."<sup>15</sup>

Please bear with me, especially if you have no stomach for obscurity or for strange use of words, like *flesh* and *chiasma*. I am not inviting you to a research-reach into details of present phenomenology. My invitation is much broader and simpler, in the odd sense talked about in the fifth paragraph of this essay. But let us now throw in that quotation I mentioned, from the end of Lonergan's lecture-notes:

"the subject as subject is reality in the sense that we live and die, love and hate, rejoice and suffer, desire and fear, wonder and dread, inquire and doubt.

it is Descartes's Cogito transposed to concrete living

it is the subject's present to himself, not as presented to himself in any theory or affirmation of consciousness, but as a prior (non-absence) prerequisite to any presentation, as a priori condition to any stream of consciousness (including dreams).

The argument is: the prior reality is not object as object or subject as object; there only remains subject as subject; and this s as s is both reality and discoverable through consciousness.

The argument does not prove that in the s as s we shall find the evidence norms invariants principles for a critique of horizons; it proves that unless we find it there, we shall not find it at all."<sup>16</sup>

Is my invitation much simpler than the invitation of Barbaras or that of Lonergan, which does seem simpler? Well, it is a matter of inviting you luminously and effectively to find yourself, your self. How simple is that? What, anyway, could either of us possibly mean by *luminous*? Is the self-discovery itself to be luminous, whatever that means, to the self in question. Whatever, "self in question" means. And so on. It seems

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<sup>15</sup>*Desire and Distance*, 126.

<sup>16</sup>*Phenomenology and Logic*, 215. I quote the text directly from the text, where I held to Lonergan's own typing and expression of it.

that the invitation to “finding self” is not so simple: nor luminous, even when simply put. Indeed, is it not, in its full exigence,<sup>17</sup> an eschatological question?

Yet in another context of writing, to ordinary folk in their loneliness, in their eschatological edgeiness, my talk was relatively effective, moving out from Ezra Pound’s wishing “Go, my song to the lonely and the unsatisfied, / Go also to the nerve-racked, go to the enslaved-by-convention,”<sup>18</sup> to bring the reader towards simple phrases that express loneliness and a bone-want for understanding. The reader, spontaneously searching, reads such a question as “what am I?” in an elementary self-identification. And the reading can be carried into revered books, as I did there, so that patterns of self are recognized in the patterns of scripture questions,<sup>19</sup> or one may echo with the sayings of Dogen, “Question: What part does intention play in becoming Buddha? Answer: ‘It is continually involved right from the start.’”<sup>20</sup> “Enlightenment is the natural activity of ‘everyday mind.’”<sup>21</sup> But the effectiveness is only “in minore parte”<sup>22</sup> and Ezra Pound tells of that, too, in his poem, in which he catalogues “all sorts of mortmain.”<sup>23</sup> The flesh of everyday mind is battered by axiality in its fragmented and fragmenting conventions, and life is secretly unlivable. Colette rebels, but she cries out

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<sup>17</sup>See *Phenomenology and Logic*, the index under *Exigence*.

<sup>18</sup>I quote at some length from the poem from which this is taken, “Commission”, on page 29 of my *Music That Is Soundless*, Axial Publishing, third edition, 2005 (first published 1968).

<sup>19</sup>*Music That Is Soundless*, Appendix (111-122), “bible, Meaning, Metaphysics”.

<sup>20</sup>*Music That Is Soundless*, 123-134: Editorial Conclusion: *Shobogenzo*.,124. *Shobogenzo* is the four-volume work of Dogen Zenji, a contemporary of Thomas Aquinas. I quote here from vol. 4, page 49, in the translation by Kosen Nishitama and John Stevens, Tokyo:Kawata Press, 1975..

<sup>21</sup>*Music that Is Soundless*, the Frontispiece and page 123. Quoted from *Shobogenzo*, Volume 1, p. 13

<sup>22</sup>See note 47 below.

<sup>23</sup>“Commission”: *Music That Is Soundless*, 29.

for “the lonely and the unsatisfied’, and steps beyond the fiction of Emma Bovary or Hemine: “Ah, Harry, we have to stumble through so much dirt and humbug before we reach home. And we have no one to guide us. Our only guide is our homesickness.”<sup>24</sup>

“Why Colette? She invented an Alphabet”: so is titled the first chapter of Kristeva’s book. The alphabet is an alphabet of the flesh flung at convention with facticity and the flourish of fine prose. Might we lift that freshness, fleshness, forward? And was this what Merleau-Ponty was seeking, what Barbaras is still attempting, what Lonergan edges towards when he writes of art, of the aesthetic self, of the self as self, subject as subject? Is this not the subject that is pointed at in that first line quoted from Lonergan? But who is pointing to what? Or is the Brain’s<sup>25</sup> categorization of the self already trapped, distanced from the self, “in terms of the brain’s categorizations of its own categorizations”?<sup>26</sup> I am recalling here Kurt Goldstein, who is in fresh esteem now, and quoted regularly by Barbaras.<sup>27</sup> Goldstein’s old book, *The Organism*, is freshly available, and the conclusion of the foreword by Oliver Sachs, just quoted, brings this odd point to the fore, as he points to Gerald Edelman’s neural Darwinism. The pointing is worthy, for our purposes, of a fuller quoting. “The global theory that Goldstein and Lashley and the Gestaltists sought may now have emerged in Edelman’s theory of neural Darwinism and his concept of the brain as a sort of society, in which every part is

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<sup>24</sup>Herman Hess, *Steppenwolf*, Penguin. 179.

<sup>25</sup>A school nickname of Lonergan.

<sup>26</sup>Kurt Goldstein, *The Organism. A Holistic Approach to Biology Derived from Pathological Data in Man*, with a foreword by Oliver Sachs, Zone Books, New York, 2000. I quote here from the conclusion of the foreword. See further note 28 below.

<sup>27</sup>See the index under *Goldstein* in *Desire and Distance*. “We must still establish the constitutive relation between perception and movement beyond the empirical fact that living beings are the ones who perceive. This correlation has been established unquestionably by the important current of psychophysiological thought represented by Goldstein, who focused on the unitary character of the organism in contrast with physicochemical or vitalistic reductions” (*Desire and Distance*, 88). Relate this to the problem raised in note 54 below.

dynamically connected, 'in converse,' by a process of re-entrant signaling, with every other. Edelman's concepts of higher-order consciousness, in terms of the brain's categorization of its own categorizations, may provide a physiologically coherent way of looking at the 'abstract-categorical' and at the formation of a unique viewpoint and a self."<sup>28</sup>

But what, you may well ask, has this to do with my view "that Merleau-Ponty's ontology, his beingstalk, has a future pointing"? Simply - oh la la, that word again! - I would have you lift the ontology of the organism called Merleau-Ponty into a phylogeny, and the patience of Merleau-Ponty into a cosmic patience, a historical modesty. Goldstein wished to get light on such organisms as the sunflower and the salmon through findings about fractured humans. History seems to be telling us at present that light comes rather from the simplest of our putterings, our fracturing of atoms, our huge effort to catch a Higgs particle in a big round-about.

So, "study of the organism begins,"<sup>29</sup> but barely. I used to joke with my beginner students in philosophy that Konrad Lorentz got a Nobel prize in the 1970s for finding out that zoology was about live animals. Elsewhere<sup>30</sup> I write of the oddness of an effort

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<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.* The concluding sentence above gives a take-off point for the final essay in this series on "Desire Undistanced", which is to have an eschatological focus: *Field Nocturnes CanTower 92*: "Desire Undistanced, Part Four". It also deals with page 92 of *Method in Theology*: not at all an accident of number equivalence. Page 92 contains the second and last reference to "linguistic feedback" in the book. I have drawn attention before to this missing line in the published text. Lines 12-16 should read ( the missing piece is in boldface): "But these limitations recede in the measure that linguistic **feed-back is achieved, that is in the measure** that explanations and statements provide the sensible presentations for the insights that effect further developments of thought and language. Moreover, such advance for a time can occur exponentially...." Within a developed genetic eschatology the phrase "brain's categorization of its own categorizations" takes on a terminal meaning, in terms of a final open neurodynamics of what is, not the Big Crunch, but the Big Clasp.

<sup>29</sup>*Insight* 464[489].

<sup>30</sup>"Zoology and the Future of Philosophy", chapter 3 of *The Shaping of the Foundations*, (University Press of America, 1976) a book available now on the usual website.

to take the measure of animals with somewhat the same strategy that Aristophanes has Aeacus talk about regarding poetry:

*Aeacus*: Poetry is to be weighed in the scales.

*Xanthias*: What? How can tragedy be weighed?

*Aeacus*: They will bring rulers and compasses to measure the words, and those forms which are used for molding bricks..<sup>31</sup>

“Study of the organism begins” begins a paragraph in *Insight*, and I had the foolish notion - now more luminously foolish as completed and further digested - of bringing a reader of 41 Field Nocturnes in 300 pages towards grasping the meaning of the paragraph sufficient to permit the continued fruitful reading of Lonergan’s promised “initial statement of metaphysics.”<sup>32</sup> Only you can judge whether we got some distance, some distance to undistancing desire. And, along the road of those *Field Nocturnes* Merleau-Ponty’s patience triggered the slow fermenting of a new thematic of patience with the patience of history and new humour regarding - and guarding and guarding against - the over-reachings of human desire.

So, more and more I sense the sense of what I write about when I talk of 2 billion years of possible self- and group- identification; more and more I sense the truth in Barbaras’ pointings to the meshing of desire and distance; more and more do I sense the sadness of words in their post-systematic meaning, so regularly a state of post-explanatory necrophagia. But perhaps my sensing is best densely caught in the word *sport*, lifted a little beyond slogan or doctrine by the digestion of “The Article Grail” where sport becomes an echo of Voegelin’s *spoudaios* of which Voegelin wrote in his third

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<sup>31</sup>Aristophanes, *The Frogs*.

<sup>32</sup>If one is to be luminous regarding the drive of the book *Insight*, one has to come to grips with this transition mentioned so casually at the beginning of section 7 of Chapter 15. “To prepare our statement of the integral heuristic structure that we have named metaphysics” (458[484]).

volume of *Order and History*:<sup>33</sup> serious self-enlightenment is at this stage in the evolutionary process **the kink of sports**. The sports, like Plato or Jesus, leave behind schools. The schools decay and splinter, and there remains “technique. What counts ultimately is getting results, but what counts proximately is the approved technique, doing things the way things are done. If you write a book in history and you have the footnotes and the bibliography done just right, if that sort of thing is done well, who is going to judge whether the contents are good or not? You have the technique....” And you can live, partly live, a piece of history in a piece of history with technical competence, and pass on the necropagous words kinked forth by genius and do so perhaps in all innocence.

Perhaps. Especially with the support of an axial truncatedness. Against which there now moves - in the now of a millennium - a specialized auxiliary of global recycling that is the present ferment of a global cosmopolis. The recycling will, of course, involve the recycling of plastics, but what is strangely more indestructible is the dynamics of the recycling of minding that is to emerge and be unpatentable, an invention of history’s longing and need. But at present it seems to “be denounced as absurd”<sup>34</sup> by those closest to Lonergan, its foster father, the one who stumbled on its skeleton and its name.

But have we lost track of our two quotations, both focused on a phenomenology of humanity’s desire? By no means. We are, I am, trying to locate them in the fourteen billion years of the cosmic story. The most improbable organism emerged: a fleshpot.. *Fleshpot.*, did you notice, has an extra punctuation mark following it - or is it leading it?

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<sup>33</sup>The essay, “The Arctic Grail” is chapter 3 of *The Redress of Poise*, a book of the 1990s that seeks to point to a sublation of Seamus Heaney’s reach in *The Redress of Poetry*. The book is on the usual website. “Growth of self as *bios theoreticus*, as maturing *spoudaios*, to Sargawit, yes, that’s the problem” (p. 52 of *The Redress of Poise*).

<sup>34</sup>“Healing and Creating in History”, the conclusion. The text is available both in *A Third Collection* and in Volume 15 of the *Complete Works*.

- a poorjackjill immortal diamond point of intersection with timelessness. But this, a spontaneous presence, is unknown, unknowable, ineffable<sup>35</sup> So we, I, find the research here meshing with that of the previous essay. Find - or have been found? A cosmic puzzle. The chiasmic puzzle of Barbaras' quotation, the limit-solution of Lonergan's pointers, yet perhaps as obvious as the hand-holding hand of Helen, the pen-gripping hand of the fading Maurice. Could that dark-earth sunflower seed become a visible undistanced from luminous identity?<sup>36</sup>

Back then to an elementary puzzle: that you are being invited to glimpse what might not be denounced as absurd by a school of followers but is in fact only quietly dodged.<sup>37</sup> You have been invited to sniff out the what-might that has a beginning in functional research. Further, that the invitation is not mine but yours, a fleshpot. of fantasy desperate to be not alone, "Mayday in boy and girl."<sup>38</sup> Mayday, perhaps in

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<sup>35</sup>This is the key problem raised in the previous essay.

<sup>36</sup>The answer to this is layered and complex, reaching even to the heuristics of ultimacy mentioned in note 28 above. The key beginning is the struggle to lift into personal luminosity the five weeks of Anne and Helen (*A Brief History of Tongue*, 30-37). Then one has to press on to the puzzle that named chapter 2 of that book; "How-language. Works?" That puzzle of a decade ago has slowly fermented in the full question raised here and in note 28. But the question of our pilgrim way in the later stages of meaning is one of **HOW** language, where the **HOW** points to the challenge of a global luminosity, where human expression is normatively and luminously the **Home Of Wonder**, so that "the earth and every common sight take on the glory and the freshness of a dream". This is the full challenge of section 1 of Chapter 17 of *Insight*, from which this Wordsworth quotation is taken (532[556]).

<sup>37</sup>See note 48 below. Perhaps this needs a separate essay, a bio-historical stand within the last lines of page 250 of *Method in Theology*? I talked in the previous essay of Richard Branston's obvious move: we need global elders. I have to hand a recent book, *Wikinomics. How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*, (Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams, Portfolio, Penguin Group, 2006.) The breathless lateness of *Insight* 733[755] increasingly moves into an identification of Lonerganism as necrobiotic.

<sup>38</sup>G.M.Hopkins, line 13 of the sonnet *Spring*.

history, or even very early spring, “nothing so beautiful as spring.”<sup>39</sup>

But so brutally ugly in its present axial overreach, art’s pain. “What I want to communicate in this talk about art is the notion that art is relevant to human living, that it is an exploration of the potentialities of concrete living. That exploration is extremely important in our age, when philosophers for at least two centuries, through doctrines on politics, economics, and through ever further doctrines, have been trying to remake man, and have done not a little to make human life unlivable.”<sup>40</sup>

The living must somehow be prior to the exploration, and the issue of my simple invitation is, literally, an elemental one of sensibility, senseability. Yes, “the vast forces of human benevolence can no longer be left to tumble down the Niagara of fine sentiments and noble dreams. They have to be assigned a function,”<sup>41</sup> and that function, for the cultured who reach beyond spontaneity, must needs henceforth be within the Tower of Able. But collaborative flesh has to find, founderingly, foundationally, its place there. And that place is to be in a slowly-won fleshed patience and modesty that echos in one’s skindom ontogeny’s imaging of phylogeny, an echo of genetic, dialectically-clouded, luminosity.

My research provides no simple answer to me. Nor, perhaps, to you: what after all did you make of the noting, in the previous essay, of the phrase “the pure desire to know is ineffable”, or of the identification of ontogenetic and phylogenetic data on patience? And what might you and I mean by **make of?** We are back at fleshpot.-dreams that can so easily be lost in sentiment, or eloquence: or necrophagic rituals of repetition and composition where “all perform their tragic play”; their work “sweetens the little half-way house”; yet life’s livability “cannot grow by an inch or an ounce.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, line 1.

<sup>40</sup>Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 252.

<sup>41</sup>Lonergan, *For a New Political Economy*, 36.

<sup>42</sup>The three quotations here are from W.B. Yeats, *Lapis Lazuli*.

So, you and I, as cultured, must struggle - but together and Towerwise - to find new global tadpole twists of thought and tongue and penship, a “riverrun past Eve and Adam”<sup>43</sup> of new words. Or old words made fresh, that all words be made flesh.

What might that struggle be towards post-axial communal times and talk? The researcher not only passes the baton forward, but may do so with a wrist flick that nudges and encourages. But here I have been somewhat bewildered, and no doubt bewildering, and now by accidental brooding I find myself nudged by a master. When there is “a whole row of dead horses, a flick at a particularly nauseating one is enough; indeed a wink is as good as a nod. Still, one point deserves attention, and it is this. A generalization will postulate a transformation not only of the old guard and its abuses but also of the reformers and their reforms.”<sup>44</sup> The generalization has been named, a functional cyclic collaboration. What flick of keyboard wrist might rattlesnake past eyes, your eyes **whathere**, to counter the herenow of “the brain’s categorization of its own categorizations”<sup>45</sup>? At issue is both the old guard’s less than subtle rejection of the collaborative task and the reformers missing of a proposed transformation so long since postulated. So I flick forth a single boldfaced sentence. **Reform-statements in the old mode need luminous identification as research-statements and as statements darkened towards necrobiosis<sup>46</sup> by an axial superego’s bent towards descriptive**

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<sup>43</sup>The beginning of Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*.

<sup>44</sup>Lonergan, *For a New Political Economy*, 36.

<sup>45</sup>See notes 26 and 28 above.

<sup>46</sup>My necro- vocabulary is loose and tentative. In the fourth chapter of *The Shaping of the Foundations* I wrote of the necrophiliac orientation of the academy. I talk here of necrophagia and necrobiosis, evidently misusing these words. Necrobiosis is a process of decay and death of body cells, but I am struggling to nudge you further in incarnating a grimly-climbing stand against that within your own molecules. “If a man is a hero, he is a hero because, in the first reckoning, he did not let the monster devour him, but subdued it not once but many times.” (C.G.Jung, “The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious”, Vol. 7 of his *Collected Works*, Princeton University Press, 1996, 173). What monster is this? “Such is the monster that has stood forth in our day” (*Method in Theology*, 40). Sometimes I wonder about the followers of

**doctrinal talk.**

So, I have typed it; and do I not stand condemned by my own type, distanced from desire? The boldfacing hopes in vain to place the statement “ut in majore parte”<sup>47</sup> under reader’s skins, in the hetararchic networkings of the brain.<sup>48</sup>

Perhaps a recalling of the flicking of the master’s wrists might help. It is a recall of what I re-typed, twice before, from a letter of Lonergan to Crowe when I first introduced the notion of an axial superego.<sup>49</sup> “Incidentally, re anxiety, what the Freudians call the Super-Ego is Aquinas’ *cogitativa*: just as the little birds know that twigs are good for building nests and the little lambs know that wolves are bad, so little human beings develop a *cogitativa* about good and bad; it reflects their childish understanding of what papa and mamma say is good or bad and in adult life it can

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Lonergan: is there a foolishness among some of imagining that they are outside the flow in which “the social situation deteriorates cumulatively” (*Insight*, 229[254])?

<sup>47</sup>I am recalling Aristotle, but with the aim of nudging us beyond description towards a later statistical heuristics of the effective implementation of metaphysics, a statistics that handles problems of concrete possibilities and peculiar convergences, some relating to the everlasting. See *Randomness, Statistics and Emergence*, chapter 8, which deals with Lonergan’s advertence to this in the second edition of *Insight*.

<sup>48</sup>The message of the 41 *Field Nocturnes* is, perhaps, best expressed in the title of *Field Nocturne 12*, “Self-Appropriating the Inner Parts”. This is a discomfiting challenge to a present heavily-descriptive Lonerganism. I repeat here note 18 of *Field Nocturne 2*, a useful pointer, which also gives the source of the word *hetararchy*: “Contemporary neurodynamics considers the brain as a modular distributed system, a complex non-linear hierarchy for which W.S.McCulloch invented the name *hetararchy* in ‘A hetararchy of values determined by the topology of nervous nets’, *Bulletin of Mathematics and Biophysics*, (1945) 7, 89-93. More on this in the later essays of *Field Nocturnes*.” A hetararchy is a looser pattern than a hierarchy: one needs such a looser heuristic to grapple with e.g. the neurodynamics of vision, or the evolution of linguistic competences.

<sup>49</sup>The most recent essay is *Field Nocturne 2*, “Lonergan’s Obscurest Challenge to His Followers”. The earlier essay is *Humus 2*, “*Vis Cogitativa*: Contemporary Defective Patterns of Anticipation”. Both essays are, alas, grist for the present mill, so what is written above is skimpy, even if it is part of my accelerating move forward.

cause a hell of a lot of trouble.”<sup>50</sup> But the recalling, if it is to be anyway effective, must be a re-calling of the two essays mentioned in note 51 to one’s neurocelling ocularity.

Do you pause? Did you thus pause? Not likely: the superego’s molecular dynamic dictates an unhuman pace. So much for effecting ontogenetic and phylogenetic patience! Might I enter “not by argument but by laughter”?<sup>51</sup> The nerves of you “would hurry you to your destiny ..... In contrast, humour keeps the positions in contact with human limitations and human infirmity.”<sup>52</sup>

But it is not only the nerves of you: it is the type of me. I call my own bluff in noting that the recalling is condemnable, condemned by that boldfaced sentence. Do you see, seize, this? Or is that short question also condemned? Are we in a vicious circus?

Reform-statements? Both of the quotations to which I have drawn attention - from Barbaras, from Lonergan - can be regarded as reform-statements. Take a piece of each:

Barbaras tells us: “desire is the fact of the transcendental, or rather the transcendental as fact, the concrete form of its originary delay.” It is the heart of Merleau-Ponty’s pointing.

Lonergan tells us: “The argument does not prove that in the s as s we shall find the evidence norms invariants principles for a critique of horizons; it proves that unless we find it there, we shall not find it at all.”. It is the heart of the pointing of *Insight’s* first

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<sup>50</sup>This is quoted from the 13<sup>th</sup> of 129 written communications of Lonergan to Crowe, some as short as Christmas cards, some several pages long. This letter is dated 27<sup>th</sup> December 1955. I have no doubt but that these letters will eventually appear in some published form but meantime I avail of Fr. Crowe’s generous permission to quote from archival material that has not been published.

<sup>51</sup>*Insight* 626[649].

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*

of three questions.<sup>53</sup>

Both statements re-direct desire, with the redirection that characterizes doctrinal talk: they are like maps for a journey. So, I end here abruptly with the odd question, Might much of our axial writing and reading be mappings and map-readings? Writings and readings that are at an uncouth distance from desire? I thus arrive - but you perhaps do not, since I am at a distance of a type of doctrine - at the problem of my title, "Desire Undistanced". And I find it best to halt this indigestible doctrinal essay here.

But I did mention that the problem bubbled up for me into a problem, not of a couple of quotations from two books, but of a world of seven books that lay before me. Indeed, laid before me like layed eggs, finished unhatched ellipsoids. To that we return in Part Two. One of the books is *Insight* with its three and more questions. The book has many doctrinal statements, statements of reform. I shall return to listing the other books in the next essay, where I also venture further with the strange reform-statement about research. But should I not end with humour? Doctrinal statements in *Insight* can be so funny, if you are alert to the madness of it all: e.g. "We are now familiar with the notion of empirical residue" Ho Ho. So, there is that last section of chapter 5 of *Insight*, a section which is at the heart of Barbaras' spacetime struggle and reach - now there's a

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<sup>53</sup>The three questions are regularly mentioned in *Method in Theology* (see the index under *Questions*). The first mention is on page 25: "What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it? The first answer is a cognitional theory. The second answer is epistemology. The third is a metaphysics." There have been muddled discussions of the distribution of these questions in *Insight*. Part One is obviously inviting the reader to answer the first question. Metaphysics? One begins when one takes a decisive stand on the position, *Insight* 388[413]. Epistemological guiding is, then, the drive of the intervening pages. It is a magnificent balancing act of subjectivity and even expert readers can mistake moves in the journey as arrival. One decides one has arrived - and it is normally a believing based on Lonergan's slim description of positioning - by pausing over the proposals on that key page 388[413]. But this is too brief for such a tricky topic. I would note, however, that to get beyond the introductory level of the book, the position needs the lift of axiomatization, with the addition of axioms of intentionality, of infinity, of incompleteness.

doctrinal statement hitting Barbaras where it hurts!<sup>54</sup> The section is titled “The Concrete Intelligibility of Space and Time”, a horridly difficult piece of Lonergan’s doctrine. The final paragraph begins with one of the funniest sentences of the book. Why not, then, end here with the joke, so solemnly typed in five words pre-echoing the magnificence of later sections,<sup>55</sup> that I might well now compare them to the five great and elusive notes of Bruckner’s *Eight Symphony* to which I drew attention earlier:

**“The answer is easily reached” .**

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<sup>54</sup>And hitting us beautifully where it hurts! The point comes across beautifully thus by my now using the old-style phrase, “Compare *Insight* chapter 5 of “Space and Time” to R. Barbaras, Chapter 12, “Originary Spatio-Temporality” in *The Being of the Phenomenon. Merleau-Ponty’s Ontology*, (translated by Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawler, Indiana University Press, 2004). Recall that we are moving to a fancy of doing functional research. The command is passed on, up to the part of the dialectic operations described on page 250. It is a task that involves the UV + GS that we discussed in the previous essay, as well as FS<sub>4</sub> in that specialty. The old-style work of **comparison**, now discomfortingly pre-scientific, is replaced by *Comparison*. What the researchers notice is the anomaly visible in the two texts, from first paragraph to last. “The concepts of space and time come to the forefront: the originary unity of the perceived, the co-presence of the world to what manifests it, must be reconceived as spatiality and temporality....” (Barbaras, 204) right on down to the conclusion, on the edge of Lonergan’s end of “The Concrete Intelligibility of Space and Time”. Barbaras’s conclusion (*Ibid.*, 228) reads: “Being does not rest in place in order to remain ‘the system that embraces everything,’ flesh of the world, in order that flesh remains mine.”

The place of *Comparison* in dialectic analysis was a topic in the two series of Website essays SOFDAWARE and Quodlibet. It is to be treated more fully in *Field Nocturnes CanTower 117*.

<sup>55</sup>I draw attention especially to two sections. There is section 4 of Chapter 16 with its reflections on “The Unity of the Proportionate Universe” and “The Unity of Man”. Then there is section 7 of chapter 19, with title “The Secondary Component in the Idea of Being”. I shall return to “The Concrete Intelligibility of Space and Time” in *Field Nocturnes CanTower 92*, “Desire Undistanced, Part Four”. See above, notes 1 and 23.