

Posthumous 3

A Commentary on **Inside**

This is a three-part essay. The focus is on the empirical investigation of what is inside the human cranium. The three parts are oddly titled as commentaries on [i] **Inside** [ii] **Insight** [iii] **Selves Inside Insight**. The bold-facing is a strategy developed in earlier commentaries on *Insight*.¹ What does it mean? No doubt you find it disconcerting to read my claim that the meaning is for your **self** to find – impossibly slowly – **inside insight**.² Best leave it at that until the end of Part 3 and venture on here tentatively **in**.³

1.A Commentary on **Inside**

The title is pretty obvious, to people of any philosophic bent. *Inside* refers to the inside of our skin, and I recall my first talking about it, in terms of Tennessee William's claim, "we are all condemned to solitary confinement within our own skin," in my little book, *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations. Self-Axis of the Great Ascent*.⁴ The skin, of course, is a pretty rough border, not at all a Euclidean surface. What sort of surface is it? That is a heavy interdisciplinary

¹The **bold facing** nudges the reader out of the simplistic view that the print that is seen and read is **out there**. Reading that **bold-face** now does not bring forth the fruit of that nudge. Indeed reading this essay may just leave you thinking of me as, well, out of my mind, whereas the truth is that you are, as you read, in your mind, your cranium. Above, I mentioned commentaries on *Insight*. It is the topic of Part Two here, and I shall obviously have more to say about it there, but the saying will come eventually to something **quite unobvious**. My hope is that it will have an obvious sense and an obvious effect in the next decade, which will lead, in later generations, to a **Tower of Able** that is **global but oddly cranial**.

Meantime I would note that I quickly turn here to a single set of commentaries on *Insight*. The 41 *Field Nocturnes*, written about five years ago, are basically a commentary on the particular paragraph on *Insight* 489, beginning "Study of an organism begins." I shall refer to these essays below as FN. The FN set is available at: <http://www.philipmcschane.ca/fieldnocturnes.html>

² The title of the concluding Part Three here has the bold-faced triplet **Selves Inside Insight**. I do not elucidate this here, or indeed anywhere. It is a central topic of the following short essay in the series, *Posthumous* 4: "Conversing with Divine Persons." That fourth essay is "a brief appendage to the present work" (*Insight*, 754), but it should be "the inception of a far larger work." (*ibid*). The far larger work, however, is not the missing volume 2 to *Insight* that Lonergan is talking about there. It is a far larger communal work that pivots on the peculiar placement of *Insight* that is the key point of Part Two below.

³ "In" is the first word of the first chapter of *Insight*. My hope is that the Tower People of 9011 A.D (see note 41 below) will read it properly, with a fuller inner dynamic than my elementary suggestions of Metawords, W_i. (See *Prehumus* 2, "Metawords and Metaphysics," available at: <http://www.philipmcschane.ca/prehumous-02.pdf>). The 17th word of that chapter is *Renaissance*. We need to strive towards the fantasy of reading that 17th word in the astonishment of a developed explanatory heuristic of the 17th chapter of *Insight*, reading the Renaissance as a massively complex heterarchy (see note 14 below) of chemical patternings, its serious authors and ourselves weaved into, fused into, the past-modern explanatory heuristics of Lonergan's second canon of hermeneutics.

⁴P.McShane, *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations. Self-Axis of the Great Ascent*, Exposition Press, New York, 1973, 42. The book is available at: <http://www.philipmcschane.ca/wealth.pdf>

question, with multidisciplinary contributions to be pursued beyond present single disciplines, ranging from the obvious zones of physics and chemistry to the complexity of sports' medicine or skin grafting. A commentary on skin, then, would be quite a venture.

A commentary on the inside of the skin, in its accepted meaning, is another vaster adventure in complexity. Think of the ongoing commentary that is the science of cranial chemistry and its neural patterns, made altogether more difficult in that the linguistic data on it, the story of its genetic dynamics and of its various patterns of break-down and decay, are part of the data of the inquiry.

So, let us begin by asking an immediate question, in the trail of that odd point regarding the difficulty of the cranial presence of words: "Where is this present commentary?" Yes, it is "apparently" outside my skin and yours, perhaps on an animal skin or the treated skinned tree. But you must agree that that skinned version of the commentary is not the whole commentary. If the commentary happens to come from your computer printer, you have no problem in admitting that the commentary was in the computer, in marvelous code.⁵ You can comfortably come further with me and nod your cranium as I speak of someone putting the commentary into the computer, and of a trail of somebodies back to, well, in this case, me. Does it not get back to me, inside me, patterns of chemicals that are skin-within? And is not this a loaded, coded, question?

So I land you, comfortably or uncomfortably, in the problem of code-breaking, one that you admit takes time, whether it is the time of Helen Keller breaking the enigma of five week's fingerplaying or the time of a genius breaking of the Enigma code.⁶ And what becomes, now, herenow, uncomfortable, is my halting you – a quite new halting problem from the Turing machine business!⁷ – at the juxtaposition of Helen and Turing and you, three puzzlers.

But let us add to these puzzlers two other puzzlers: the two authors of a particular book, or rather bits of a particular book titled *Neurodynamics of Personality*.⁸ Let me take a single

⁵ Code brings us back to *caudex*, or even to the Indo-European base *kau* (think of the English *hew*), cut tablets, etc. So we can think of cuts on cut tablets, and chase along in scholarly fashion, but perhaps miss the elementary point, which is the point made by the complex skinned 5-code spun on the hand of Helen Keller by Annie Sullivan which, after a month of repetition and agitation, fermented into some new patterning inside Helen. See Philip McShane, *A Brief History of Tongue: From Big Bang to Coloured Wholes* (Axial Publications, 1998, 31-37).

⁶For further pointers related to Helen Keller, see notes 6 and 53 below. On Turing, Turing Machines and Goedel see the lengthy first chapter of *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Enquiry*, available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/lonergansmodel.html>. Goedel's theorem, of course, is a high point in code-breaking, and relates to the complexification of Positional Axioms (see note 48 below).

⁷ See the previous note and add FN 35, "Helen's Halting Hand," available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/Field%20Nocturne-35.pdf>.

⁸ The book has two authors, Jim Grigsby and David Stevens and it is published by The Guilford Press, New York, 2000. We may comfortably speak of one writer of particular passages. If you think my assumption doubtful, then work on the neurodynamics of your more complex assumption. Indeed, you could go further with assumptions

paragraph and share it with you. First the title of the section, in large bold-face: WHAT IS THE SELF? The title is certainly worth a pause.⁹ It is obviously the authors' interest, as it is mine. It is, or could be, your question. It is a question which has been inside humans for ages, whether we go back only to Kierkegaard, as our **NP** does here, or we venture further back to Confucius and Socrates or to the Hebrew Prophets or to the writers of the *Upanishads*. Inside humans? And, crazy as it may seem - it is best here to keep evolution of mind in mind. Now **that** suggestion is surely a mind – and question – stopper ... or starter! – so that we could be, indeed are poised, over [over? poised?] cranial evolution.

But now I wish you to read the paragraph that follows the heading, “what is the self?”, in a lightsome way that turns us from the problem of the self - the topic of the third section - to focus on what I might call some superficials of **Inside**. Let's give the tongue-in-cheek paragraph an initial reading, and then we can pick out some super, really super, ficials.¹⁰

“The concept of the self is of fundamental importance for any attempt to explain human personality, but self is nevertheless difficult to define. In fact, trying to define the self can lead to peculiar intellectual contortions. Consider Søren Kierkegaard's definition of the self in *The Sickness unto Death* (1849/1954).... He wrote that ‘the self is a relation which relates itself to its own self, or it is that in the relation [which accounts for it] that relates itself to its own self; the self is not the relation but [consist in the fact] that the relation relates itself to its own self’ (p.147). How clear it all becomes when expressed in this manner! Moreover, this definition raises several important questions. Most importantly, what hallucinogens were available to Kierkegaard and the philosophers of his day? Were they eating mushrooms or smoking opium?

and work out the neurodynamics of conjoined twins authoring, with various degrees of conjoining. In such conjoinings there sometimes are quite amazing degrees of sharing, even shared consciousness. But we return to issues of shared consciousness in *Posthumous* 4. I refer to *Neurodynamics of Personality* below as **NP**. I first used this book in my writings about five years ago, in FN 2, “Loneragan's Obscure Challenge to His Followers” (available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/Field%20Nocturne-02.pdf>), where my focus was on the axial superego that globally cripples us. But in those essays I took, as my central reference on things neuroscientific, a basic introductory text, *Neuroscience. Explaining the Brain*, by Mark F.Bear, Barry W.Connors and Michael A.Pendise, Lippencotte, Williams and Wilkin, 2001. I would hope that my challenge here would lead philosophers of mind to venture into some such basic text and on into cranial chemo-dynamics.

⁹ The difficulty of this short essay is that I must skim along. There are a multitude of ways of approaching the question, beginning with pointers from the Hindu tradition and ending with the recent two-part Olympics in London, dancing with the self of all the arts, the sports, the sciences, the technologies. The issue, really, is that of the strange global group dynamics, pointed to in Part Two, as the relocation of *Insight*. Its beginning is the topic of *Posthumous* 5.

¹⁰ My dictionary remarks that “**superficial** implies concern with the obvious or surface aspects of a thing.” Thing? **Thing**? The drive of this short essay is towards initiating the cyclic collaboration that would generate a community possessing, possessed by, the answer to questions about the thing reading this paper.

Should Kierkegaard have been forced to undergo random drug screening? Is it any wonder that he wrote *The Sickness unto Death* using a pseudonym ('Anti-Climacus')?"¹¹

A superficial comment on the paragraph you have just read is that it winds round, with irony or sarcasm or whatever, to three question-marks, one use of the word *question* and one use of the word *wonder*. The question-marks, you may go back and easily note, illustrate three different types of question. There is a what-question, a what-to-do question, and an is-question that ties in with the use of the word *wonder*.

I could head off here into connecting the word *wonder* with the first two questions, and perhaps thus head for another helpful ancient slant on the question, "What is the self?"¹² But let us stay superficial. So we pause over the print as it points inside: inside Jim and David, or at least one of them, inside me, inside you. Perhaps skip yourself here, since it is not at all superficial to deal with the neurochemical echo in you that corresponds to sufficiently-registered¹³ reading.

I would note immediately, indeed, that it is not easy to stay superficial without losing the sting of my superficiality. Jim and David go on a little later to heavy stuff under such lofty titles as "The Self is a Modular Functional System."¹⁴ We are dealing now, in our pause over the three types of question, with that same stuff. But is there not an odd twist to which I am inviting you, without smoking weed? The twist is inviting you to take note of Jim and David's not including the data they are generating in their search. Nor am I talking of some heavy subtle inclusion, calling in some Kierkegaardian self. I am talking about three question-mark tails of phrases. I am talking about the cranial neurodynamics that are, to some extent, isomorphic to these questions as they emerge from Jim and David working with their pens or computers. There is surely no need for me to go into this here: there is a *massive* literature, indeed listed in **NP**, on

¹¹ **NP**, 328.

¹² I am thinking of the approach from the Bhagavad Gita that I used in section 4 of chapter 1 of the Website book, *Process: Introducing Themselves to Young (Christian) Minders*, available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/process.pdf>. See note 9 above.

¹³ I am using the word "register" here to cover the obscure area of the "polyphony" of self-presence that we recognize in beings above the chemical level. The quotation marks point to pages where Lonergan refers to the reflections of Jung, Horney and Stekel on the matter: "Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our Time," *A Third Collection*, edited by F.E.Crowe, Paulist Press, 1985, 58-59. My *register* covers both pointings of Lonergan in his claim, "One is aware that the window is open, but conscious that one is about to sneeze" (*ibid.*, 55), but I would be inclined to replace 'that' in his expression by a suggestive, if awkward, 'when'. And one may ask, in this context, how the plant registers when the sun shines, and even how the amygdala registers when there is fear. The topic of Lonergan's essay, however, belongs in *Prehumous* 4, "Conversing with Divine Persons."

¹⁴ **NP**, 333. See note 23 below for the problem of a fuller heuristic context. The notion of hetararchy is immediately important in countering simplistic views of system. It was introduced by W.S. McCulloch, "A hetararchy of values determined by the topology of neural nets," *Bulletin of Mathematics and Biophysics* (1945), 7, 89-93.

various tight or loose isomorphisms of language-use and neurodynamics. I am, so to speak, only advocating the patching in of some relevant data.

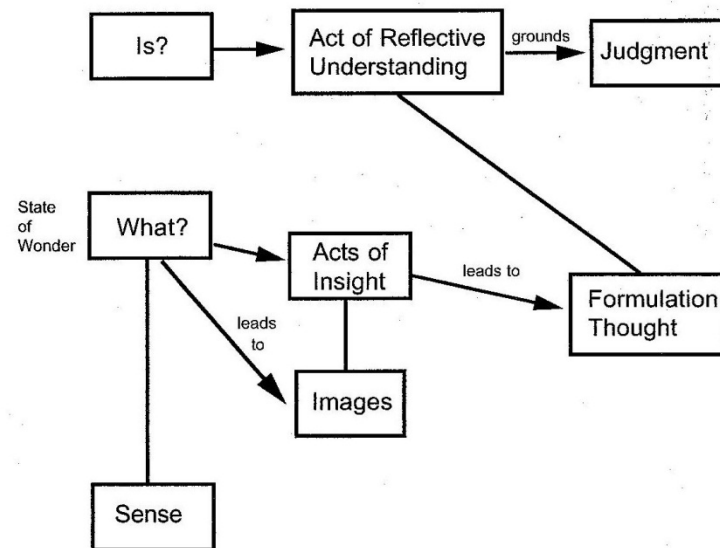
Alas, here we are pressed further beyond the superficial. The relevant data to which I point, at no matter what level, shakes up considerably the modular modeling, when the questions noted in that paragraph are found to be superficially correlated. This shake-up moves through the highways and byways of various philosophies of linguistics: how might I carry my brief commentary through the labyrinth with pedagogical success?

Let us turn to a broad identification of **Inside**. Obviously, there is the whole mess of bones and guts and general nerves, but it is evident that our focus is on the cranial zone of the inside. So, a map is useful, and oddly I offer two map-sources to support our rambling around those three questions. There is the collection of maps with commentary – that leading word again! – given by Rita Carter in her popular book, *Mapping the Mind*¹⁵: it gives a broader journalistic sweep to the more focused effort of **NP**. But the second source offers an odd lift to our musings in that the map, given in two parts in my *Wealth of Self, Wealth of Nations*,¹⁶ offers the shake-up I mentioned. There is no need to re-produce any of the Carter maps, which are familiar from all levels of the literature, but we need to add here some other diagrams.

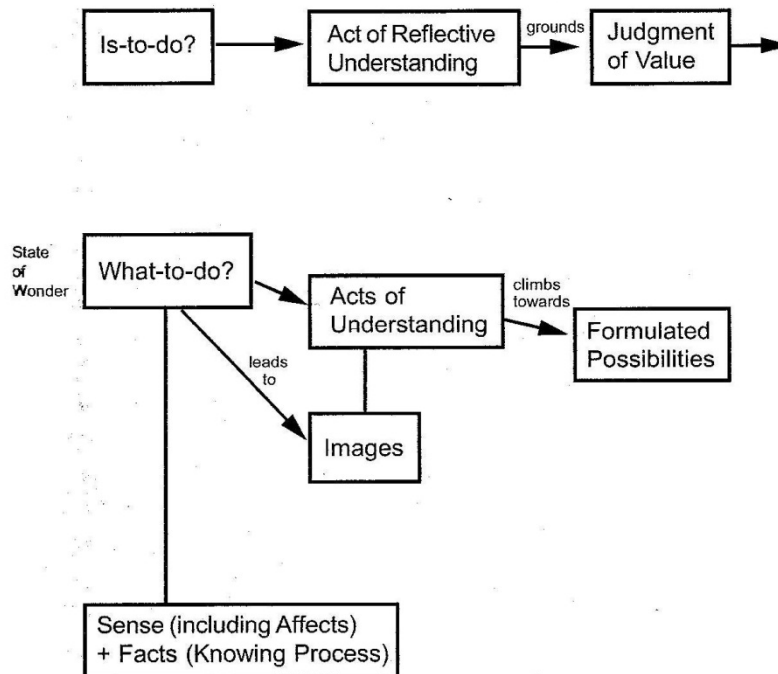
¹⁵ Rita Carter, *Mapping the Mind*, Phoenix pb, 2002.

¹⁶ P.McShane, *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations. Self-Axis of the Great Ascent*, Exposition Press, 1975, available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/wealth.pdf>. The diagrams are on pages 15 and 48, in chapters that comment on them. More elaborate versions of the two diagrams are given in Appendix A of CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic*, on pages 322 and 323. The versions that I add in the text are, in fact, those that are given in chapter three of Bruce Anderson and Philip McShane, *Beyond Establishment Economics : No Thank You, Mankiw*, Axial Publishing, 2001, where they are contrasted with the trivial errors on thinking foisted on us by Mankiw [rhymes with “thank you”].

Dynamics of Knowing



Dynamics of Doing



These displays may well be unfamiliar. The original little text labors to communicate the meaning of the displays in an elementary fashion. Might I leave it to you to figure out the

obvious sequence of personal goings-on represented by the diagrams? Think of some experience that stirs you to ask, “What is that, what’s going on?” Like the bump that occurs when a tire goes flat. Is it really a flat front tire? Sometimes it hardly needs to be checked. Then: what-to-do? One jumps to some plan rather than sit waiting to be towed away (although that sitting-project can be considered a plan!). Of course, you can go back to Jim and David, wondering about Kierkegaard’s going flat in talking about the self, the talk that “raises several important questions. Most importantly, what hallucinogens were available to Kierkegaard and the philosophers of his day? Were they eating mushrooms or smoking opium? Should Kierkegaard have been forced to undergo random drug screening?” Is it not interesting to note that **NP** runs through the first three question-types, though the third is about a past-relevant plan?

So, there remains the fourth question, the to-do question: yes, Kierkegaard, perhaps, could have been drug-tested; yes, “I had best get out the spare tire.” But do we not, here and now, generate a fourth question? Think about what Jim and David are doing. Somehow there is a sense of their discourse going flat, being flat. What are they smoking or smoke-screening? How might we nudge – perhaps force?¹⁷ – them to, we might say, de-screen?¹⁸ Perhaps by talking to them about these simple data provided by them to themselves? And now there emerges for me – and I hope for you - that final fourth question, “Am I going to try that?” Yes: and - ho ho – if it does not work on Jim and David it might work a change in – inside - you or me or both of us!

You may well claim, “it has already worked on me”: I have indeed read *Insight*. Let us move on to see how well you – and indeed I - have read **Inside**. But we must move on carefully: we are, after all, reaching out to Jim and David and others like them, which sadly includes most of the gallant dedicated community working in neuroscience.

That sad inclusion is a long story, going back through global history; one finds its confining presence in the talking of Panini as well, indeed, of Plato. It is illustrated by the early sentences of our chosen paragraph. How is one to get a concept of the self, the subject that I am? The answer lurks in the question: I must puzzle over the data that “relates itself to its own self,” not, for the moment, in any complex existential way of relating, but in the simple superficial way

¹⁷ “[B]y cajoling or forcing attention” (*Insight*, 423). There is the gentle force of “satire and humour” (*ibid.*, 647-49) and the trickier turn to *fare lo stupido* (*Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18, 317, 361). Generally it is a matter of finding loose vulnerable patterns in the polyphony of register. See note 13 above and the following note 19.

¹⁸ We are, of course, skimming over varieties of the problematic of “The Subject” (Lonergan, *A Second Collection*, edited by William Ryan and Bernard Tyrrell, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974). There is especially the truncated subject who “does not know himself but also is unaware of his ignorance, and so, in one way or another, concludes that what he does not know does not exist” (op.cit., 73). The word *unaware* is now, I hope, a larger linkage in your cranial network. Especially do these few coming notes seek to wind you into an improved statistics of awareness of the cranial-named aggreformism, and the inner road to it named generalized empirical method.

that I have indicated. Jim and David produce – a tricky word - these questions in their texting. Any of these questions can be noticed as “mine,” related to my own self, Jim or Dave or Jill or Maeve.

To follow up that lead is a long pedagogical venture, further commentary on which I give in Part Three. But what interests me now, and I hope you, is staying, so to speak, in the cranial ball-park of **NP**, of Carter’s *Mapping the Mind* and of my own superficial mapping. And here, I must warn you, we arrive at some discomfoting comments on the reading of *Insight*.

I turn, conveniently, to the Frontispiece of that book *Insight*, to the quotation from book 2 of Aristotle’s *De Anima*, which I give in translation:

“The faculty of thinking thinks the forms in the images.”¹⁹

Think now – that word *think* is not easy to avoid here – in the context of **NP**. Then we, the neuroscientific community, need to find neurochemical patterns that correspond, not to something called *thinking*, or *form*, or *image*, but to some physic-chemical net-sets that correspond to **those words**: and if the correspondence reaches to the sequencing of the words, so very much the better. **Words**: now that naming takes some struggling to get to grips with.²⁰ There is the external noise or touch or print or brail or whatever: complex patterns of physics and chemistry, even before considering the thermodynamics, etc., of the breathing forth of them. Backing up this complexity is the dynamic neurochemical cranial base. That indeed, is the dominant interest in the late chapters of **NP**, such as 13: “Modularity, Dynamics, and Functional Systems” and 14: “Regulation of Behavior.” I am merely maintaining an emphasis on the neurochemistry of language.

So, picking up on the data supplied by the two maps from *Wealth of Self*, I make a first superficial hypothesis, that the two maps help to spell out Aristotle’s little statement regarding thinking. Superficially we can claim – and just try contradicting the claim!²¹ – that what Jim and David and Aristotle and we mean by *thinking* is the spectrum of wonder mentioned thinkingly in the paragraph of **NP** and read thinkingly by us. But now I pose my non-superficial hypothesis,

¹⁹ *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, edited by Jonathan Barnes, Princeton University Press, 1995, volume 1, 686.

²⁰ See *A Brief History of Tongue*, Axial Press, 1998, 30-37. What a five-week aggregate of aggregates of handiworks fell, lept, into place, brainspace of waterpointing.

²¹ This is a serious and tricky invitation, massively and neurotically resisted by the axial superego of present truncatedness. It has its elementary aspects such as Lonergan mentions frequently: Hume having a view of mind that stood against his minding. A lighter twist is mentioned by Lonergan in his lectures on Existentialism, related to an old Italian Church practice, *fare lo stupido* (playing the fool). See *Phenomenology and Logic*, 317, 361. Think of all those heavy volumes and learned articles on neurodynamics and cognition etc. as playing the fool! There are chemicals; there are cognitions in and about them, layered within: but how? And might we find that HOW – Home Of Wonder – language? To what do these question marks that, neurochemically bracket these thirteen words, correspond?

one that is merely an extension of working hypotheses of neurolinguistic studies: that there is a network of complex dynamic chemical patterns “inside” that are somewhat isomorphic to the diagrammed patterns.²²

The hypothesis pushes the work described in **NP** and pulls in – a key feature – the words of **NP**: this is illustrated from our chosen paragraph, but you might care to range through more of the book, or of *Mapping the Mind*, to glimpse better this extension of data. Further, it should help people forward towards subtleties of the difficult and novel enterprise of generalized empirical method.²³ What I wish to emphasize as I conclude this section is the important and discomforting push it gives to those familiar with Aristotle’s or Lonergan’s invitation to self-discovery to get beyond superficial identification of some version of the two diagrams.²⁴ We reach an explanatory grip on the diagrams only when we take cranial neurochemistry seriously.

2. A Commentary on *Insight*

I must go back here to where this essay began: with an invitation from Professor Galán to write an article for this journal.²⁵ Some months after that invitation, at a conference we attended, he

²² This is a huge task of this century, quite beyond a sketching here. But I would note two pointers regarding the emergent complexity. First there is the notion of heterarchy that points to a broader heuristic than one that is monotonically hierarchical. Secondly I would point to the gross contemporary handicap lurking in the word *emergent*. The handicap is illustrated abundantly by Part VI (577 -690) of a recent volume, *Science and Ultimate Reality. Quantum Theory, Cosmology and Complexity*, edited by John D. Barrow, Paul C.W. Davies and Charles L. Harper Jr., Cambridge University Press, 2004. The authors of that Part VI, “Emergence, life, and related topics,” are brutally ignorant of aggreformism, a central thesis of Lonergan, to be culturally available and streetwise effective only through the establishment of generalized empirical method as an *ethos*. This is the ethos, redemptive of spirit and psyche and sex and skin and surplus trading, to which these few notes point, worded forth in quiet but vehement sensual description in the next note.

²³ So now it is surely useful to peat moss and repeat – a petechia irritating the skin of culture towards replacing *mos* by *nomos* - the familiar description of the delicate and demanding poise. “Generalized empirical method operates on a combination of both the data of sense and the data of consciousness: it does not treat of objects without taking into account the corresponding operations of the subject; it does not treat of the subject’s operations without taking into account the corresponding objects” (Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, 141). We desperately need, in these coming decades, volumes of simple illustrations bubbling from subjects-as-subjects playing in eschatological fairness instead of subjects-as-fools playing the longer cycle of decline.

²⁴ I would note especially the danger of simplification due to a superficial reading of Lonergan’s slogan, “Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible” (*Method in Theology*, 53) that would squeeze out the dynamics of creative planning. A first help is to note his immediate comment on intelligence: “being intelligent includes a grasp of hitherto unnoticed or unrealized possibilities.” A second help is the follow up clues in Appendix A of *CWL* 18 (see note 17 above) to get back to *Insight* chapter 18 and its root in Thomas’ *Prima secundae*, qq. 6-17. A further help is to grapple with the full meaning of the what-question that would enlarge it to include the fullness of “what might be.” This raises very deep issues regarding evaluation and its conditioning by molecularity, so that there is a sense in which humans move from the pure desire to know to what I teasingly call *the poor desire to do*. But, at any rate, it seems to me pedagogically and pragmatically better to replace the familiar slogan of *Method* 53 with the slogan, “Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be adventuresome [or some such reference to plan-seeking], Be responsible.”

²⁵ The article has two locations: it is the third of the *Posthumous* series, available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/posthumous.html>; it will appear in *Revista de Filosofia* of autumn 2013.

made, more than once, an appeal to me to write “a commentary on *Insight*.” No small request for someone in their ninth decade: a decent commentary would surely run 3000 pages. Besides, I have been writing commentaries on *Insight* for over fifty years. At the end of the conference, however, the bright idea, indeed the bright title occurred to me: I could name the requested article “A Commentary on Inside.” So was seeded the present work.

My first published commentary on *Insight* was “The Contemporary Thomism of Bernard Lonergan”²⁶ and pointers there turn out to be central to the final section in this article. But the relevant commentary for our present interest is one that brings out very clearly the enormity of the task of commenting on the book *Insight*. A simple mention should do the trick: the series of 41 essays titled *Field Nocturnes* is an incomplete commentary on a single paragraph of *Insight*. That paragraph happens to be at the heart of this present essay’s venture. I might as well quote the beginning as a reminder, and add a teasing little piece from further down the paragraph.

“Study of an organism begins from the thing-for-us, from the organism as exhibited to our senses. A first step is a descriptive differentiation of different parts and, since most of the parts are inside” So we have to battle our way towards a mental sorting out of the inside, and “to this end there have to be invented appropriate symbolic images of the relevant chemical and physical processes.”²⁷

I talked at the beginning of this section about a definite paragraph in *Insight* as being “at the heart of this present essay’s venture” but now I come to the heart of this present essay’s venture, an embryonic heart identified now in its feeble abortion-fearing beating. It is, I might claim, a final commentary on *Insight* by me in this, ho ho, *Posthumous* essay. It is, I might claim, “A classic” commentary, and here I am referring to and stealing from a section of *Method in Theology* titled “understanding oneself,” within which there is that great quotation from Friedrich Schlegel. “A classic is a writing that is never fully understood. But those that are educated and educate themselves must always want to learn more from it.”²⁸ Such classics emerge normally from a life-climb, like the final efforts of Beethoven, Cezanne, and Joyce.²⁹ It puts me in mind of Camus’ comment, commentary: “It takes ten years to get an idea.” In a

²⁶ Philip McShane, “The Contemporary Thomism of Bernard Lonergan,” *Philosophical Studies, Ireland*, XI, 1961-2, 63-80.

²⁷ *Insight*, 489.

²⁸ Quoted in the section of *Method in Theology*, 161.

²⁹ There emerges here the massively serious topic of adult growth, so far grossly handled in the usual literatures, and massively absent in present Western Cultures. I cannot expand on it here but refer you to the brief consideration of it at the end of my *Lack in the Beingstalk* (Axial Publications, 2007). It is to be a central source of luminosity in future millennia.

previous set of essays³⁰ I talked of my years of battling with Fred Crowe's study of functional history and finally fermenting the useful insight that the essay was not really in the specialty history but indeed best considered as being functional research. My battling with Lonergan's "study of human understanding"³¹ has been much longer, a crazy journey of 55 years. Yet, only in these past few weeks has its location dawned on me. But, you say, surely its location has been pretty obvious, and made quite obvious in *Method in Theology*, where its table of contents pretty-well occupies the center of pages 286-7, and the claim is made earlier, "to say it all with the greatest brevity: it is not only to read *Insight* but also to discover oneself in oneself."³²

Insight, then, is surely a foundational work? I recall now vividly Lonergan pacing his room on the sixth floor of the Bayview Avenue Regis College in 1966, fretting over how to get *Insight* into his intended book on method in theology. What pleased me enormously as I worked on indexing the book at the end of 1971 was the set of references to *Insight* given in the "Foundations" chapter. However, in the past decade it became clear to me that *Insight's* categories were to feature in the grueling venture described in lines 20-33 of *Method in Theology* 250. But now the issue emerges, in this posthumous commentary, how precisely might *Insight* feature in the future? And here I am cheerily distracted by one of my favorite quotations from *Insight*. It begins the final paragraph of the fifth chapter, after his pushing the reader to figure out "the concrete intelligibility of space and time." He begins his brief answer by writing, "The answer is easily reached," and he goes on to the comic pointing "one has only to shift from the classical type of inquiry" So, I might imitate his solipsistic silliness here by saying that my final commentary on *Insight* is easily reached. One has only to shift from Schlegel's classic typology of classics. Shift where, shift how?

The easy answer is that *Insight* is functional research.

³⁰My first effort to come to grips with Frederick Crowe's book, *Theology of the Christian Word. A Study in History*, Paulist Press, New York, 1978, was in the 2005 *Cantower* 38, "Functional History" (<http://www.philipmcshane.ca/cantower38.pdf>), where I struggle with his muddling towards excellent turning points in history. A few years later, in the series of essays titled *Humus* I tackle the work again in my methodological searchings. The key turning point was in *Humus* 9, "Frederick Crowe and Ourselves as Researchers" (<http://www.philipmcshane.ca/humus-09.pdf>). My searching continued through the next few essays, arriving at *Humus* 12, with title "Crowe: Possibilities of Methodical Collaboration" (<http://www.philipmcshane.ca/humus-12.pdf>).

³¹The subtitle to *Insight*.

³²*Method in Theology*, 260.

Does this claim not give you pause? Might it send you back to my efforts to enlarge on Lonergan's skimpy treatment of functional research?³³ There you can find abundant clues to my wandering towards the easy answer. But for the moment let one key little nudge suffice.

One of my pedagogical pointers towards conceiving of functional research has been the recalling for those familiar with Lonergan's story of his nudged towards his doctorate thesis on Aquinas. There he was, "without plans or proposals" for a thesis until he puttered around a bit in a chat with Charles Boyer. "Finally Boyer reached for his copy of Thomas Aquinas's *Prima secundae*, pointed to an article he himself had difficulty in interpreting, and suggested Lonergan make a study of that article in itself, in its *loca parallela*, and of its historical sources."³⁴ So here, now, you find my playing Boyer's role but not to an individual but to history. I point to an article: the "little book *Insight*,"³⁵ and I make the discomfiting suggestion, "this is worth recycling."³⁶ What does this mean precisely? First of all, its precise meaning is a matter of the distant future.³⁷ Secondly and proximately, there is the matter of reading freshly Lonergan's fifty lines on "understanding oneself." Do our "hearts burn within us" at the invitation to understand our hearts and our crania? Or? Or do we continue to scrabble around the little article in question? "The tradition may be unauthentic. It may consist in a watering-down of the original message, in recasting it into terms and meanings that fit into the assumptions and convictions of those who have dodged the issue of radical conversion."³⁸ The radical conversion, of course, is the conversion to serious understanding and standing humbly against "pseudo-metaphysical myth-making."³⁹

Thirdly, there will, I hope, be those who, even now, can reach towards an operative removal of the question mark in the title of my first Posthumous essay, "The Gross Immorality of Lonerganism?" But there are those of the present generation of Lonergan scholars, probably the majority, who "will look and look but never see."⁴⁰ The effective shift in history, giving a new covenant of promise to the global economy of loneliness, is a matter of omnidisciplinary recyclings through this next millennium: Lonergan may be the foster-father of the shift to

³³ Lonergan eventually spoke with regret about the shortness of his chapter in *Method in Theology* on Research. My own efforts to specify functional research culminate in the series of 7 *FuSe* essays, 3-9, a version of which will appear in *Journal of Macrodynamical Analysis*, volume 8. The *FuSe* essays are available at:

<http://www.philipmcshane.ca/fuse.html>

³⁴ *Grace and Freedom*, CWL 1, 2000, xviii.

³⁵ *Method in Theology*, 260.

³⁶ This was the slogan of the Halifax Conference of July 2012 on Functional Collaboration. A basic statement is included at the end of *Posthumous* 1, "The Gross Immorality of Lonergan Studies?" available at:

<http://www.philipmcshane.ca/posthumous-01.pdf>

³⁷ See chapter 10 of the Website book *Method in Theology. Revisions and Implications*, "Metaphysical Equivalence and Functional Specialization."

³⁸ *Method in Theology*, 162.

³⁹ *Insight*, 528.

⁴⁰ *Method in Theology*, 162, where Lonergan is quoting Paul and Isaiah.

effectively luminous philosophy and functional collaboration, but patient history is to be the mother.

3. A Commentary on **Selves Inside *Insight***

Where to start this final section of my commentary has been a great puzzle to me. But, there's the start: is it a great puzzle to you, or at least a minor business regarding the bold-faced title and its odd threesomeness? In the next Posthumous essay I shall tackle that oddness in a fresh strange way. But meantime what inadequate printings can I make? Perhaps we can share a return to that paragraph of **NP**?

"The concept of the self is of fundamental importance for any attempt to explain human personality, but self is nevertheless difficult to define. In fact, trying to define the self can lead to peculiar intellectual contortions. Consider Søren Kierkegaard's definition of the self in *The Sickness unto Death* (1849/1954).... He wrote that 'the self is a relation which relates itself to its own self, or it is that in the relation [which accounts for it] that relates itself to its own self; the self is not the relation but [consist in the fact] that the relation relates itself to its own self' (p.147). How clear it all becomes when expressed in this manner! Moreover, this definition raises several important questions. Most importantly, what hallucinogens were available to Kierkegaard and the philosophers of his day? Were they eating mushrooms or smoking opium? Should Kierkegaard have been forced to undergo random drug screening? Is it any wonder that he wrote *The Sickness unto Death* using a pseudonym ('Anti-Climacus')?"⁴¹

Anyone who has ventured seriously into Kierkegaard's life and writings knows that he was a serious man, serious about life as that glorious woman Nadia Boulanger was about a life of music.

"Do not take up music unless you would rather die than not do so. It must be an indissoluble love. And one with great joy of learning, the firm determination to learn, the unswerving perseverance, the intense faithfulness. But primarily if it is not better to die than not to do music – then it is an excuse. And if not then why, why?"⁴²

⁴¹ **NP**, 328.

⁴² I quote from Alan Kendal, *The Tender Tyrant. Nadia Boulanger. A Life Devoted to Music*, with an Introduction by Yehudi Menuhin, Macdonald and James, London, 1976, 14. As I move forward from here I am thinking of the Tower People to come, numbering a quarter of a billion by 9011 A.D. (see the conclusion to "Arriving in Cosmopolis," a paper read in Puebla's Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico, 2011, available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/archive8.pdf> . Here, too, I find it opportune to note that, regarding commenting on *Insight*, my entire teaching and writing of fifty years has been an effort to do so. But I draw attention especially to the ten-volume work of the last decade, *Cantowers* 1-41 (the nudge came from Ezra Pound's 117 *Cantos*!) for detail pedagogical helps towards a new self-luminosity. The *Cantowers* are available at: <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/cantowers.html>

But let us assume that you are an ordinary scholarly person like our two authors, sensing that McShane and Boulanger and Kierkegaard are somehow out of their minds. Now the oddity is that McShane is, not out of his mind, but in his mind ineluctably,⁴³ yet hoping that there is that in your mind that would break out or rather break into a Helenesque “tell me all.”⁴⁴ My cranial patterns are reaching to yours, hoping for a distant echo. Of course, the reach may meet a friendly frontalobic nod. So let me try out a key relevant piece of my first commentary on *Insight*, allowing that you have some vague notion of yourself, mirror-reversed sideways but not upside-down. Then you enter the zone of the problem of that self as..... ? real, really me? It might seem that I am supposing that you have rolled through the book *Insight* and found yourself in the eleventh chapter, but that is not essential to coming with me here. We return later to muse over just how essential it is. At any rate, yourself, your self, simply twisted in the mirror or more complexly twisted in some epistemological fog, have those leads, and may already have taken them as a road towards answering what is traditionally called the critical problem. My later musing can help towards judging your success in that. But here I slip to a sort of short cut by quoting a piece of my article of more than fifty years ago, out of context but comprehensible.

“In *Insight*, there is a large strategic shift of the critical problem from ‘that we know’ to ‘what we know’, from the quest for certitude to the question of what exactly occurs when we are knowing. For this reason it is only at the end of a prolonged effort at understanding his own activity of understanding that the reader is engaged in a judgment. The judgment does not commit the reader to any position on the nature of reality. Whether reality is one or many, material, etc., there is an undeniable and intelligently formulated judgment, ‘**I am a knower**’. With the identification of ‘being’ and the pure desire to know there is, strangely enough, still no commitment on reality. By the conscientious objector the definition can be taken as nominal: whatever I can know or want to know I will call . . . Umpa? Odo? - what’s in a name? - . . . Being?

One is led further to an appreciation of the complex notion of objectivity. Yet it is only in the clear statement of the ‘position’ and the ‘counterposition’ that the key element in the strategy falls into place.”⁴⁵

⁴³ I am recalling here James Joyce’s solipsistic rambles round the “ineluctable modality of the visible,” “the ineluctable modality of the audible,” “I am getting along nicely in the dark” (*Ulysses*, Penguin, 1986, 31), quoted more fully in one of two of my ventures into invitations to the dark light: *A Brief History of Tongue*, p. 146 of the relevant chapter 5. The other venture is *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations*, chapter 5, “The Insider-Out of Radical Existentialism.”

⁴⁴ James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, 196. It is the beginning of the global riverrun: “O / tell me all about / Anna Livia! I want to hear all”

⁴⁵ P. McShane, “The Contemporary Thomism of Bernard Lonergan,” *Philosophical Studies, Ireland*, XI, 1961-2, 63-80, at page 74.

The present essay cannot be considered “a prolonged effort at understanding his own activity of understanding” or hers. Still, we have arrived in a twistedly beneficial way, through my pointing to patterns of cranial chemical patterns, at the threshold of a judgment. Is not the total result, in you, of our efforts as far, in our reading, as the pattern, ‘**I am a knower**’, a network of patterns of patterns of cranial chemical events? The two sentences that follow that ‘**I am a knower**’ and end the paragraph add forty odd words about naming ‘being’ or such, and the paragraph that follows, and ends the quotation, adds a pointing to forty odd pages of *Insight*. In you, the reader, these lines and pages are an additional aggregate of inner chemistry.

But what is this key element that falls into place at the end of what I now risk calling “the chemotherapy”? The forty words and the forty pages add patterns, somewhat like Ann Sullivan added patterns to Helen Keller. With Helen there is a break, a dazzling break, a self-finding. What is or was your break in chemoreading “the real is the concrete universe of being”? The containing paragraph of that quotation invites a shocking shift of patterning, a towering personal poisoning regarding all that chemical agitation and its concomitant overtone openings to further questions⁴⁶ in the now-identified concrete universe of being. I invited “some familiarity” – not a prolonged effort of understanding -- with “the development of intelligence” in pointers to the neurochemistry of language, and the overtones may well have contained elements of what Lonergan mentions in brutal compactness in the paragraph referred to in the previous footnote. But the new invitation of “if the real” nudges the reader to a code-breaking leap, a break with a code of ethics for which “a spade is just a spade,”⁴⁷ for which “the universe of being seems as unreal as Plato’s noetic heaven.”⁴⁸ The Code-breaking and the new Covenant of Promise is to spiral into a Tower of Hope, of Able.

This Tower Community will have, luminously molecularized, an altogether more sophisticated stand on the real than the simple introductory nudge of that paragraph of *Insight*. I mention here only a missing axiom of intentionality, since we hover round it here.⁴⁹ But then there is

⁴⁶ I leap here, strategically, to a later paragraph, at the conclusion of *Insight* 493. “With the development of intelligence the reader already possesses some familiarity. The lower, otherwise coincidental manifold is provided by sensible presentations and imaginative representations to give rise sooner or later to further questions.” The four dots point to the strange inner climb with words like *postulates*, which also have their chemistry, but the omission of those words here helps to make the familiar unfamiliar in the shock of chemicalizing (re)presentations, a shock that sooner – now indeed -- raises questions.

⁴⁷ *Insight*, 557.

⁴⁸ *Insight*, 411.

⁴⁹ Hovering round, I hope, in a way that brings forth an intimation of the seeming horror of permanent isolation that goes with presence by “intentional existence” (Lonergan, *Verbum. Word and Idea in Aquinas*, CWL 2, 162). The simple descriptive paragraph on Positioning needs development into sophisticated sets of axioms to include infinities, incompletenesses, etc. Such sophistication is especially important when one moves to consider eschatological matters. Here, certainly, one can glimpse concretely the message of *Insight* being functional research. A great deal of recycling is needed to get the required development underway and to get its results into

the climb onwards of *Insight* to arrive first at a luminous self-identification, under present circumstances a decade's come about: "So it comes about that the extroverted subject visualizing extension and experiencing duration gives place to the subject orientated 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."⁵⁰ That self-identification reaches new height's when the self is weaved explanatorily into the history of selves by the second canon of hermeneutics⁵¹ and is lifted further into and beyond the icy heat of "critical method, method with respect to the ultimate."⁵² But these are the stuff of the recycling mentioned in the second part, and my words are vague research notes to the article called *Insight*.

My main message here regards the opposite end of the project, the failure to begin, the failure to admit the failure. There is the failure to grapple with neurodynamics emphasized in Part One and here there is the failure to grapple with the question of the self. This latter failure may come as a shock to Lonergan scholars. It is a failure that certainly cries out for the recycling of *Insight* in its status of functional research, the pointing of Part Two.

What else might I say here about these massive problems, problems that Lonergan studies shares with the entire global tradition of both honest and devious people? In the Field Nocturnes I recalled and discussed the dying struggle of one honest man, Merleau-Ponty, paralleling his struggle with the meaning of touch with that of the seven-year old Helen Keller.⁵³ The answer to his struggle requires that one take seriously two research projects noted in the

the streets in a manner that would lighten the tension between myth and mystery that Lonergan points to in the beginning of *Insight* chapter 17.

⁵⁰ *Insight*, 537.

⁵¹ This is a central crisis-pointing of the functional researching that is *Insight*. The key paragraph is the final paragraph of *Insight* 609, ending on the next page with the powerful challenge "fuse into a single explanation."

⁵² *Insight*, 708.

⁵³ There are a series of related essays. The beginning is FN 24, "Merleau-Ponty and other Mudflesh," (<http://www.philipmcshane.ca/Field%20Nocturne-24.pdf>) and the essay that follows, FN 25 "Proust and the Squid" (<http://www.philipmcshane.ca/Field%20Nocturne-25.pdf>), is also relevant. In it I draw on Maryanne Wolf, *Proust and the Squid. The Story and Science of Reading the Brain*, Harper Collins, New York, 2007. Then there is FN 26, "Helen and I" (<http://www.philipmcshane.ca/Field%20Nocturne-26.pdf>), and closer to the struggles of Merleau-Ponty, FN 28, "A Touching of Touching: Getting on Your Nerves" (<http://www.philipmcshane.ca/Field%20Nocturne-28.pdf>). One gets into deeper contemporary water by taking in the works of Renaud Barbarus, in particular, *The Being of the Phenomenon. Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, Translated by Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor, Indiana University Press, 2004 (Fr: 1991) and *Desire and Distance: Introduction to the Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by Paul B. Milan, Stanford University Press, 2006 (Fr: 1999). So we have FN 32, "Seeing is Deceiving" (<http://www.philipmcshane.ca/Field%20Nocturne-32.pdf>); FN 36, "Desire and Distance" (<http://www.philipmcshane.ca/Field%20Nocturne-36.pdf>); FN 37, "Distance Undistanced: Light" (<http://www.philipmcshane.ca/Field%20Nocturne-37.pdf>); FN 38, "At the Threshold of the Halfway House" (<http://www.philipmcshane.ca/Field%20Nocturne-38.pdf>). In these essays I contrast the muddles regarding space and time of Merleau-Ponty and Barbarus with the clear reachings of the physicist Lochlainn O'Raifeartaigh: points relevant to the remarks in the text regarding the importance of *Insight* chapter 5.

little article *Insight*. There is the project of conceiving adequately of “the concrete intelligibility of space and time”⁵⁴ that involves “a natural bridge over which we may advance from our examination of science to an examination of common sense.”⁵⁵ Then there is the deeper project of conceiving adequately the aesthetic object, each human that is the neurochemical skinful of a life. That project asks for the facing of the untried climb through chapter 8 of *Insight*, that would bring one, through the prolonged cherishing of simple **things**, to an explanatory luminous reduplicative self-cherishing of the “qualitative change in me, the shift in the center of my existence from the concerns manifested in the *bavardage quotidien* towards the participated yet never in this life completely established eternity that is tasted in aesthetic apprehension, in the inner utterance of truth, in the partial success of moral struggle.”⁵⁶ So, one would arrive at the radically post-modern grip on Aquinas’ two words *integritas* and *consonantia* that is pointed to in the three research-words *unity, identity, whole*.⁵⁷ Then there is the consequent challenge, lifting Saint Ignatius’ final contemplation⁵⁸ beyond “the glory and the freshness of a dream”⁵⁹: “tell us now what is *claritas* and you win the cigar.”⁶⁰

⁵⁴ *Insight*, 194. But add the context of *Insight*, Chapter 17.

⁵⁵ *Insight*, 163.

⁵⁶ CWL 20, 209: in a Review of Jules Chaix-Ruy, *Les Dimensions de l'être et du temps*, Paris-Lyon: E. Vitte, 1953.

⁵⁷ The central topic of *Insight* chapter 8; it is deepened radically by the context of Faith and theology, the topic of the next essay in the series, *Posthumous 4: "Conversing with Divine Persons."*

⁵⁸ “The Contemplation for Obtaining Love,” which ends the Ignatian Exercises. A massive challenge of this century is to lift those exercises into the third and fourth stages of meaning.

⁵⁹ *Insight*, 556.

⁶⁰ Lynch’s remark to Stephen after his disquisition on *integritas* and *consonantia* in James Joyce’s *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*.