

Q.9 (Conn O'Donovan): You are to deal, on the second day of the Halifax Conference, with a peculiar "Existential Gap" that is presently present somehow between efforts to research and efforts to communicate. The "between", I know, is interpretation in some of its clear and foggy senses. Could you pick up from that and throw light on the Gap?

A.9 (June 11). Since you were with me in the authoring of *Road to Religious Reality* you have a decent grip on the core of the Gap, and this we can gradually share with the interested group. But can we hover round the topic and the question now in fruitful ways within the present topic? AND perhaps this could be the beginning of more dialogue, larger essay-questions?

But meantime I think of the incomplete topics of the two previous questions, and so on getting a grip on, or a glimpse of, the Gap, by talking of its eventual disappearance. This is like getting to know the tadpole by musing on the frog.

In Q/A 8 I wrote of C, finding the Connection between A and B. I am thinking now of trying out various As and Bs that could help in glimpsing the Gap and its closing.

Some readers may not have the context of *CWL 18* on Existential Gap: it is worth 'taking in' at some stage on problems of dread, anxiety, etc. I'll slide past those for the

present. I am going to start here, oddly, with an illustration of synthetic talk that gives us a new twist on the larger context of our problem, and then get from there to the “between” regarding interpretation.

Suppose A is the present state of fresh constructive insights about life: a global aggregate in land, sea, air. B is the state that would be present, with a lag, if those insights were realized. We need C: and of course it is not hard to think in terms of Lonergan’s Cosmopolis. The fresh insights are had by a sub-aggregate. A first step towards C would be - is it not obvious, ho ho!!? - to shift the sub-aggregate to be a reasonably operating unity, not an organic unity [? obviously, again, but oddly there is an eschatological issue regarding such a unity] but at least a scheme-repetitive unity (*Insight* 144), indeed one might push towards thinking in terms of a flexible circle of ranges of schemes of recurrence. Push towards? Or be pushed towards by the neurochemical “order’s dynamic joy and zeal” (*Insight*, 722, last line)? The evolutionary push is towards patterns of neurochemicals, brain-organisations in the sub-group. But evolution is lifted first in its push by the emergence of the evolutionary sport, the idea of the push: a tadpole brain-organization in Rome, 1965.

The state and problem of such an evolutionary sport is described in *Insight* 17 in various spots, starting with “3.1 The

Problem. The problem of interpretation can best be introduced...”

So now we have a new A, “a principal insight A to be communicated.” (*Insight*, 585). Four paragraphs later there occurs one of the funniest paragraphs in *Insight*, beginning with the words, “A reflective interpretation” I don’t think that Lonergan was unaware of the wit involved in talking about “the audience’s habitual grasp of its own intellectual development” (*Ibid.*, 586). Indeed, my suspicion is that it belongs to his neat hurried (a few months before his shifting to Rome) strategy. But establishing that is a longer foray. At all events, he typed and talked to himself, “to an audience that similarly grasped the universal viewpoint” (*ibid.*, 602).

We have A: what might I consider to be B? Let us think of it as the effective practical insight F” (*Ibid.*, 586: line one of that funny paragraph).

So begins Lonergan’s hunt for C in section 3 of this 17th chapter of *Insight*. Curiously, I associate that hunt with my occasional musings about the 17th word of the first chapter of *Insight*, *Renaissance*. Those musings relate to the later heuristic control of meaning that will be luminous about that loosely-identified period of history in terms of a massive complex of chemical patterns. Quite crazily beyond our times, isn’t it? Now the odd thing about this hunt of Lonergan in *Insight* 17.3 for a

Renaissance of linguistic meaning and expression is that it really does not give the appearance of a hunt. It gives the impression of an astonishing synthetic control of meaning: he has C, but can he type it adequately, typecast it properly, in this pressured summer of 1953? He has, had, C in some powerful inner symbolic control that is quite beyond his typing: this is something that you, Conn, and I, figured out during work together in Vancouver last year, and it relates both to where I aim to arrive in this Q. and A sketching and in the early stages of it that is our collaborative work scheduled for Autumn of 2012, and an increasing collaboration with others. Note, as we move to this effort, that Lonergan was quite tuned into the difficulty of his suggested heuristic, something like “the barrier between the theoretical physicist” (ibid., 603) and the lab-folk.

At all events, he produces his expression of his C, sketches it madly in 3.6, and packs it into canons in section 3.8. [you might find it enlightening to see my juggling with those two sections in *ChrISt in History*, chapter 9, “Interpretation”, available on the Website]. It did not turn out – as yet! - to be an effective practical solution to getting from his A to an F”. I symbolize this failure regularly by referring to the conference we had on Lonergan’s view of interpretation, one in which we never got to C: the published effort is in *Lonergan’s Hermeneutics. Its Development and Application*, edited by Sean E. McEvenue and Ben F. Meyer, The Catholic University of America Press,

Washington D.C., 1989. We haven't got to C since. I'm not going to get into that, nor am I going to venture into the lightweight effort of *Method* chapter 7. But let us think of that C of *Insight* 17.3 as C_1 . Then I would claim that in the full book, *Method*, he produced a poor description of his next effort, C_2 , and he mentions that lift of C_1 in the first footnote of the 7th chapter of *Method*. "Ideas presented there recur here in quite different specialties" (*Method*, 153, note 1). C_2 has not, of course, clicked with his disciples either. To make a fifty year-old story short, we come to C_3 , but it is to be broken into a set of sub-solutions [a], [b], [c], Might I suggest that C_{3a} , the 25 seminar plan did not work either? The present Q. and A. effort is C_{3b} : we obviously hope that it will work. But it needs symbolic help, so I come to C_{3c} .

C_{3c} goes back to the problems mentioned on the bottom of *Insight* 603: "the introduction into physics of tensor fields and eigenfunctions raised a barrier between the theoretical physicists that grasped the mathematics but possessed no great skill in handling laboratory equipment and, on the other hand, the experts in experimental work for whom the recondite mathematics was sheer mystery." I must be brief here. I slip past the tensor calculus equivalence of my W_i , the zone in which O'Donovan and I hope to work in the Autumn, but I push you to muse over my new eigen-function terminology that is to

defog the meanings of interpretation. We split M, (think, if it helps, of the physics shift to discontinuous orbits related to the work of Schroedinger and Heisenberg), the meaning reached by the function of interpretation into eigenfunctions, eigen-zones, M^r , M^i , M^h , M^d , M^f , M^p , M^s , M^c , M^o . The super-scripts are powers in mathematics, but here the powers are of the functions of research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, policy, systematics, communications, and ordinariness. Ordinariness feeds into research, as indicated in W_3 . Note that “p” is used for doctrines: policy, then, but also avoiding the repetition of superscript “d”. I could go on, but it would be too much here, to discuss Alpha’s presentation in these terms, noting, e.g., that regularly Alpha’s audience is pretty undifferentiated, even perhaps to be thought of as ordinary in the sense of the last line of *Method* 266. So, we symbolize the “between”, and hope that Alpha will be asked, even by Alpha, “who is the audience?” and – a final nudge here – I would note finer eigenzones that emerge when one considers the communications matrix C_{ij} presented on page 108 of *A Brief History of Tongue* and discussed in chapter 5 of *ChrlSt in History*, “Communications in General”. And I pause with these suggestions of refinements, opening up, I hope, a few generations of work.

But before concluding I return to the topic raised in Question 8, about elementary reading of scriptures [think of the *Upanishad* as well! And recall for all scriptures the advice hidden in that name: *shad* : sitting ; *ni*: devotedly ; *upa*: near. Near a teacher, a cosmos, a self, a tradition, a Tower]. The lone ordinary reader in that later culture is to be luminously not-alone in his or her cave or campus or village. The dynamics of M^i is to cyclically improve ordinary reading in its mesh of clarity and mystery (recall *Insight* 17.1), and the heart of that ever-fresh freshness is the creative possibilities of varieties of luminous selves in luminous lonelinesses, possibilities intertwined with a positivity of later stages of *haute vulgarization*. Such later stages, solving “the problem of general history, which is the real catch” (*Topics in Education* , 236), replace – it is a schedule of statistics - the anaphatic solitary contemplative with the kataphatic contemplative community of The Tower of Able. The Tower community is to “fuse into a single explanation” (*Insight*, 610), a dark symphonic anticipation of the Single Explanation to be expressed eschatologically in patterned molecules, some of which expressions are names, but all of which is a Single Name.