

SOFDWARE 4

Care: From Name to *Nomos*

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My pace and poise in beginning to read page 250 comes as a shock to some. It is certainly odd to focus on the turning of a page and on the two words of the turnover: *Assembly* and *include*. A summary way of putting the result of my rambling through languages was the addition of a curious new word, which I now designate as '##1' though it would be nicer as a more Chinese character: imagine it that way, wonderfully penned.¹ ##1 is the same as what I called W4 in the Cantowers. It is simply a word that refers to the structure indicated by the two diagrams on pages 322-3 of *Phenomenology and Logic*. Why, you may well ask, am I doing this?

I am inviting you first of all to think of that word, ##1, as the word *care*, or equivalent to the word *care*. Unrealistically, I might think of an odd view of the Chinese Ecumene that Voegelin considers at the end his Volume 3 of *Order and History: The Ecumenic Age*.² Voegelin had trouble with splicing East and West in a global unity: my little word, I might un-modestly say, points to the answer, Lonergan's answer.

Shortly I will rope in Alasdair MacIntyre's book, *After Virtue*, to throw light on the process of working with page 250, and I will pick up on an imaginative scene with which he begins: the loss of all but fragments of the literature on virtue.³ Here I have a

¹Below I recall the Chinese splicing for sing. Here you might think of symbols for factknow/knowdofeel. Connect such efforts with note 34 of *Method in Theology*, 88: "expressing the subjective experience in words and as subjective". The words are evident there but the subjectivity is a trickier issue, depending on the development of a cultural *ethos*. A simple instance of this may help. What are you thinking of when you think of reading, say, Plato, or listening to Beethoven? Not too many people really think they are doing more than reading a book, listening to music.

²Louisiana State University Press, 1964. The final chapter.

³Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, University of Notre Dame Press, 1981, 1.

larger fantasy in mind: surely worth following up for an hour or seven (the length of the fantasy film, *The Lord of the Rings!*). My fantasy is of a Chinese Aristotle, self-discovering in such a full sense that she discovers the structure of caring. The Western Aristotle gave birth to new usages, new twists on old words. You might consider as an example the new post-Aristotle word, *hylemorphism*: a “double word”, spliced together like the double word in Chinese for **sing** that I discussed in the previous essay.

The word for **sing** is spliced from **mouth** and **bird**. Note that the Chinese Ecumene has a different twist on structuring signs and our Chinese Aristotle - lets call her Ako after my Japanese daughter-in-law! - has this advantage in speaking out her discoveries. She is, if you like, the Chinese or Japanese equivalent of the Indian Panini or the Korean King Sejong. She is the Panini of the grammar of the mind; she shifts the Sejong project of ‘isomorphing’ the articulators ‘inwards’. What, then, is the reality of care, a woman’s care? She leaps out of the tradition in her self-digestion, self-intussusception, and comes to a pretty decent understanding of herself (as human: she is not inventing Akoism, no more than Lonergan is inventing Lonerganism: when are we going to stop this nonsense!) which she manages to diagram as the diagrams of pages 322-3 of *Phenomenology and Logic*.

Ako’s advantage as Chinese is that she can make a word the same way the word **ming** was made for **sing**. Her word, of course, would be much more elegant than my poor ##1, but you get my drift. This is the same sort of drift as led me to use in class⁴ the two ‘words’ *McA* and *MAC* for the process of minding that yields concepts. You get a diagram-word that ‘keeps you real’: that, in my case is the diagram-word *MAC*. My other diagram-word, *McA*, helps to identify the “unreal”. We shall see below how these

⁴I present this usage in *Beyond Establishment Economics. No Thankyou Mankiw* (Bruce Anderson and Philip McShane, Axial Press, Halifax, 2000), chapter 3, “Thinking Like an Economist”. In the symbolism, M means mind, C means concept, A in MAC means ?! But the A in McA means analysis. This obviously links up with Lonergan’s simple positioning in note 2, *Method in Theology*, 336: “The key issue is whether concepts result from understanding or understanding results from concepts”.

two work nicely in controlling our critical assessment of MacIntyre's book.

Not only would Ako's work be more elegant than mine, but it would use delicate strokes so as, for example, to up-image the role of questioning and to intimate the origin and role of concepts as indicated in note 4 below. Then the folly of "conceptual analysis" would stare at you from the page. I am surmising about one very smart lady of the past and hoping for some very smart lady in the future!⁵ At all events, the better the stroke-structure, the more significant the symbolism.⁶ What does significant mean? Well, effective in real-making: she is implementing her metaphysics more beautifully.⁷

Ako's word expresses externally - pressed as much as possible towards an isomorphic (Orphic) beauty - her inner word of theoretical achievement. Theoretical? I suspect that she would do well here too, getting a complex word like *real-hard-long-think* for theory. But the word gets out into common use in the culture, a word that expresses fact-know/do-know/feel-do as the pattern of care. And as 'out' in common use, it slips into commonsense in a post-theoretic meaning.⁸

But I would like to think, in my fantasy of contra-factual history, that the *ethos* of

⁵I cannot but help thinking of the opinion of another lady, Molly Bloom: "I don't care what anybody says it'd be much better for the world to be governed by the women in it you wouldn't see women going and killing one another" (James Joyce, *Ulysses*, Penguin, 640).

⁶On the significance of symbolism, check the indices of both *Insight* and *Phenomenology and Logic*.

⁷This is an old point of mine, but you may need the nudge. Anyway, pausing, delaying, is a desperate contemporary need. So, no harm in delaying over the development of the point made by Lonergan on line 16 of *Topics in Education*, 160. The unity of a science relates to its efficiency. Metaphysics gains unity and beauty in so far as it meshes with, and expresses the patterns of, finality, being's thirst for processional perfection.

⁸This is an enormously complex topic relating to popular culture, to pedagogy, etc. It was to have been a central consideration of Cantower 54, but perhaps we'll get round to it later.

care of that Chinese culture would end up being more “thought-ful” for being under the control of this peculiar linguistic creativity. Think of the difference to childhood growth of being told “*##1*” instead of being told “be good”.

A parallel from the West’s shift to theory will help us along: instead of the word *care* let me take the word *curve*. If someone is sick they are cared for towards recovery; if a stone is thrown it curves towards return. There are lots of ways of developing the parallel in a pedagogical manner. You might think of the Aristotelian account of both the sickness and the stone and get ideas about nature and virtue. More relevant to us herenow is to think of Socrates as a nuisance, as I may well be a nuisance. Your possible annoyance at me fits in both with the page-250 task of *Completion* and with questions of the second half of the page. What is care back to health? We all know what it is, sez Socrates’ - or Ako’s - listeners. What is it to curve back to earth? Same difference. You can even throw in new words: for *care* try *##1*; for *curve* try *accelerate*. Both new words add subtlety: *##1* quite obviously - so Ako thinks, cooking it up - accelerate, less obviously. *Accelerate* - perhaps recall your Latin - adds **haste** to the shape.

But let us fantasize further and think of the brilliant Ako as getting quite beyond Aristotle in thinking about the curving flight of the stone. Then it is not a matter of the stone hastening back to its natural place: it is a matter of a quite precise earth-call which pushes Ako to invent a further new word, just as odd looking as *##1*. Ako’s new word is d^2s/dt^2 . We now have two odd words: but they have familiar names: *care* and *acceleration*. AND we have now two types of annoyance. To say that we do not know what *care* and *courage* mean: that is an annoyance to the doctor and the soldier respectively. The annoyance is normally milder when it comes to the meaning of acceleration when talking of a flying or falling stone. But this is tricky: a mother can get annoyed with the doctor because she suspects that the doctor doesn’t know what *care* means; a racing driver could get very indignant at the suggestion that he or she doesn’t know what *good acceleration* means.

However, the real twisting question here is, How annoyed are you at these

ramblings of mine? And to salt the wound I might ask, What do you mean, anyway, by annoyance?⁹

The real twisting of your questing brings us back to the twisting of the page, and to an annoying existential question about reading the word *Assembly* before turning the page. It brings us face to face, indeed, with a shocking cultural assumption about reading. This needs thinking out, talking out, caring, scotosis-therapy. The cultural assumption reaches into the neurodynamics of what is named *general bias*. It constitutes a sick existential gap that grounds the tragedy and the comedy of learned axial talk: so, for example, it is the stuff of MacIntyre's 250-page talk of virtue.¹⁰

The turning of page 249 is a turning on two words: "*Assembly includes*". Ako's word for each would 'include' - note another twist to ponder over - the sub-word ##1. Assemblers are doubly involved both in the assembling and in the including. And Lonergan, at 64, cared about those sub-words as he typed along in his solitary climb, in his isolated bedroom of Regis College on Bayview Avenue. He had read with care, not Ako, but Aquinas. The sub-word haunts every word of the text.

Is this something altogether fanciful, just plain daft? Let us twist back and forward with the analogue, the romance of the stone going home, or the story of the earth hanging round the sun. Now the two words that turn a page might be "*Acceleration includes*" or "*Curving includes*". But we pick up now on a long history of

⁹No harm in recall one key Socratic pointing of Lonergan from the middle of page 287 of *Method in Theology*: "one can go on to a developed account...." Can one?

¹⁰You may be pleasantly surprised if you approach MacIntyre's book with even a nominal glimpse of the content of note 4 above: it becomes pretty obvious where he is stuck on the matter. But we shall get back to that in the two essays to follow, SOFDAWARE 5 and 6. The same is true, of course, of a close reading of the use of the word *concept* in any field, in any author. Such an effort belongs to the beginnings of dealing with the existential gap: but that is a tough reality to face, to intussuscept, to challenge in one's own molecules. You may find it helpful to follow up *Existential Gap* in the index of *Phenomenology and Logic*.

struggle. Instead of Ako we have *The Sleepwalkers*, beginning with Kepler. Instead of the word '##1' haunting the page there is the word ' d^2s/dt^2 '. But, unlike the first haunting, there is no a sub-culture that accepts, lives with, the second haunting, a culture that physics students battle with for years in order to be **at home**.¹¹

I have before me my very old notes of lectures I gave in Mathematical Physics in the spring of 1960. This morning I mused over that parallel between page 250 of *Method* and the page in which I dealt with Kepler's three wonderous laws of planetary motion, showing how their investigation can lead to the law of inverse-square attraction. It is a dense page of symbolic talk. I tried presenting it to a very serious and interested audience of philosophers a few years ago but had to give up after a few lines. My first year students of 1960 knew how to read, had been cultured into reading. They battled for months with flying stones and spinning tops to lift themselves into the preciousness of *theoria*, of serious understanding. That was my last year of mutually uplifting teaching: is that not a horrific claim? The next year I shifted to being a first year student in a four-year course of theology and had to live through the obscenity of a sick commonsense eclecticism.

My later 20 years of teaching was in philosophy where I met the commonsense needs of young ladies. Certainly **meaning** made sense to them¹², but the culture of their education and their social context battered their vulnerable psyches. And we grappled with the meaning of care, of ##1. We did so in terms of such things as caring for your friends enough to plan a good dinner. But our best sessions were our efforts to digest what was wrong with their Friday nights - or Knights - when they ventured out in their best sights and smells, seeking to meet Cosmo Polis. Cosmo regularly turned out to be

¹¹Parallel this with what Lonergan has to say about transcendental method and systematic thinking in *Method in Theology* 14, 350-1.

¹²I found it useful to get them to think and talk in terms of **me-ning, ning** as something 'me' does, an "outgoing of subject."

inattentive, unintelligent, unreasonable, planless, and irresponsible. And regularly couldn't dance.

What has all this to do with our efforts regarding reading page 250 of Method? I am talking about a controlling and destructive *ethos* that blocks teachers and students from reading there the *##1* and the curving and the accelerations of Lonergan.¹³ It was, in general, the *ethos* of his audiences, trapping him into presentations that frustrated his expression and braked his pace.¹⁴ It was the *ethos* that he took his stand against in his mid-forties after a decade of trying to read Thomas and the expressed stand is worth a read, a reed shaken in the *ethos*, even as we read.

“Inasmuch as one may suppose that one already possesses a habitual understanding similar to that of Aquinas, no method or effort is need to understand as Aquinas understood; one has simply to read, and the proper acts of understanding and meaning will follow. But one may not be ready to make that assumption on one's own behalf. Then one has to learn. Only by the slow, repetitious labor of going over and over the data, by catching here a little insight and there another, by following through false leads and profiting from many mistakes, by continuous adjustments and cumulative changes of one's initial suppositions and perspectives and concepts can one hope to attain such a development of one's own understanding as to hope to understand what Aquinas understood and meant. Such is the method I have employed,

¹³The problem of adult growth lurks here, a key existential problem in our times. I wrote of it in various Cantowers, with doctrinal leads in the final Cantower 41. The rate and acceleration of one's growth is a function of the growth already achieved. I sometimes use the illustration of a balloon steadily expanding: the larger it is, the more air in the added volume. For the mathematicians there is the analogue from $d/dx [e^x] = e^x$.

¹⁴One can view his entire works in this light, but I think especially now of volume 6 of the *Complete Works*, and the pressure there to popularize, to give the *haute vulgarization* which, ironically, is a topic in the volume (see the index under *haute vulgarization*).

and it has been on the chance that others also might wish to employ it that this book has been written".¹⁵

Only with the emergence of a counter-ethos, a parallel to the *ethos* of serious classes in physics, will that reading of his signs occur. Indeed, as I check the texts and the teaching and the graduates of physics in the past forty years, I have the suspicion that the *ethos* in physics "deteriorates cumulatively."¹⁶ And again, some of Lonergan's words on the matter are worth neurosoaking.

"Teaching physics without the students knowing the relevant mathematics is not teaching physics. If they know the mathematics, there is nothing difficult about the physics. If they do not know the mathematics, then what they are learning is not physics. That applies to the simplest and most elementary matters. What does the physicist mean by a velocity? He means ds/dt . What does he mean by acceleration? He means d^2s/dt^2 . If you know what is meant by these symbols from the differential calculus, you know exactly what is meant by acceleration and velocity, and if you do not know what these symbols mean you do not understand acceleration and velocity"¹⁷

I do not think that I should labor the parallel or detail the problem. That could well just be added clutter: unless unless there be a curve of redemption, a creative corrective orbiting of signs, of ##l.

And that is the wonder of Lonergan's last great hop, step and jump which Ako, if she had done it in my strange Chinese fable, would have found words for to cyclowake us. Lonergan's hop: that is the hop by which he came to the general perspective of page 250 through the late 1950s and the early 1960s. The step: that is the

¹⁵*Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, 223.

¹⁶*Insight*, 229[254]. Contrast Stephen Hawking: "The basic ideas about the origin and fate of the universe can be stated without mathematics in a form that people without a scientific education can understand" (*A Brief History of Time. From Big Bang to Black Holes*, first page).

¹⁷*Topics in Education*, 145.

step, the clear step up, to the conception of a discontinuously more efficient metaphysics. The jump, jumpstart: that is the placement of the hop within the step that I would associate with a larger placement towards which we are moving, the placement caught symbolically in W5, my fifth metaphysical word, which no doubt Ako would have wafted into a compact Chinese tort.¹⁸ I have used the word W5 before¹⁹, but no need to follow this up for the moment. We will focus on W5 in *Quodlibet 2*.²⁰

I spoke to a colleague last night about the struggle towards the meaning of dy/dx . In her early forties, she is gallantly struggling with the beginnings of calculus. The issue is a personal shift from a notional assent and an assent of belief to an ascent into the world of serious understanding, of *theoria*, of contemplation.²¹ It is, to my mind, the central issue in the disease that I call Lonerganism, but that disease is just a piece of the general *ethos* for which general bias is the golden calf. That disease, and its heir-breeding through generations, assures the exclusion of adult growth in these axial times. It holds our molecules as we turn that page, bruising our read of those two

¹⁸*Tort*, from the Latin, *torquere*, to twist: Indo-European roots, *terk*, to twist, *ter*, to rub.

¹⁹In Cantower 40; See also *Journal of Macrodynamical Analysis* 4(2004).

²⁰The shape of my shift from the Cantowers only emerged gradually. The final structure is a set of 8 SOFDAWAREs (the eight being a single-page invitation to a general collaboration in implementing functional specialization) followed by three Quodlibets that contextualize the invitation to collaborate. Those three are, I hope, the beginning of a Quodlibet series of exchanges helping forward the collaboration. Note 80 of SOFDAWARE adds a context relating the effort to the present state of Lonergan studies.

²¹Rescuing both the use of the word theory and the activity of contemplation are major challenges of this century. Both problems relate to being serious and luminously critical about ourselves as whatters. The word *appreciate*, perhaps, helps in both cases, where the stress is on articulate appreciation. Cantower 21, on the topic of contemplation, may be useful here. Real theory is, of course, the result of contemplative cherishing.

words, "*Assembly* includes".

But notice where we are now. I have rambled down that page, an investigator of things assembled and completed and selected, and I take a stand. Lonergan's achievement stands or falls with the rejection or acceptance of the challenge of this page. I began presenting the Cantowers on an Easter Monday - all Fool's Day, as it happened that year of 2002 - with the memory of another revolution, when a few fool's occupied the General Post Office at the centre of Dublin and proclaimed a stand against 700 years of Empire. It is altogether clearer to me now that page 250 of *Method* is the GPO in which to take a stand. So, obviously, a reach for a proper initial reading of it seems a sound idea: get into the building and note its strengths before a shot is fired.