

Towards a Luminous Darkness of Circumstances : *Insight* After Forty Years.

"Cervantes - a patient gentleman who wrote
a book - has been sitting in the Elisian
fields for three centuries and gazing
sadly around, awaiting the birth of a
grandson capable of understanding him"¹

I begin this essay, suitably yet accidentally, on May ninth, the birthday of Jose Ortega y Gasset. It is a suitable day, for I am writing in celebration of the appearance of Bernard Lonergan's *Insight* in Spanish.² It is marvelously accidental: while I had, through yesterday, been gearing up to this essay entwining the hopes of Ortega with the achievement of Lonergan, only this morning did I begin Rockwell Gray's biography of Ortega and so discover the birth date.³ Finally, the beginning is suitably accidental. Perhaps you are, at this moment of your Spanish or English reading, thinking that the beginning, so far, is just foolishly circumstantial? But then, I would invite you to pause with Ortega to ask, "What are circumstances?"⁴, to envisage you and I

¹Jose Ortega y Gasset, *Meditations on Quixote*, W.W. Norton and Co, New York, 1961, p.52. By the end of this century, of course, the search for a Quixotic reader of *Insight* has become the healthier reach for a granddaughter. Would it be you, young lady? (This work will be referred to later as *Meditations*.)

²The essay was written originally for presentation at Universidad Xavieriana, Bogota, Colombia, where it has been translated and published.

³Rockwell Gray, *The Imperative of Modernity. An Intellectual Biography of Jose Ortega y Gasset*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1989.

⁴Ortega y Gasset, *What is Philosophy?*, translated by Mildred Adams, New York: W.W.Norton and Co.,1960, p.199.

"existing in a landscape of things, in a set of circumstances"⁵, to reach for the Quixotic impossible dream that "every circumstance is enclosed by a broader one"⁶, that "in reality everything surrounds us"⁷.

What is at issue here is what I have elsewhere discussed as "poise",⁸ but now I wish to carry my pointing to a new level of meaning. Further, it is as well to indicated, at this early stage in our encounter, the problems of that carrying for you and me, in you and me. In what manner am I a carrier, a character,⁹ of the meaning pointed to? There is the old joke about the oriental master-mistress pointing to the hotdog stand in New York saying, "make me one with everything". The vendor, street-wise, and the circumstantial listeners, HCE and ALP,¹⁰ get the street-level pointing, but perhaps the vendor is in that other jostling world in which the exchange is an

⁵Ortega y Gasset, *Phenomenology and Art*, translated by Philip W.Silver, New York: W.W.Norton and Co.,1975, p.23.

⁶*Op. cit*, note 4, p.199.

⁷*Ibid*.

⁸See P. McShane, *The Redress of Poise*, Axial Press, 2000. The meaning of "poise" is a development of the meaning of "the bridge of bones" discussed in P.McShane, "Features of Generalized Empirical Method", *Creativity and Method*, edited by M.Lamb, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, 1980.

⁹ "character": see Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, chapter 14, section 1. Like the other short section in the book, section 6 of chapter 3, this is deceptively short. Elsewhere (P.McShane "Systematics, Communications, Actual Contexts", *Lonergan Workshop* Vol. 7, F.Lawrence (ed), 1987, pp.146-7) I suggested an alternative title for the section, which helps towards lifting the meaning of "character" here: "Passionate subjectivity in the lucid closed options of the finality of implementation".

¹⁰ 'Here Comes Everybody' and 'Anna Livia Plurabelle', the Joycean man and woman in each of us.

epiphany, a Proustian teasingsong¹¹ to be further shared? Who is to say? But let you and I now secretly share.

You would not be reading this, I suspect, had you never heard of Lonergan and indeed of my vending of Lonergan these forty years. You may well be a growing mistress or mister of Lonergan's meaning, and if so you share somehow his reach and respect for Aristotle's obscure human finest, a "going all the way"¹² that would make you one with everything, that would call you to become a circumstance in which "the universe can bring forth its own unity in the concentrated form of a single intelligent view".¹³

Now before moving on with you it seems best to make a clear pointing about this last cliff-scape Hopkinsesque¹⁴ - or Dantesque or Cervantesque - calling, Way, Hod. Be comforted in a possible suspicion that it may not be yours. Indeed, a central function of my essay is to help you identify your Way by my Windhover's¹⁵ eye view of bits of my own forty year Quixotic climbing. You may taste yourself tremblingly called forward or you may sense yourself authentically off the hook. Or you may find yourself trapped in a third group of

¹¹ For a discussion of Proustian memory of tea, of sonata, of 'position', of past, see chapter four of P. McShane, *The Shaping of the Foundations*, University Press of America, 1976.

¹² See Lonergan's discussion of the relevant text of Aristotle in "Mission and Spirit", *A Third Collection*, Paulist Press, New York, 1985, p. 27.

¹³ *Insight*, p.520. A full Christian context finds here also a perspective on the vision of Jesus.

¹⁴ I would recall here Lonergan's comment on the polyphony of consciousness and Hopkins' perspective on self-taste: See B. Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, Paulist Press, 1985, p.132.

¹⁵ My reference here to Hopkin's 1877 poem, "The Windhover: To Christ Our Lord", raises the larger topic of the axial disorientation of discourse and the possibility of what Seamus Heaney calls *The Redress of Poetry* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995). See the Introduction and Chapter 1 of that work.

which I shall write later.¹⁶

Furthermore, let you note that I used the expression "clear pointing" above. Perhaps I may reverently put myself above my class, my second rate mimetic status, by identifying this final sweep of mine as my *Paridiso*. Campbell, recalling Dante, writes of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* as Joyce's *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*. His last, fourth, work would have been his *Paridiso*. "What the heavenly language was to have been for Joyce's unwritten fourth book, we do not know, but Joyce is reported to have said that it was going to be lucid, simple, and clear. Which is as it should have been for Paradise".¹⁷

The problem of lucidity, simplicity, clarity, is one that haunts this paper (should you drop the haunted paper?). But for now clarity is my aim. So I shall pursue here a clear analogy that gives for me a fundamental pointing towards the type of effort needed in work on the book *Insight* as we move into the new millennium. It is one that dawned on me a decade ago, an insight regarding two books that preoccupied me in the late fifties. Obviously, one of the books was *Insight* itself, which came bursting into my life in 1957 in its first edition. And in that first edition it was pretty well the same size as a book I had been labouring over in the previous academic year of graduate mathematical science, a copy of which I have on my desk. The book is the second edition (1951) of Georg Joos *Theoretical Physics*.¹⁸ There is no need for the reader to seek this book out, but certainly it would be useful to peruse some equivalent book. Joos' book is slightly longer than *Insight*, a great survey of work done in a good undergraduate study of

¹⁶See the text below, at note 63.

¹⁷Joseph Campbell, *Mythic Worlds, Modern Words, On the Art of James Joyce*, edited by Edmund L. Epstein, Harper Collins, New York, 1997, p.21.

¹⁸This edition was written with the collaboration of Ira M. Freeman and published by Blackie and Son Limited, London and Glasgow.

mathematical physics.¹⁹

Now, what we must pause over is the meaning of the word "survey". We may think of a map, and map-reading. One reads a map quite differently after the journey, the climb. Perhaps you have shared my excitement at getting a book in a new field of inquiry, reading the chapter headings, pushing quickly through a few chapters until growing obscurity forces a halt. I cannot resist comment here on one such book of my graduate studies in mathematics, since it stands out for me as an epiphany of what serious reading, climbing, is. The book was the classic Whittaker and Watson, *Functions of a Complex Variable* and the moment of illumination came to me when I had "read" the first short chapter and moved to "read" the first of the many problems given at the end of the chapter. As I type, it dawns on me that we could do worse than add to chapter one of *Insight* some such bundle of problems.²⁰ At all events, I recall being so struck by the obscurity of the exercises, that I paged back to see whether I was really looking at the problems of chapter one. Gradually, of course, I settled down to the serious reading that these exercises involved: some of them absorbed me for several days. One could think, then, of the chapters as being surveys, reading very differently after one had climbed through the exercises.

Now, back to Joos as survey. I am sure that an enthusiastic first year student of physics could have struggled through the 27 pages devoted there to "The Mechanics of a Single Particle",

¹⁹The book of 1951 was not, of course, up to date on areas of development in that decade, like quantum electrodynamics. And of course it is quite dated now in the areas of micro-physics and cosmology. But my point is not effected by this datedness: it would merely add refinements to a challenge of updating the survey that is *Insight*.

²⁰My original intention in the present paper was that it should wind round towards the treatment (at some length!) of an "apparently trifling problem" (*Insight*, chapter one, paragraph one). That problem will now be treated in a separate essay, entitled "Riverrun Past Eve and Adam: An Apparently Trifling Problem", opening up feelingful reflections on "circumstances" right through the book *Insight*. The problem is worth posing here: How many ways can n married couples be seated about a round table in such a manner that there is always one man between two women and none of the men is ever next to his own wife?

but it certainly would be map-reading of a mountain fading into the mist. A graduate, on the other hand, can read it in the recollection of the many books and problems tackled in the previous years: a mountain climbed, at least by an easy route, with a guide. And I may add that my reading of that chapter was quite different after teaching a full course on the topic in the academic year of 1959-60.

So, I come to the central light that I have to offer with my paralleling of *Insight* and *Joos*. Joos' book was made possible by the centuries long shift in physics that brought forth, for instance, the sophisticated dynamics of a single particle under a central force, and in that area there are classics of the nineteenth century that a good teacher will draw on in guiding the climbers in a first year university course. What, then, of *Insight*? My claim is - and no doubt it will offend and be disputed - that there is no such positively genetic sequence of advances in these previous centuries in the strict empirical analysis that grounds the survey, *Insight*. There are, of course, advances in the sciences and the arts, clearly evident in such diverse areas as history and mathematics: but I am speaking of quite another matter, a genetics of generalized empirical method.²¹ Of his or her nature, a methodologist of this ilk is luminously self-tasting²² in contrast to all types of sophisticated spontaneity that self-articulate but in fact are self-opaque,

²¹ Generalized empirical method requires a balanced attention to investigator and investigated. Its genetics is a topic in a higher order of discourse named by Lonergan "a third order of consciousness" in File V.7, the February 1965 file which contains not only the original discovery-sketch of functional specialization but also a beginning of a book on method which points to a much more complex work that the eventual book, *Method in Theology*. The file is reproduced (about forty pages) and its significance discussed in Darlene O'Leary, *Lonergan's Practical View of History*, Axial Press, Halifax, 2000.

²²Ortega has a relevant little aside in his discussion of *The Origins of Philosophy* (W.W.Norton and Co, New York, 1967, p.116). He is reaching towards primitive and Indo-European roots to describe "the oldest profession....generally an elder, entrusted with tasting foods, a connoisseur of tastes or savors, *sapores*.... The term transfers from the object to the subject, 'one who understands savors',. the *sapiens*, the *sophos*"..

voraussetzunglos. Perhaps an illustration would help. What of the last hundred years of phenomenological searchings? It seems appropriate to let the self-tasting Lonergan make the point:²³

"Phenomenology

deals with concrete data

moves towards invulnerable insight

hence, presupposes a philosophy [data, insight, judgment

+ rejects a counter philosophy

-that neglects concrete data

-does not understand

-does not require invulnerability

hence, nonsense to dispute phenomenological results

because they suppose a philosophic position

nonsense to attempt phenomenological study

under pretext that it is *Voraussetzungslos*"

Before considering Lonergan's point here, I must pause again, autobiographically, over my central parallel, between Joos and Lonergan, between surveying physics and surveying

²³I quote here the content of a single scribbled page from the Lonergan archives, Batch V.8.i. I suspect that it is from the winter of 1963. It is worthwhile to draw attention here to the early essays on phenomenology of Ortega, of which Philip Silver writes in his Introduction (Jose Ortega y Gasset, *Phenomenology and Art*, W.W. Norton and Co, New York, 1975, p.7) "Ortega can be seen to have been the first existential phenomenologist of all, adopting this position in 1913 when Husserl himself had only just published the first edition of his *Ideas*". One may reflect, in the light of Lonergan's statements, on Ortega's view: "The novel thing about phenomenology is that it makes a scientific method out of its unwillingness to abandon this plane of the *lived*, the immediate and the visible as such".(ibid., p.110). A detailed comparison of these essays with parallel zones of *Insight* would enlighten the reader on the Scotistic failure to thematize the assumed method.

philosophy, between two parallel types of beginning.

First, I express the hope that my autobiographical bent neither bores nor offends you. I write to you, biography to biography, about four biographies, ours and Ortega's and Lonergan's. As Ortega would have it, each of us is a mesh of circumstances. I write from mine that you may, perhaps, better identify yours. Ortega remarks, "he who wants to teach us a truth should place us in a position to discover it ourselves".²⁴ Lonergan expresses a truth that I would have you intussuscept: "To learn thoroughly is a vast undertaking that calls for relentless perseverance. To strike out on a new line and become more than a weekend celebrity calls for years in which one's living is more or less constantly absorbed in the effort to understand, in which one's understanding gradually works round and up a spiral of viewpoints with each complementing its predecessor and only the last embracing the whole field to be mastered".²⁵ I wish us to add four sets of circumstances to that cold call - and, as my reader may know from elsewhere, that call, happily, may not be yours.²⁶

I am inviting you, more concretely than Lonergan, less eloquently than Ortega²⁷, to discover the

²⁴*Meditations*, p.67.

²⁵*Insight*, p.186.

²⁶ I have treated this topic most recently in *A Brief History of Tongue. From Big Bang to Coloured Wholes* (Axial Press, 1998), chapter four. In that chapter there is also a diagramming of the horizontal axial period that separates the first and second phylogenetic times of humanity (see B. Lonergan, *De Deo Trino Pars Systematica*, Gregorian Press, Rome, 1964, pp. 199-204). Since this is the context of my reflections (see especially notes 8, 23, 26, 37, 52) on Lonergan's structuring of *Die Wendung zur Idee*, I add the diagram at the conclusion of this paper.

²⁷I think especially here of the *Meditations on Quixote* - my edition includes the relevant nudgings of Juan Marias - where Ortega leads us through valleys and centuries, gently generating an attitude so that "if we prolong the attitude taken by Socrates in the *Symposium* in the pale light of dawn, it will seem as if we come up against Don Quixote, the hero and the madman". (ibid., p.161).

call, its presence or absence, the shade of its nature, above all the slow rhythms of its reaching. I am writing, one hundred and fifty years after the *Communist Manifesto*, a *Communications Manifesto*. That manifesto has been so-slow growing, thus calling for dates and circumstances to take it out of the windmill world.

I mentioned offense: certainly my view can generate fright, resentment. A multitude of anecdotes bubble up in memory-pool. I recall an expert I met in Oxford in the mid-sixties, who remarked that he had read *Insight* during the year and considered that he had caught the essential. My too-spontaneous reply was that I found this odd: I had been at it for a decade and was still struggling for clues. Mention of a decade brings to mind an old chestnut, which you may well have heard from me before. The disciple asks the Zen Master, "how long to enlightenment?" "Ten years" was the reply. "But if I try harder?" "Then, twenty".

Now the point of my analogy is that there is nothing mysterious about the reach for what I call Ken Mystery (a nice lift out of male nonsense!). I am simply appealing, as Lonergan does, to a parallel with a successful science.²⁸ Let me spell it out autobiographically.

In autumn of 1959, in my first university position, I lectured at two quite different levels of mathematical physics: there was a first year course;²⁹ there was a graduate course in which I dealt with special relativity and advanced theories of differential equations. The "dealings" were worlds apart: the gap was one of understanding, a gap created in the second group by something of the spiraling mentioned by Lonergan in the quotation above. I must emphasize the gap was precisely one of understanding, not one of information.³⁰ We were dealing with elementary motions on

²⁸*Method in Theology*, p.3.

²⁹It was an honors level course, something I later found absent in the local Canadian system.

³⁰There is the more complex issue of an affective gap, generated by a concomitant psychic development. Some clues are available in "Systematics: A Language of the Heart", chapter five of P McShane, *The Redress of Poise*, Axial Press, Halifax, 1999.

both levels, pushing in each case for an initial hold on essences and circumstances of such motions, still an elusive goal at the end of this century. The phenomenon - I draw attention to the fact that we are doing phenomenology in a full sense³¹ - is familiar to any student in serious mathematics. Walk by mistake into a classroom - or worse, into an exam - of a higher year and the talk is startlingly beyond one's horizon. The parallel does not normally prevail in the literary worlds of philosophy and theology. In my own years of theological studies, the second, third and fourth year classes were lumped together in a democratic sell-out. To the common argument that the fields of inquiry are different, I would answer that indeed they are. Mathematics, mathematical logic, mathematical physics are very elementary relation fields³²; human studies reach for massively complex and remote meanings. In my fourth year of mathematical studies I focused a great deal of energy on the problem of the self-energy of the electron. Why should we assume - as a slovenly culture does³³ - that the self-energy of inquiry is a trivial democratic topic?

There is, then, adult growth in mathematical physics, a growth which can reach beyond graduate studies, a growth which will reach new depths in the next millennium to make self-luminous and self-tasting the progress, the pedagogy, the roots, the limitations.³⁴ It has its parallels in the more difficult fields of inquiry, complexifying up through chemistry, botany,

³¹ In a note to the final question session of *Phenomenology and Logic* (Lonergan: *Collected Works*, vol.18, edited by P. McShane, University of Toronto Press, 2000), I include a lengthy aside by Lonergan regarding the phenomenology of *verstehen* and mathematics. The essay mentioned in note 20, above, will add the dimensions of mathematical feeling and judgment.

³²There are, of course, peculiar difficulties in physics regarding the circumstances of forms.

³³Ortega y Gasset, *Mission of the University*, translation and Introduction by H.L. Nostrand, Princeton University Press, 1944, p.43.

³⁴The new depths are those pointed to here in notes 8, 21, 26, 52.

zoology, etc.³⁵ Much of contemporary culture takes a stand against such adult growth: how might I make a beginning of a post-axial pointing?

Here, certainly, the impressionist and biographic aspects of my essay become all too evident. I might call up ghosts from the remnants of compact consciousness openness to elderhood, from the narrowing harrowing of human meaning laced into the axial grammars of Panini (5th century BC) and Dionysus of Alexandria (A.D. 2nd century) and Abbot Aelfric (A.D. 11th century),³⁶ from millennia of disoriented writings on education and rhetoric. Instead, I would wish you to focus your attention on Ortega's critique of slovenliness, on Lonergan's stand against rigidity, on both thinkers' reverence for the openness of self-circumstance as against a certain identifiable closure.

So, in line with their bent and mine, I would have you focus on the circumstances of that part of your adult initiation that was a first university year. Lonergan writes of "closed options" where he means in fact a rooting commitment to openness that deconstructs all forms of rigidity in the luminous searching of circumstantial roots.³⁷ Recall, in contrast - or pick up a few of those terrible texts - the survey courses in philosophy, psychology, sociology, economics, etc that close options in the opposite sense. Instead of an openness to the unknown there is established a bogus nominalistic essence that can crib you into acceptable graduate studies. Joan Robinson gives an instance very much to the point: "The student of economic theory is taught to write $O =$

³⁵I would hope that you would pause over the meaning of "more" here. Do you really think, feel, that physics is much simpler than psychology?

³⁶This is a massive topic. You might fruitfully pause over what you have been taught to mean by "parts of speech": how does this categorization relate to the interrogativity of your tongue and lungs, nerves and skin?

³⁷The deconstruction is, of course, ongoing. Missing from my flawed index to Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, is an entry under "Ongoing". Such an entry of implicit and explicit reference would point the way towards the science of methods within a third order of intentionality and consciousness. See notes 21, 26, 52, 63.

f(L,C) where L is a quantity of labor, C a quantity of capital and O a rate of output of commodities. He is instructed to assume all workers alike, and to measure L in man-hours of labor: he is told something about the index number problem involved in choosing a unit of output; and then he is hurried on to the next question, in the hope that he will forget to ask in what units C is measured. Before ever he does ask, he has become a professor, and so sloppy habits of thought are handed on from one generation to the next".³⁸

How can this rigid handing-down be unseated? "The opposite of slovenliness [and of sloppiness] is *to be in form*"³⁹ Ortega muses about this form in its intensity and suppleness, but surely at its best it is somehow an initial concentration of the concentrated form already mentioned, "the madness of love"⁴⁰ to which Ortega introduces the reader, but a madness and need within the mesh of immediate circumstances. "Circumstances! *Circum stantia!* That is, the mute things which are all around us. Very close to us they raise their silent faces with an expression of humility and eagerness as if they needed our acceptance of their offering and at the same time were ashamed of the apparent simplicity of their gift. We walk blindly among them, our gaze fixed on remote enterprises, embarked upon the conquest of distant schematic cities".⁴¹

The focus, then, is not on distant schematic cities, be they Athens or Paris or Koenigsberg, but on the diseased and diseasing circumstances of student living. With your tolerance, I turn

³⁸Joan Robinson, "The Production Function in the Theory of Capital", *Review of Economic Studies* (21) 1955, p.81. The point is of considerable importance because of the present rigidity of economic studies in the face of both macro- and micro- disasters.

³⁹Ortega y Gasset, *Mission of the University*, p.43; italics his.

⁴⁰*Meditations*, p.35.

⁴¹*Meditations*, p.41. You might well take time out to savor a parallel to the focus I am speaking of above that Lonergan gives in two first paragraphs of *Insight*: the beginning of chapter one and of chapter 14. The *form* in question is, of course, the heuristic form identified with metaphysics, a luminosity of desire.

again to the circumstances of my twenty years in a small undergraduate university for women: thematizing loneliness was a matter of struggling with the circumstances of failed Friday dates. Donna Quixote ventures out to find Cosmo Polis, regularly ending up in boredom⁴². What are the conditions of the possibility of companionship? Of, as Rilke says, solitudes guarding, binding, greeting one another? To be in form is to be bone-wise open. To be bone-wise open is to reach for the echoing of primitive compactness in post-axial mystery-laden integrality. But in our present daze, we must seek out the bone of contention, the bone of contraction, in such squalid zones as first year university.

Have we rambled too far? I am fishing for strategies of "salvations" of our modern mangled circumstance, seeking "to carry it by the shortest route to its fullest significance".⁴³ But there is no shortest route, rout. Sometimes I think, in this regard, of the 1916 Easter march down Dublin's main street of a few Irish rebels against an empire: occupy a few strategic buildings, like the central post office, and hold out for a week or a century.

So we are here edging towards some musing on the central post office of a massive cultural transition. The Quixotic second time, ontogenetic and phylogenetic, of "reading the book of self"⁴⁴ "does not surrender to weapons: it surrenders, if at all, to the meditative cult. A work as great as Quixote has to be taken as Jericho was taken. In wide circles, our thoughts and our emotions must keep pressing in on it slowly, sounding in the air, as it were, imaginary trumpets."⁴⁵

For the moment our attention is on the ontogenetic reading of self, "I and my immediate

⁴²I recall a borrowed definition of Ortega: a bore is one who interrupts your solitude without offering you companionship.

⁴³*Meditations*, p.31. There is a worthwhile editorial note of Juan Marias on "salvations".

⁴⁴James Joyce, *Ulysses*, Bodley Head, London, 1954, p.175.

⁴⁵*Meditations*, p.52.

circumstances", with the peculiarity that the immediacy may indeed include remote enterprizes. Let us spread our attention across the four enterprizes that are Lonergan, Ortega, myself, yourself. Surely, here, the fleeting attention of a first mini-map reading: but it may blossom out into Joycean or Proustian tasting.

We are helped here by a precise focus on what I call "Lonergan's Line". It is the small line that is drawn vertically in the page on phenomenology reproduced above, linking data, insight, judgment. I risk calling it a phenomenological line, thus pointing to its thereness - or hereness, if I may write of you in the circumstances of reading my page. And may I call now on your imagination to press on slowly to trumpeting up, not just a line but an equivalent surface, a three layered surface that is a quasi-continuum of porcupining Lonergan lines. You might press further, and with emotion, to envisage this surface of consciousness, this nooskin, with a fuller complexity of layers, and indeed you could strain forward a fourth dimension, the concreteness of time, biography, history.⁴⁶

But let us stay with a three layered surface: to which now we must add a twist of creative imagination. We are, here, struggling round the Jericho wall of consciousness and the twist that I am cajoling⁴⁷ you to attempt is equivalent to the twist that your hands can give a long rectangle of paper to produce a Mobius strip, a one-sided surface. If this surface is unfamiliar to you, a surface all of which a fly can traverse without either flying or juggling round an edge, it is well worth a pause.

What you and I are doing in all this exercise is tilting ourselves towards the unimaginable.

⁴⁶An entire book would be needed to spell out the reduplicative layering involved in this: for instance, the layer of identified events becomes cumulatively data for critical history (*Method in Theology*, p.189), data for critical method (*Insight*, pp. 685-86), data for *Ignatian Contemplatio ad amorem* of Julian of Norwich's "all manner of things well".

⁴⁷*Insight*, p.398 "...the method of metaphysics is primarily pedagogical....it proceeds by cajoling or forcing attention...."

Envisaging as one-sided our nooskin, our life surface of innumerable Lonergan lines or, if you like, of Ortega circumstances, may help towards the self-surrender, the self-taste, that is the meditative culture of radical immanence. The Jericho wall of consciousness faces neither in nor out. It is an immanence of intussusceptive desire in the human flower, neural-tuned yet skinwise, but rendering this fact luminously incarnate "is a sheer leap into the void for the existential subject".⁴⁸ And, need I add, I am presenting this windmill tilting doctrinally, like koan coaxings, map-misted.

More prosaically, I am being autobiographic here, touching on the set of circumstances that is me prior to raising the question, or quest, of the other three quests, Lonergan, Ortega and you. I am gesturing from a place and time in my climb, twenty years ago.⁴⁹ And you? If you are an old hand at successful self-searching, then you recognize the madness. In my very first conversation with Bernard Lonergan, Easter of 1961, I asked him about the discomforting discovery of sensibility's skin-identity -the so, so softly distant hills and clouds are not really away there - and he spoke of having to go to talk to somebody about the strangeness. I have often wondered what the somebody made of the shocking truth.

But the interest here, of course, is what you make of it. As I said, if you are an old successful hand, then comfortably the hand in front of your face, or your nose caught peripherally by your reading eyes, are neither in front nor caught, but simply brain-bursts. But you may be an old unsuccessful hand. Then your response may be like that of a friend of mine, decades-long a student of Lonergan's work, who smiled at me after my burst about the reality of our reaching words as solitary echoings of each other in the darkness of noetic being and remarked, "Phil, I

⁴⁸Insight, p.539. Recall note 8, above, regarding poise.

⁴⁹ The Mobius-strip image belongs to a period when I was struggling with the dynamics of the loneliness of Emma Bovary. See chapter five of *Lonergan's Challenge to the University and the Economy*, University Press of America, 1980.

don't know what your talking about". And if you are a young hand, this may well be your genuine response for some years yet.

What is at issue here is what I call luminous extreme realism. The name extreme seems apt in many ways. Lonergan names that luminosity neatly in his brief account of "the line" in the Introduction to *Insight*. He writes of "the discovery (and one has not made it yet if one has no memory of its startling strangeness) that there are two quite different realisms, that there is an incoherent realism, half animal and half human, that poses as a half-way house between materialism and idealism and, on the other hand, that there is an intelligent and reasonable realism between which and materialism the half-way house is idealism."⁵⁰

We may profitably turn back now to Lonergan's brief comments on phenomenology.

There is extreme realism. It is operative in all of us. It is the three-layered spontaneous skin-jumping that we all do, and that many of us express physically as a nod. Homer nods, and even phenomenologists nod. Lonergan writes "...*hence*, presupposes a philosophy". I would say, "unavoidably presupposes extreme realism", a spontaneous philosophy or "inbuilt methodology of response". To make that spontaneity luminous, self-tasted, is a massively difficult task, a rare achievement. Here, again, I suspect offense will be taken. I would claim that it is rare even in the growing school named Lonerganism, where it is not often a topic, and when it becomes a topic it is regularly talked about as if it is a shared experience, a common heritage. I recall one Lonergan expert lecturing about it as somehow present in the initial Jesus-group. In the evening, I had occasion to speak with Lonergan about it, remarking that Jesus wasn't up the mountain for forty days reading *Insight*. "Exactly", replied Lonergan.⁵¹ Jesus' skin-taste was not focused on

⁵⁰*Insight*, p. xxviii. Recall note 11, above, on the deeper meaning of "memory", and note 8 on the incarnation of the position in poise.

⁵¹I take the opportunity to record the follow through in the conversation, when Lonergan spoke eloquently about Dante and the vision of Beatrice. Waving his hand in the air in characteristic fashion he said, "That's what life's all about: saying hello!"

Aristotle's problem of sensibility's immanence.

It is, however, a focus of genuine phenomenologist. But there is a time-deep warp - seven thematizing centuries and the eons of spontaneity since Eve - in the psychic circumstances of their searchings. That warp is no longer to be a topic in philosophic studies: it is a topic of hodic logic.⁵² Existentially, of course, there is its pedagogy, fermented by hodics and by aesthetic and theoretic displacements. And it is a topic here only in a superficial (or cliff-scape) koan sense: it is a horrendous mist-climb. Serious thinkers, like the phenomenologist I mentioned and shall return to, move into that mist courageously but with culture-screened self-taste. Such was Ortega. I merely recall here my joy in finding him reflecting somewhere on my favorite memory of Plotinus: the master's reluctance to leave behind an image of an image. Both Plotinus and Ortega wrote from the mist, the cultural musk-bag, that blocked the central element of their self-identity. They failed to sniff out extreme realism, but they wrote of their struggle from that position. This is the pointing of the central post office of *Insight*, but that elementary book does not push forward into a full thematization.⁵³ To thus thematize it is to lay out with foundational pedagogy the nature of spirit as being not only itself but also all else. How does it be all else?

That being in finite spirit has not the fullness of the being of the other: it is a being that might conveniently be called noetic being. I be I; but I also be this tree, not as the tree be, but noetically. It is part of evolution, of vertical finality, that noetic beings emerge, that eventually some trees reach noetic existence. That noetic existence is not of the tree as it stands lushly at

⁵² Hodic logic is the ordering of cultural reflection, through functional specialization, of Georg Simmel's "turn to the idea". I have previously indicated the significance of that ordering for musicology (*The Shaping of The Foundations*, University Press of America, 1976, ch.2), for literary studies (see note 53 above), for economics, (*Economics for Everyone*, ch. 5), for Linguistics (*A Brief History of Tongue*, ch. 3). See above, notes 8, 21, 26, 37.

⁵³I refer to the shocking top of p. 388 in the original *Insight*. "It will be a position if...." Its fuller meaning may be expressed as "you will be poised if....". See note 8 above.

the edge of my garden, invitingly offering footholds to grasped apples, but of the tree "as it stands within a pattern of intelligible relations, and offers no foothold for imagination".⁵⁴ Certainly, part of the destiny of trees is to be touched symbiotically, twined by plants and imagined by beasts. But I am writing here of a ridiculously larger destiny: being spirited up into a noetic universe. That possessed noetic universe, a variable across finite spirits, is not the ontological universe. It is an immanent achievement of the spirit and of the evolving universe. The pseudo-problem of objectivity is seeded by an axial feebleness and failure in the luminous acknowledgment of the nature of noetic immanence, the breeding ground of genuine correspondence.

Now, I am claiming that Ortega didn't make it out of the mist into luminosity about this evolutionary fact. Further, hodic logic should trace the failure through Aristotle to recent Oxford centuries. How many are to be found that cut through to the extreme realism of Aquinas' view of knowledge by identity and by "intentionality"?

The issue for you, of course, is, where has this strange talk found you? "It is an extremely difficult matter, it is a matter of making the subject *leap*, to move him from the first level of sensism, materialism, and so on, to the second, to bring him up to the level of the idealist, and it is another leap to bring him from the idealist position to the realist position".⁵⁵ "The problem of philosophy is to start off from the average naive realist and bring him along to something that involves a fuller grasp of all the issues, and a more profound understanding of what his real basis is. The problem is not having people repeat with Augustine that 'the real is not a body, it is what you know when you know something true'. The problem is to get people to mean as much as Augustine meant when Augustine spoke about truth, and that is a transformation of the subject.

⁵⁴*Insight*, p.250. perhaps recall 539.

⁵⁵B. Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic, Collected Works*, Vol. 18, edited by P.McShane, University of Toronto Press, 2000, chapter four at note 27.

It is bringing the subject up to the level of thought of a Plato, and an Aristotle and an Augustine and an Aquinas and that is a terrific development in the subject".⁵⁶

It is a development, I would hold, beyond the evolutionary capacity - there is the occasional sport - of present Western academic decline, or, more broadly, beyond the present stage of the axial period.

So we return to the Quixotic question of a phylogenetic dynamic, to the answer of Lonergan's discovery of 1965, the hodic division of labour in the field of mind. It would be a vast distracting enterprise to enter here either into a detailed specification of the axial period, or into Ortega's interest in a fuller view of history, or his critiques of Spengler and Toynbee, or his searchings for a perspective on history and system.⁵⁷ Nor can I enter further into my own characterization of the need for and the operation of the division of labour, the specialization of function in one's inquiry demanded by hodic logic. What is important to notice here is the manner in which the cyclic structuring of inquiry shifts the statistics of the successful reading of the book *Insight*.⁵⁸ Six of the specialties can tool forward on the thematic spontaneity of the enquirers involved, but the fourth specialty will involve the horror of self-tasting exposure, a positional nakedness, and the core topicality will carry forward as creative unclothing in the fifth specialty. I use the word "will" here and I speak of possibilities, perhaps thin probabilities, of the next millennium.

The distant emergence of the third stage of meaning, in which luminous extreme realism becomes a core dynamic, depends upon a willingness towards hodic logic in a creative minority. Meantime we have the floundering fragmented ferment of the period between the two times of

⁵⁶Ibid., chapter 5 at note 8.

⁵⁷ A recent relevant study of Ortega is John T. Graham, Ortega y Gasset, *Theory of History in Ortega y Gasset*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia and London, 1997.

⁵⁸ The immediate context is *Insight*, p.121. There is a manner in which probabilities of implementation shift from products to sums.

the temporal subject, in which we live but partly, move too much and have our being only in cultural warp.

This is too broad a descriptive sweep, a map peek, yet it is helpful in placing us humbly in a middle-period century in which Nobel prizes go to economists who lack economic science and to Konrad Lorenz for discovering that zoology is about the life-styles of live animals. But immediately I would divert you from such a panorama to the exercise of a non-explanatory focus on a single sentence of the last chapter of *Insight* that is powerfully expressive of Lonergan's aspirations. Such a focus is appropriate first because it brings out the problem of reading to which we have been drawing attention. Again, it calls attention in a simple fashion to the need for up-to-date analogues if we are to operate AMD communicate at Ortega's "height of the times". Thirdly, the problem of being at the level of the times in moving into the future was central to those years in Rome for Lonergan: it especially came into focus in his graduate courses such as "On Understanding and Method" and "History and System".⁵⁹ Indeed, it was when I was struggling with the former set of notes in the late seventies that I arrived at some precision regarding the nature of systematics as genetically structured. There had been some suspicion earlier: I recall joking with Lonergan at the Regis College swimming pool in the late sixties about the "dog" in dogmatic theology, a missing genetic perspective.

Fourthly, as I mentioned already, the problem of history and system was one that preoccupied Ortega y Gasset, not only in the sense of a search for an understanding historical method, but in the fullest sense that concerned Lonergan, the problem of moving fulsomely from the past forward, from a Eurasian past, from a global past. Finally, my attention to the sentence recalls for me, Proustwise, the occasion when I developed the analogue first, when my interest in the Spanish translation of *Insight* blossomed, and when my hope for a Spanish response to

⁵⁹These Lonergan's course notes of the late fifties are available in Fr. Michael Shiel's translations at the Toronto Lonergan Institute.

Lonergan's challenge was boosted. The occasion was some weeks of lectures at the Universidad Iberoamericano in Mexico City during June of 1997. The analogue sprung from my watching of the tennis at Wimbledon. And the sentence, on which we spent a four hour class, had best be quoted in full.

"The antecedent willingness of hope has to advance from a generic reenforcement of the pure desire to an adapted and specialized auxiliary ever ready to offset every interference either with intellect's unrestricted finality or with its essential detachment and disinterestedness".⁶⁰

Before commenting directly on this rich sentence, let me focus on the analogue that took up so much of our class-time. That class-time, in June 1997, was providentially from 4.0 p.m. to 8.0 p.m. each weekday evening. I could catch Wimbledon tennis earlier in the day! Not an exciting year for men's tennis. As one of the interviewed experts noted, racket technology had taken some of the twists and thrills out of the game. But the women's scene was different. There was Monica Seles trying to come back and Martina Hingis fighting to stay on top, both at turning points in their story. Now a further providential set of circumstances was the rain in London. The wet-out times were occupied on television by interviews and patches of history. People like Martina Navratilova and Billy Jean King were given space to speak about the changes in tennis during the past decades, and episodes of "the making of tennis" were pulled out of files and out of memories. Martina in particular was eloquent in her view of technology's contribution to racket refinement. Interesting also was her claim that she was now a better tennis player than she ever was: just that the body wasn't up to following out the relevant moves.

Perhaps it is already evident to you where this is going. In those afternoons in Mexico I was slowly cajoling the audience into sympathy with Lonergan's struggle, during the late fifties, to envisage a "maximal retrieval". Out of the many illustration the one that seemed to click best was the image of any of the women mentioned, standing swaying at the base line, facing serve. Her

⁶⁰*Insight*, p.726.

story is unfolding. She is poised to add to her story in history. What constitutes her poise?

She was struggled, and been coached, to be the incarnate idea that is total relevant ordered recall. That recall is "to the best of her ability" and she is or has been in the top ten. The totality and the relevance are ordered by her: the idea is integral, systematic, an idea-system. But it is boned in, it is part of her character. Nor is it just a pulling together of previous good moves and good ideas of past games and past practices, past successful returns of serve. Meshed into the incarnate idea are creative rememberings of poor moves, flawed ideas, sad events, events ranging from shocking stabs in the back to too slow stabs at subtly served balls. The recall is done best, of course, with an ordered community of friends, coach, physiologist, masseuse, etc, and with the help of videos, statistics, schemes of recurrent exercises, etc: "ever-ready specialized auxiliaries". The recalling of this recall in creative fantasy brings to your mind and bones, I hope, the collaboration of specialties exuberantly envisaged by Lonergan in February 1965, but here we are attending to his struggle in the late spring of 1953. What is important here is your ontogenetic struggle with my pointer, your slow grappling, your intussusception, of the subtle intussusception of her story that lifts the tennis player to an idea-presence that orders the entire relevant past and makes it a genetic psycho-physical presence. There is something here on the level of minding that parallels, but is in no way analogous to, the incarnate genetic idea that is the steeplechaser facing each jump intussusceptively. For you and I as methodologists, intussuscepting the latter leap and its biological study is a tackling of genetic method. But coming to grips methodologically with the dynamics of an internally genetic idea is a much tougher struggle. For Lonergan, the struggle lead to a massive shifting of the heuristics of theological and philosophical system and systems in history from the contexts of Aristotle, Aquinas, Newton, Bertalanffy, etc etc, to a perspective that twistingly sublates dialectic analysis into an integral heuristic of historically-rooted genetically ordered systems enrichingly meshed with reversed warped systems.

Epilogue

Perhaps my reader will not be as startled by the word "epilogue" as I am. I halted at the key phrase "reversed warped systems", as it were in full stride, because on June 15th the page proofs of Lonergan's *For a New Political Economy* arrived, calling not just for correction but for indexing. So for six weeks I ventured on a new strange strenuous climb: you may peruse the results at the end of that volume, but I think it apt to share with you here some of my final thoughts on the work, part of my note introductory to the index of this powerful three-part work.

There is, first, a bent towards genetic systematics in the index, and indeed twistings towards reversing previous warped systems. And there is my own ripe view of the achievement of the work: I characterize Lonergan's 1942 version as Newtonian, the final 1944 version as Einsteinian. Where, you might wonder, would this leave Keynes? Messing around in the Locked heavenly circles of Tycho Brahe's numbers, a pre-Keplerian?

At all events, these circumstances led me towards a deeper appreciation of Lonergan's achievement, and the more refined grasp of the circumstances of his struggle - registered in pages corresponding roughly, two-to-one, to the days of his writing in the Summers of 1942 and 1943. The index, obviously, is a new set of circumstances presenting an ordering of circumstances, a minding of what was being minded in those months. My index-note ends with a comment on my central index-entry, the word "concomitance", which refers to Lonergan's hearty appeal for respect for the productive pulses, a respect calling for a concomitance of monetary and productive flows. So I conclude there,

"Are we to respect the heart-pulses of the productive machine, or are we to continue the "absurdity" (see Index) of counter-pulsing, locally and globally?"

But the prior challenge of the work is to come to grips with the subtleties of the ideal pulsing, so that not only economists and leaders, but general culture, might come to say with Wordsworth, 'And now I see with eye serene, the very pulse of the machine'.

So now I find myself, after ten days of re-reading (an older and wiser reader!) of this present effort, moving in a new discernment towards a cut-off, with the tennis call of a fresh ball in the word, "epilogue".

Where was I going in that final paragraph? Was I making sense to you? Had you the advantage of a long struggle with some instances of genetic explanation, perhaps in botany, so that your bones and mind could tune in to me from the searchings of flowers? Or was I beginning to lose you? Or had I lost you on the Mobius strip?

And where was I going in this paper? Obviously, that is the pointing of the title: towards a luminous darkness of circumstances. But the "towards" was my personal challenge: a seeking to move towards a new skin-poise in the 21st place of the 9th section of the 19th chapter of *Insight*. It is a matter of skin-diving, neuro-lacing, into the edge of the dark final frontier⁶¹, weaving the upper and lower grounds of loneliness, circumstances and Circumcessions, into the noetic skinscope that I am, that we are.

As I new-view these searchings of the early summer, it is evident to me that the drive was dominated by the searching rather than by the needs of communication: proverbs rather than pedagogics, doctrines rather than directions. Yet the expression, and your struggle with it, is not wasted. Like Cezanne, speaking also in his sixties, I can claim that "I am making a little progress", and *show you* my recent sketching of Mount St. Victoire, even if *you cannot see it*.

And is not this final point the central pointing of my reflections on forty years reaching, through *Insight*, for a view of history? But here my focus is on the phylum of differentiation that I have named theoretic consciousness, a personal entry into some zone of the modern experience emphasized by Butterfield. Only through such a personal entry does one become capable of an initial serious reading of the book *Insight*.

⁶¹ See P.McShane, *The Redress of Poise*, Axial Press, Halifax, 1999, chapter 7: "Grace: The Final Frontier".

It is here that I clash with what I earlier wrote of as the third group of readers of *Insight*.⁶² It consists mainly of those whose literary, philosophical or theological education has led them to an unsuspecting eclectic commonsense perspective and at times a remarkable competence in repeating the words of Lonergan. They can speak of the richness of the view of emergent probability, yet have no serious idea of a single probability distribution. They can debate endlessly the apprehension of value by feelings yet remain quite inattentive to the mass of meta-zoological circumstances thus being dodged. They - strangely, or might I say inhumanly - find fields of elementary inquiry, such as physics or botany, more difficult than the reach to understand the impossibly mysterious neotic nerveplex that we humans are. They do not seem to notice the shocking contrast between the massive explanatory effort of those marketing soap and the slovenly religious culture that markets salvation. They thus pass over the great challenge of Lonergan: the challenge of a contemporary mediation of front-line understanding in all zones, a challenge that includes hodic implementation.⁶³ So, what is of importance for them in Lonergan is the rediscovery of self-discovery as pivotal in Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, isolated in each instance from the cultural context of the concomitant mediation. Then there emerges a mime of the misery of an Aristotelianism, and Augustinianism, a Thomism, in another Ism. And such a commonsense perspective awaits, at the edge of the millennium, some commonsense Lonerganesque solution to our economic ills.

Here, however, circumstance grounds optimism: it is the circumstance of the publication,

⁶²I am simplifying here. Clearly, there is a need, for example, to identify genuine post-systematic readers, who can follow leads in a post-theoretic fashion without illusions about being theoretic. Etc.

⁶³It is that contemporary mediation that brings us beyond the weakness of predicamental metaphysics (see *De Deo Trino, Pars Systematica*, pp. 308-9) to the possibility of the hodic collaboration of third order consciousness, in which methods become data (circumstances) and methodology finally emerges as the scientific study of the ongoing genesis of method. See above, notes 8, 21, 26, 37, 52.

more than a half-century after its genesis, of the mist-prints of Lonergan's precise establishment of the science of economics. How is one to come to grips with these mist-prints? We have circled back to the basic analogue of scientific appreciation. We have come to the cultural problem of a quite new B.A. - Bare Adequacy - in economics. This, certainly, is part of the 150 year struggle that Lonergan spoke to me about in 1977. So, as we eventually turn into the year 2127, a hoddically-controlled emergent probability would have bred in the culture a mesh of theoretic meaning and post-theoretic meaning, an enlightened self-interest that, however deviant in performance, would be noetically and molecularly resonant with the emergently⁶⁴ normative "pulsating flow, the rhythmic series, of the economic activities of man".⁶⁵ The first marketing and self-marketing step is ours, now, at the beginning of the new millennium. It is our dark and graceful circumstance.

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Feast of the Assumption, 1998,
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⁶⁴This is a difficult topic, placing human providence accurately in the present, a normativity immanent within cosmic groaning (*Romans* 8: 22). For an instance of the problem see *For A New Political Economy* pp. 211-12, where Lonergan reflects briefly on the task of economic control. This certainly puts Paul's reflection on control (*Romans* 8: 5-17) in a new perspective.

⁶⁵*For A New Political Economy*, p.11.