

*Eldorede 12***RatiOH Studiorum**

It seems quite odd, so then I suppose quite suitable, that I should think of my introduction to you in Riverview College - this last *Eldorede* is in a sense the first - in terms of a muddled pun. I come in the footsteps of Ignatius of Loyola; I come in the shadow of his follower, Bernard Lonergan S.J. I am here, certainly, because of your interest in both these innovators. And I wish to twist and turn, self-turn, that interest, so as to share with you a genuinely grounded excitement.

But how can I say that this essay is the first? For starters, this essay, as we shall glimpse in our cycling, repeating, leads round to the focus of the previous one, *Eldorede 11*: "Spirituality in the Third Stage of Meaning". They twine together to set a tone, give a mood, a lift towards an ethos. At the heart of the previous *Eldorede* is an odd creation myth which captures that mood, and it seems quite appropriate to repeat the myth here. But before that I would note that the heart of this essay is the final section of *Eldorede 6*, especially its final footnote 16, where I tantalizingly give a meaning to **OH-ratio**. And of course the mood towards which we cycle is that lurking in the invitation of *Eldorede 0*. So: round we go, like *Finnegans Wake*! But for now, back to our central fable.

An old creation legend tells a story about a bunch of birds sitting around complaining as they looked at their wings.

What can you do with these things?" they asked God. "You can't walk with them. You can't pick up things with them. And they're ugly and awkward to carry around."

'You can fly, " God says.

"Fly? What is fly?", The birds demanded.

"Spread out your wings. Spread them out as far as they will spread. Wider. Now move them up and down. Harder. Work at it. Faster. Now, jump."

"Jump? Jump?" , they screeched, hopping around in great agitation.. "Jump?"
One little bird jumps. The wind picks up her wings and she soars. Soars into the rainbows.
Soars into the misty clouds. Soars into creation.
And the rest? Having been shown the way, they follow.

Might the one little bird that jumps and soars be Riverview College? I am talking about a lift-off that anticipates the third stage of meaning named in *Eldorede 11*. But you might take the story personally, existentially. A recent autobiography describes the rather extreme life-change of John Wood, who, so to speak, had it made working in Microsoft in Sydney.

"My entire life had been on a predictable trajectory dominated by a couple of university degrees and thirteen years of white-collar employment. My identity was defined by my career. I now planned a radical shift, a big leap into the unknown: from corporate executive to unemployed guy setting up libraries in the Himalayas. I prayed that I would be decisive and follow through on my gut instinct."¹

"Over time, I took steps that cemented into reality a simple fact: my destiny was increasingly tied to the quest for global education."²

"I gave myself a 40th birthday present - I decided to devote what will probably be the most productive decade of my adult life to the quest for universal education."³

¹John Wood, *Leaving Microsoft to Change the World. An Entrepreneur's Odyssey to Education the World's Children*, Harper Collins, New York, 2006, 38. Cited below as **Wood**. John Wood is the Founder of the world organization **Room to Read**.

²**Wood**, 251.

³**Wood**, 253.

Is there not something of an echo of the shift in the life of Ignatius of Loyola here? But I would have you pick up the echo and transform it mightily. That, indeed, has been the plain and basic message of this short series titled *Eldorede : Plane OldTalk*. The mighty transformation was quite beyond the culture of Ignatius: indeed, it is still quite beyond present culture.

That suggestion is hard to take, and its full vindication will require a massive dialectic effort of the type described with brutal brevity on page 250 of *Method in Theology*.⁴ What is it to mind education? Ignatius did his gallant best in those days of shabby theology, and the centuries since have been something like the story of a bunch of birds flustering unwittingly about the wings of mind, grounded. A later dialectic analysis will make plain the climb of his disciples towards wing-spreading and jumping, but it will also make plain the foolishness of thinking that Ignatius had worked some sacred cultural miracle.⁵ Perhaps the comparison of Ignatius with Mark's Gospel would stir some strange thinking here: The world of John's Gospel is a later richer vision.

But what is that vision of education that I hint at? It is the vision plainly talked of in the four lectures, *Eldorede* 7-10. Nor is there any point in a summary here of that summary set of plain pointers. But a twist around the Lonergan diagram of page 48 of *Method in Theology* can help to focus the strange challenge.

Ignatius' famous *Ratio* has the full title of *Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis*

⁴Recall note 19 of *Eldorede* 9. I unpacked the brutal brevity to some extent in the 200 pages of 8 *SOFDAWARE* essays and a dozen *Quodlibets*, all on the Website: but there should be no rush to follow them up!

⁵One may think of the struggle forward towards minding **ratio** that is represented by such of his twentieth century followers as Rousselot, Chardin, Marechal. Should there not be other big names on that list? That is a matter of the dialectic effort of *Method in Theology* page 250 to which the previous note points. But I now recall my sad experience - in a German summer of 1961 - of tackling Karl Rahner's *Spirit in the World* in its pre-translation state. He simply missed the pointing of the article on which the work focused: *Summa Theologica* I, q.84, a.7.

*Jesu*⁶ One translation reads 'Order and Method of Studies', but dictionary suggestions would point *Institutio* towards 'disposition, arrangement, manner'. One can take *ratio* as referring more to the theory, the reasoning, the articulation of goals, and *institutio* as pointing to the 'set-up', the structure, the practice prescribed, for the achievement of goals. What did Ignatius and his contemporaries, indeed his followers through centuries, mean by *ratio* and *institution*? I would suggest that the meaning, however laced with descriptive richness, was and is a common sense meaning.

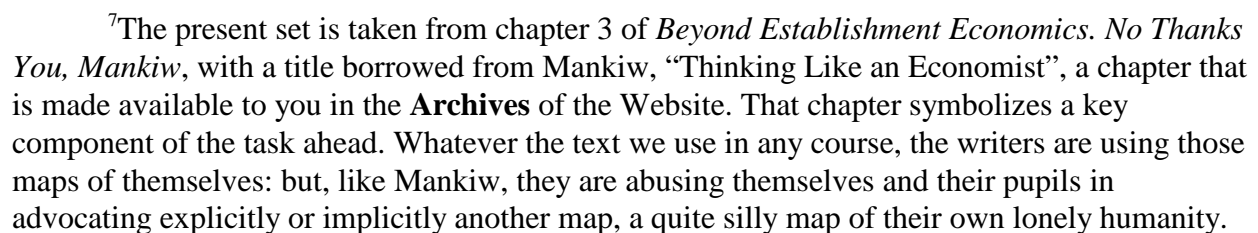
But what is the meaning towards which Lonergan points?

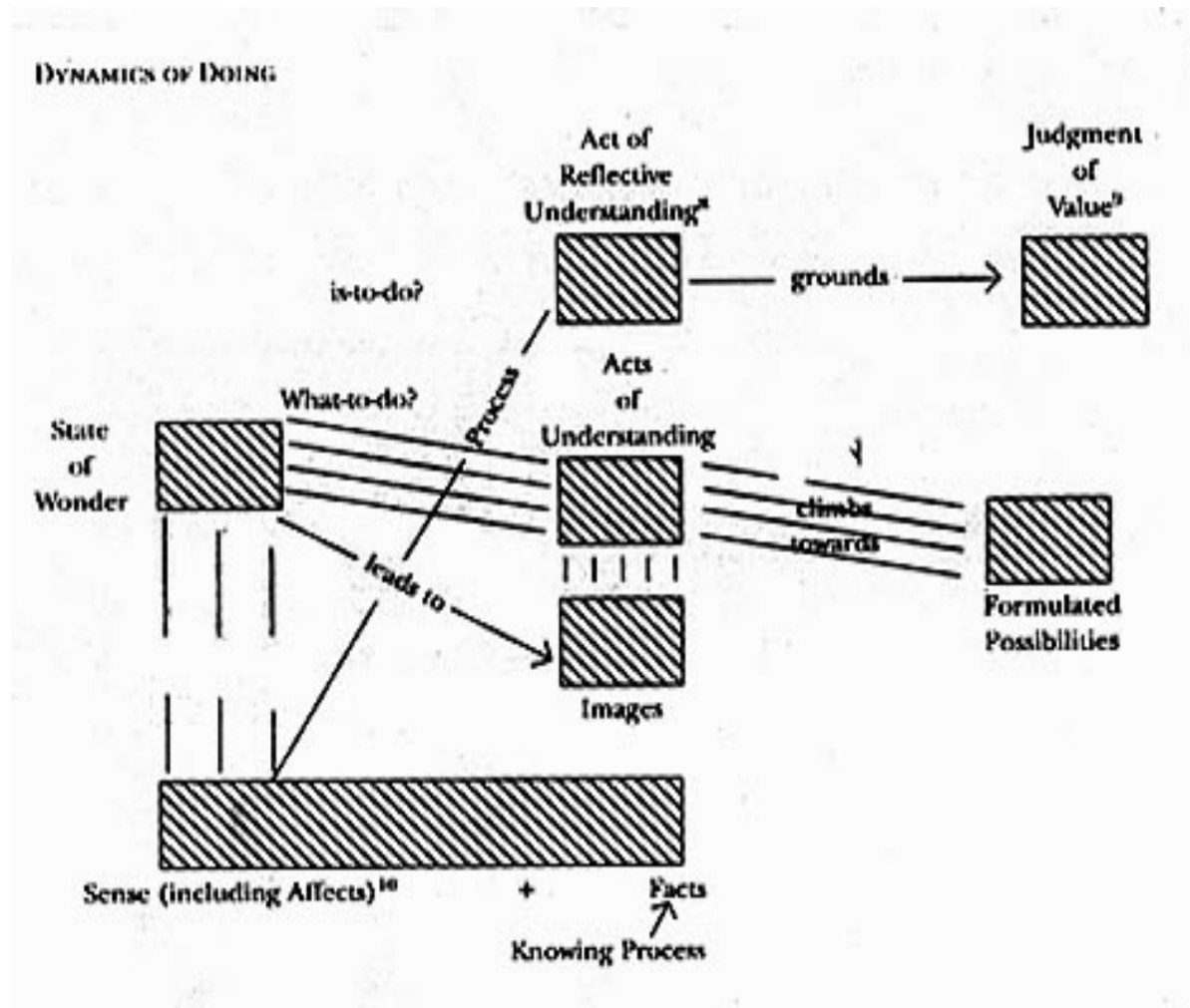
Spread out your wings. Spread them out as far as they will spread. Wider. Now move them up and down. Harder. Work at it. Faster. Now, jump.

The meaning is the remote meaning of which the introductory steps have been described in this short series. But we could have a flap of the wings of minding by locating **ratio** and *institution* imaginatively in Lonergan's diagram. And indeed, why not repeat it here?

<i>Individual</i>		<i>Social</i>	<i>Ends</i>
<i>Potentiality</i>	<i>Actuation</i>		
capacity, need	operation	cooperation	particular good
plasticity,	development,	institution,	good of order
perfectibility	skill	role, task	
liberty	orientation,	personal	terminal value
	conversion	relations	

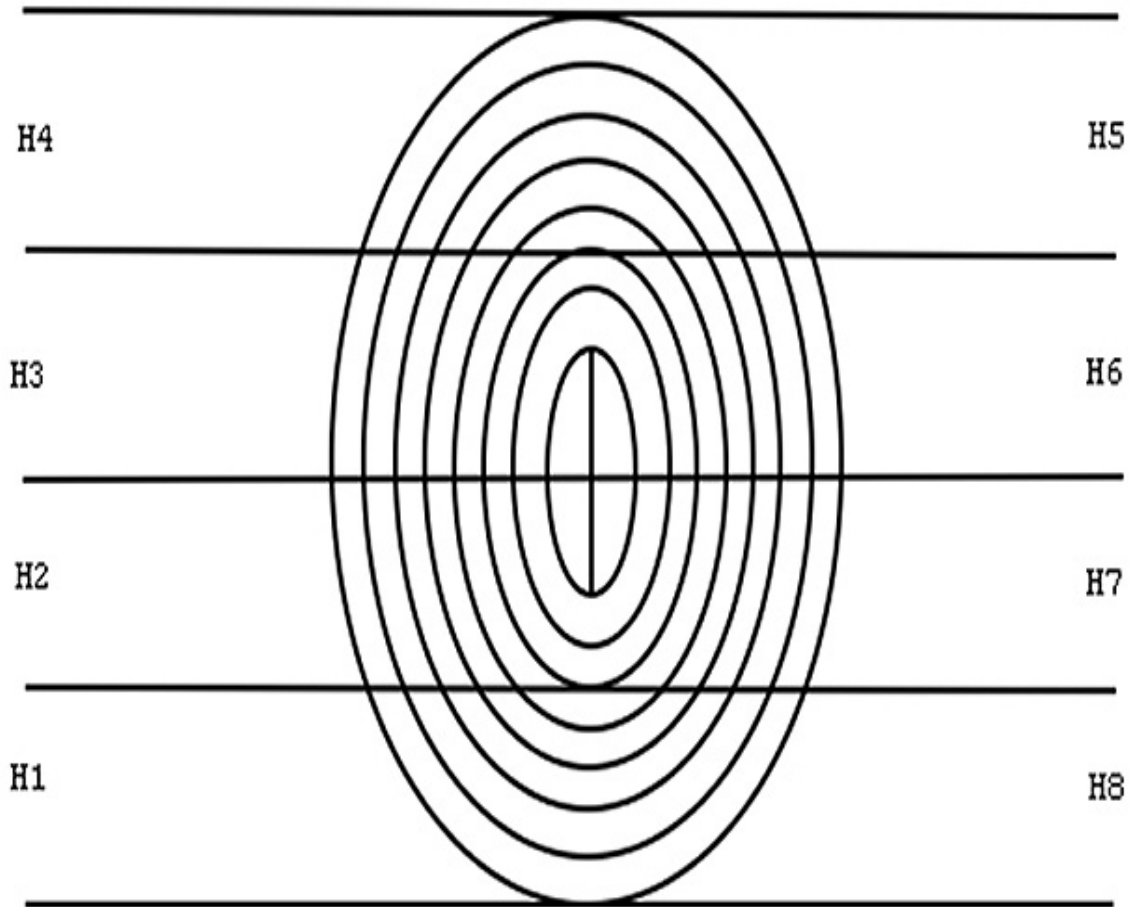
⁶There were the earlier documents of Nadal and Ledesma, called '*Ordo Studiorum*' and '*De Ratione et Ordine Studiorum Collegii Romani*' respectively. Here I take the opportunity, as I wind to an end of this series of *Eldorede*, to express my indebtedness to Conn O'Donovan, not just for details here and elsewhere, but for actually getting the entire show on the road.





And **institution**? Well, there it is, centre stage. But what is it? Well, it is to be the result of a slow global transformation to be brought about by the implementation of the simple self-elusive instructions of page 250 of *Method in Theology*, diagramed in its collaborative maturity as:⁸

⁸The diagram above is presented in various places, but my first suggested port of call would be chapter five of *ChrISt in History*, "Communications in General", which begins with that diagram and goes on to sketch its context and its meaning. What plain-speak might I add here? That it is pretty meaningless as it stands. Still, you recognize the eightfold division of labour from the reachings of Eldorede 9. Overlaid on a sketch of them are sets of tracks,



symbolizing various groups doing their own thing in their corner of the human race. I have occasionally used the spectrum colours here - ranging from **Red** to **Indigo** on the outside. Yes, **violet** is out there, but I like the word **indigo** because the outside trackers, handing on and round over generations the baton of searchings are the successful front-runners in that **in-they-go** is their ethos, their Ohratio, their RatiOH. But best leave you, and us, to mess around with the suggestions of chapter 5 of *ChrISt in History*, and indeed, on from there to the larger reachings of *Method in Theology and Botany* and *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*.

John Wood concludes his autobiographic account of his founding of the institution **Room to Read** with a brief farewell on page 254:

“Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once wrote about Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, ‘If all the musicians in the world played this piece simultaneously, the planet would go off its axis.’

That is how I feel about education for the children of the developing world.”

The children of the globe are the aggregate capacities, needs, of the future. Books are not sufficient if they merely add to the beheading of those capacities, needs. The **Room to Read** must make room for and cultivate the wings of mind, and it cannot do that effective without minding mind, without cherishing the “Self-Axis of the Great Ascent.”⁹ We need the planet to go on its axes.

The cherishing, of course, has to have at its centre an embrace of the globe which is not just **ratio** but **oratio**, **Ohratio**, **RatiOH**. So, we wind back to the topic of four previous Eldorede,¹⁰ with the deep obscure winding of a beginning, like the turning into book IV, the John’s Gospel, of *Finnegans Wake*., calling all downs to bird-soar:

“Sandhyas! Sandhas! Sandhyas. Calling all downs. Calling all downs to dayne. Array! Surrection! Eireweeker to the wohld bludyn world. O rally, O rally, O rally! To what lifelike thyne of the bird can be. Seek you somany matters. Have sea east to Osseania. Here! Here! Tass, Platt, Staff, Woff, Havv, Bluvv and Rutter. The smog is lofting.”¹¹

⁹The sub-title to my book of 35 years ago: *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations. Self-axis of the Great Ascent*. The book is available on the www.philipmcs Shane.ca

¹⁰Dancing to the tune of the last section of *Eldorede* 6.

¹¹James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, 593.