

Prehumous 2

Metagrams and Metaphysics

I had best put this and the following Prehumous in context. This one is simply a convenient collection of diagrams that I used in the book *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*, which is available on the Website. Indeed, the Preface there may well still promise the two appendices to which these two Essays, Prehumous 2 and 3, were to correspond. They were envisaged because the two publisher's readers of University of Toronto Press - who approved highly of the book - considered that they would add to its value. The book never went through, however: it was blocked by the refusal of a grant for it by Canada Council. So it is on the Web. But I had already started into the two appendices. This Prehumous, then, is pretty well what I had moved towards for the first appendix. I think that it should be generally helpful for my readers who come across that weird series of **Ws** in my writings. The second appendix, however, is being modified now - at the end of October 2007, so as to help reader's forward towards a fuller concrete perspective on what I call, in its title, *Procedural Analysis*. What readers? Well, that depends on the state of culture. In present culture I would mean readers who have been struggling with Lonergan's invitation, especially that of *Verbum* and *Insight*, for quite some time. In a later culture, where the turn to the subject is taken to be the obvious heart of education, the readers could be in grade 12, comfortable with the view as they read themselves in *Introducing Critical Thinking*.

Briefly these two Prehumous essays, 2 and 3, are both pedagogical: the first presents diagrams, the second presents attitudes that go to bring the diagrams to life, your life.

Best begin the venture immediately, and it is as well to begin with a

quotation from Lonergan which very clearly justifies and demands the present effort. *Prehumous 3* has a parallel contextualizing quotation, with which I end the present essay, and it worth adverting to the fact that these two quotations are also brought together as the frontispiece of the book *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*, the Website sequel to the book. *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*.

"The aim of discursive reason is to understand and it arrives at understanding not only by grasping how each conclusion follows from premises, but also by comprehending in a unified whole all the conclusions intelligibly contained in those very premises. Now this comprehension of everything in a unified whole can be either formal or virtual. It is virtual when one is habitually able to answer readily and without difficulty, or at least 'without tears,' a whole series of questions right up to the last 'why?' Formal comprehension, however, cannot take place without a turning to phantasm; but in larger and more complex questions it is impossible to have a suitable phantasm unless the imagination is aided by some sort of diagram. Thus, if we want to have a comprehensive grasp of everything in a unified whole, we shall have to construct a diagram in which are symbolically represented all the various elements of the question along with all the connections between them."¹

I launch now into a listing of the diagrams - metagrams is mainly a convenient renaming - that dominate in the book *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*. The listing includes in each case some preliminary helps towards a descriptive identification of constituent symbols. For pedagogical reasons I postpone dealing with the Metagram that I name W0 until last: I might well have called it W Zero!

¹B.Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, University of Toronto Press, 2002, 151

W1

This metagram is the relatively simple expression $f(p_i; c_j; b_k; z_l; u_m; r_n)$. It emerge first for me in the early 1970s, in the complex form of $HS(f(p_i; c_j; b_k; z_l; u_m; r_n))$, where the **H** refers to history and the **S** refers vaguely to sequences or schemes or structures or systems.² Best to leave these extras out here so that we may focus on “the individual”, although immediately I note that a serious grip on the relational aspect of the properties pointed to by *i*, *j*, etc show that **HS** are not extras at all. However, we are not about to venture into the complexities of chapter 16 of *Insight* here! A beginner should think of **W1** mainly as a help to remember that the human, oneself, is a layered reality of physical, chemical, botanical, zoological, rational and supernatural actualities. As one advances the meaning of the symbols complexifies in a manner that parallels the student advancing in, say chemistry: the periodic table means massively more to a graduate chemist.³

The really important and difficult part of the symbolism is the semi-colon that separates the layers. It points to the difficulty of coming to grips with aggreformisms, a massively difficult personal struggle quite beyond the beginner.⁴

²The original venture into this symbolism is available in the website book, *Wealth of Self*. 106-7.

³Note that if the subscripts point to an empty set above a certain level, then one is dealing with a lower-than-human reality. So, one gets the usual sense of “study of the organism begins ...” (*Insight*, 489) by having $l = m = n = 0$: one is dealing with flowers. But note also the value of reading that text with these layers non-empty. So, one can ascend to consider the human, and one has the nudge of appreciation that e.g. virtues are not simple realities but flexible circles of ranges of recurrence-schemes.

⁴See *Cantower XXIX* for help on this.

The advantages of the symbolism emerge from its use: so one asks, for instance, about the nature of a dream, and one is pushed by the symbolism to get beyond description to beta- waves and chemicals.

W2

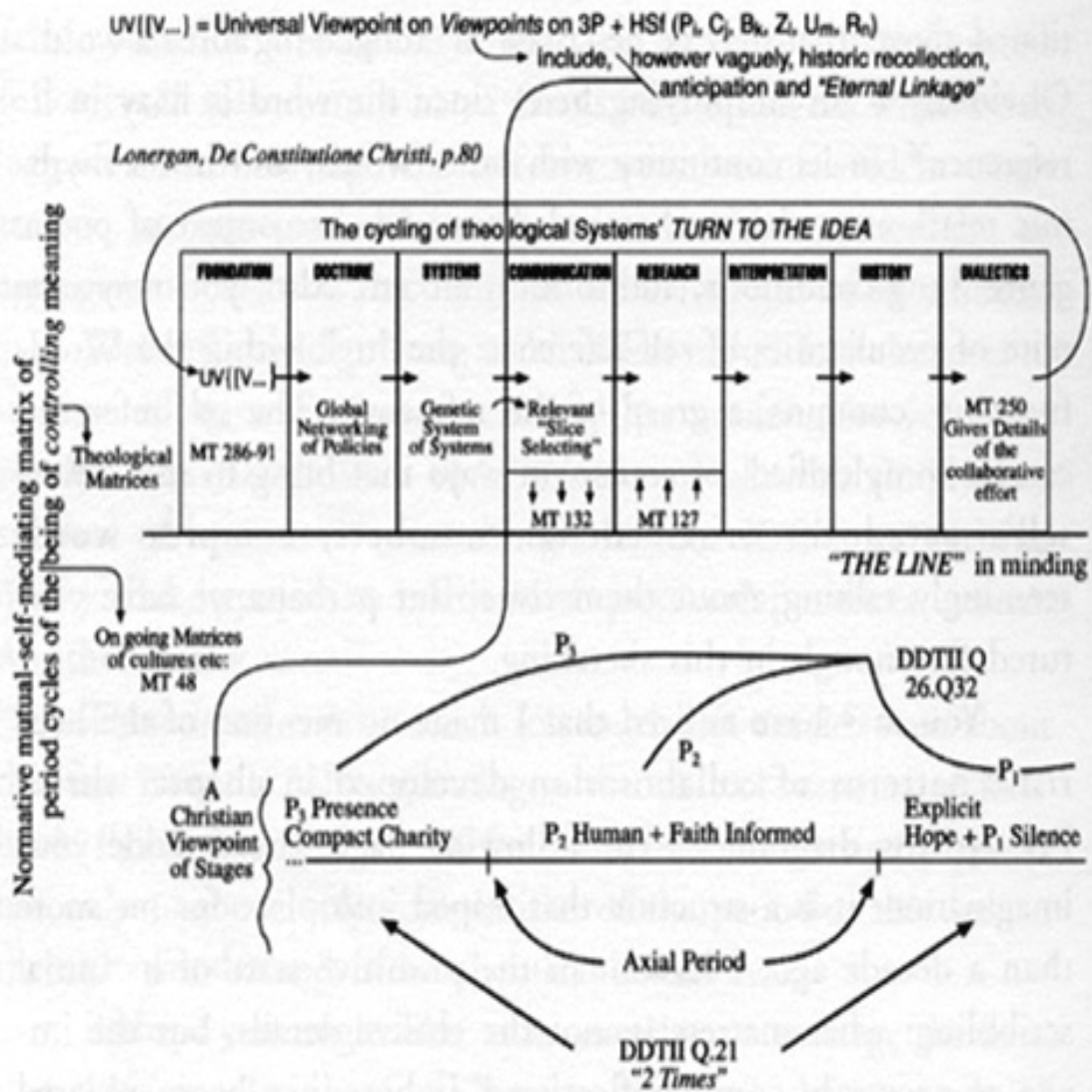
This metagram refers to the complex correlating that is the reality of making signs. Let us take its formation step by step. First, there is the challenge of coming to grips with signing through somehow living through, self-attentively, the experience of Helen Keller. This, I would emphasize, is not at all easy:⁵ eventually one has an elementary descriptive grip on the meaning of the relation $X \rightarrow Y$, X points to Y , where X is a the complex reality of, e.g. noising forth *water* in reference to a reality or conception or imagination or whatever of water. So, one lifts W1 into a fresh complexity, and one is invited into the strangeness of the “come-about” of metaphysics that gives an explanatory heuristic for considering e.g. the dynamics of poetry and song.⁶ So one moves step by step to a heuristic grip on the complex expression

$$V\{ W (p_i ; c_j ; b_k ; z_l ; u_m ; r_n) > HS (p_i ; c_j ; b_k ; z_l ; u_m ; r_n) .$$

The full heuristic grip on this, and like, expressions would be a component in a fully-developed linguistics, something quite remote at present. Think ahead, then, to the relation, V , of the noise or markings in your particular language that refer you, and your listeners, to the reality of **The Ming Dynasty** or even of **my own life**.

⁵Elementary directions are given in *A Brief History of Tongue*, Axial Publishing, 2000, pages 30-37.

⁶Again, there is a beginning in *A Brief History of Tongue*, pages 122-3.



MT = B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 1972
 DDTII = B. Lonergan, *De Deo Trino II* 1964

3P = The Trifly Divinity of Understanding.

Creator {
 P₁ = Speaker = Attractor
 P₂ = Spoken = Informer
 P₃ = Listener = Gift

W3 is, for me, the key diagram that holds one's functionally-transformed metaphysics together. Think first of the expression in *Insight*: "Let us say that metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being,"⁷ and perhaps add to your thinking the later claim of the book, made in the context of the beginning of a discussion of genetic method: " to prepare our statement of the integral heuristic structure that we have named metaphysics."⁸ The first saying is part of the preparation, the defining is what we would be about in getting control of the metagrams: this lands us right in the meaning of the quotation from Lonergan with which we began this Essay. Is this beginning to make sense? W3 is Lonergan's brilliant addition that lifts the statistics of the drive towards implementation. Perhaps a simple parallel helps. Think, not of metaphysics, but of Manhattan: Manhattan can be conceived, affirmed, negotiated, as an integral island of meaning.⁹ But it is easier to do when those words are replaced by a map.

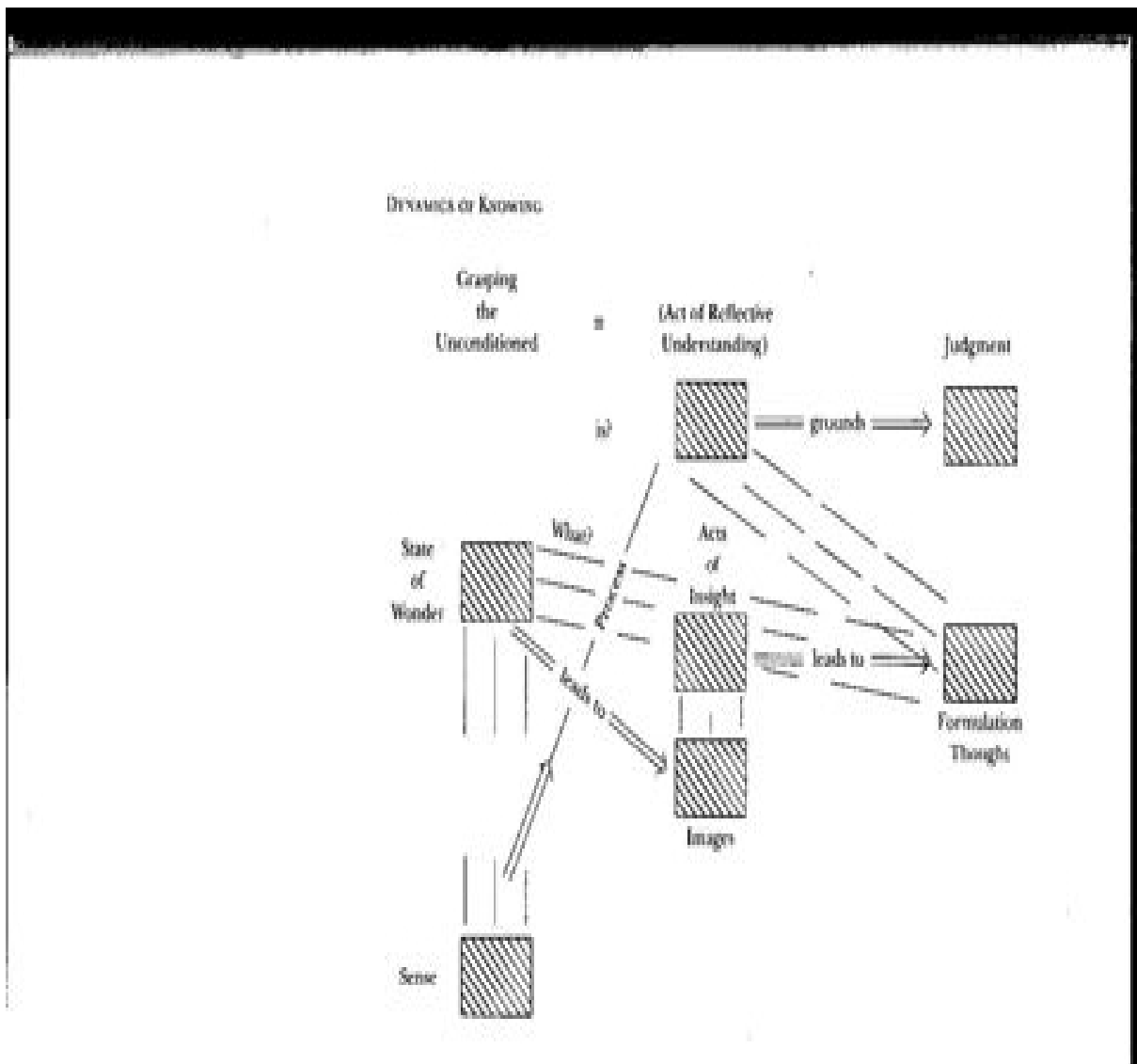
⁷*Insight*, 391[416].

⁸*Insight*, 458[484].

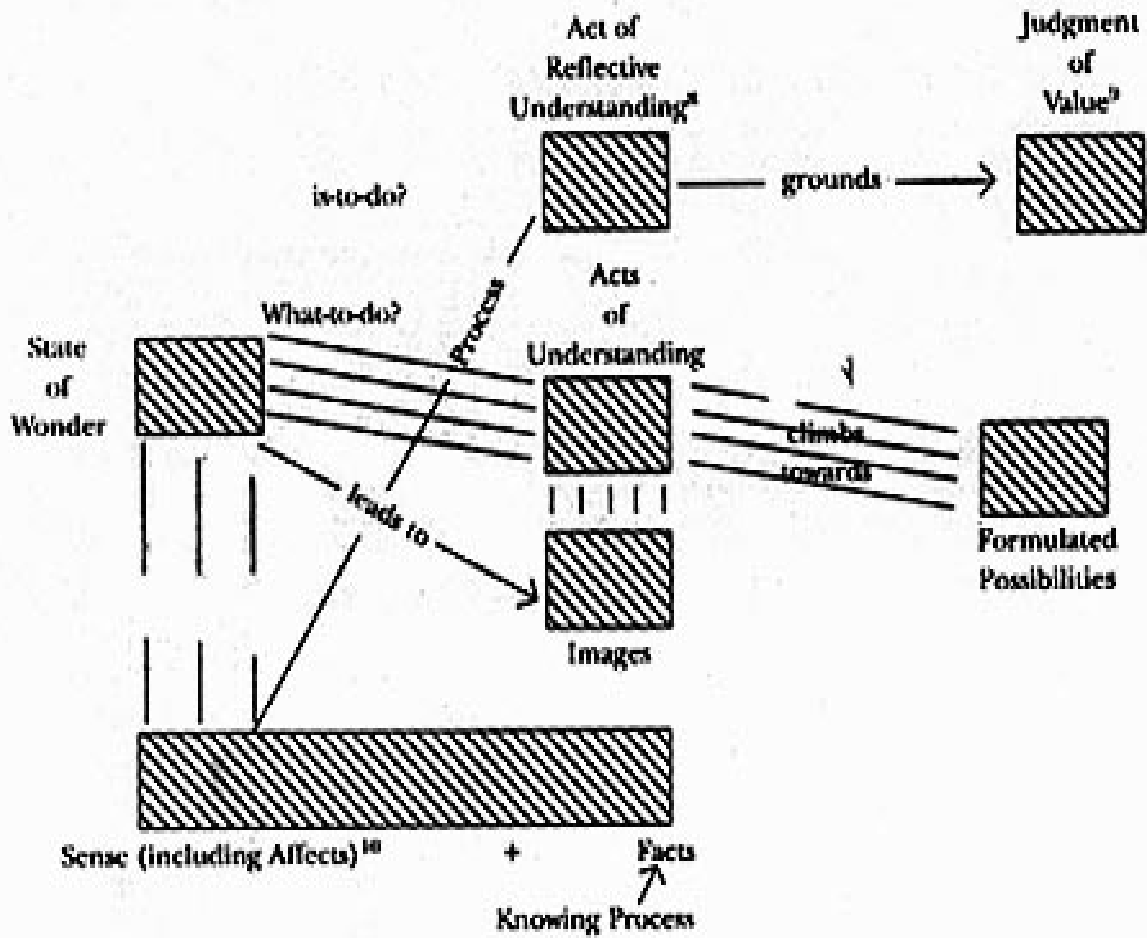
⁹Manhattan is a topic of the relevant *Cantower XIV*, "Ever-Ready Founders".

W4

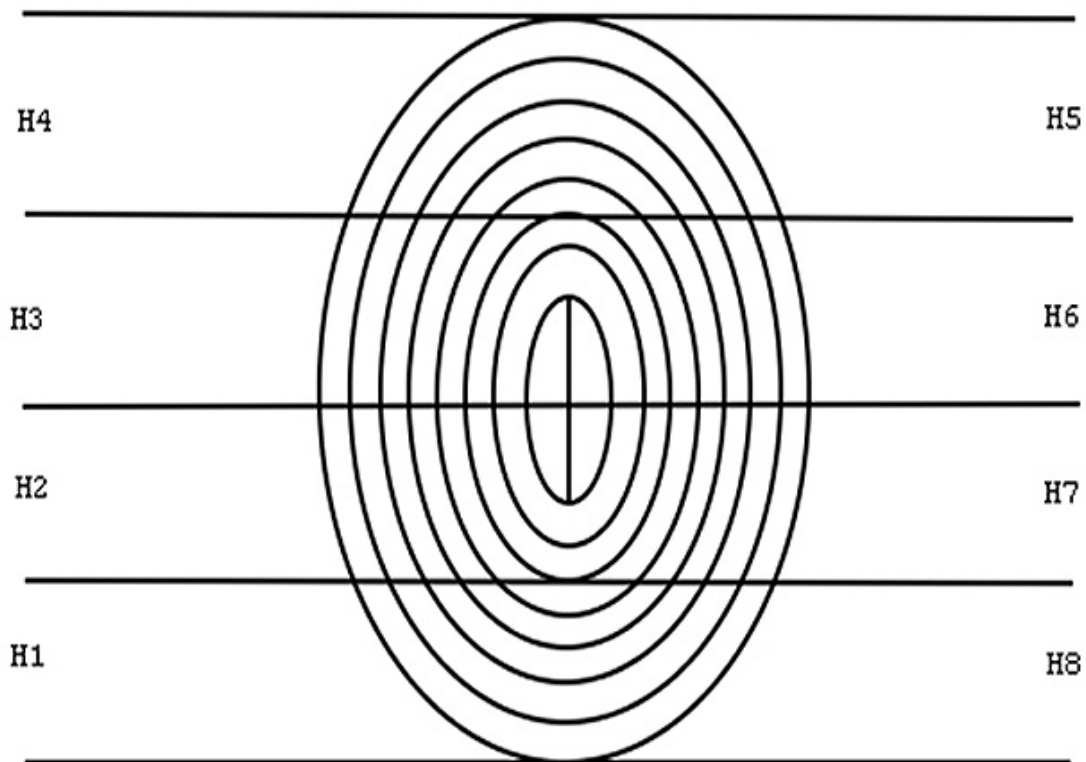
The diagrams under W4 are the elementary diagrams, maps of you and me, found in Appendix A of Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic*. No need to comment on the slow struggle involved in intussuscepting them, but perhaps a recall of the addition they entail to the usual slogan regarding transcendental precepts. One adds, between “be reasonable” and “be responsible” the precept, “be adventurous” [or some such: be foresightful, whatever].



DYNAMICS OF DOING



W5



There are various ways of reading this diagram, but the main point is to think at least of a single “track” that links the functional specialties, each specialty passing the baton to the next in the “race” for progress. The outer track can be considered to be the best up-to-date model of the collaboration that is to emerge, perhaps in the next century. I think it useful to associated the set of tracks with

the light spectrum: the first track is “red”, a rough-neck effort to collaborate that will characterize our early efforts: the outer track is to have the sophistication of “indigo”, [In They Go: yes, a terrible pun].

W6

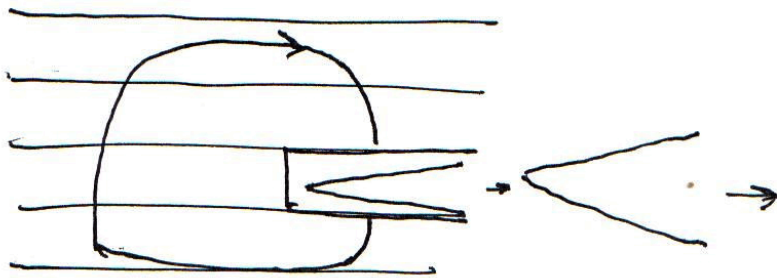
W6 is the final diagram of the book *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*. It is a first effort to point towards the manner in which the system of theology cycles towards a continual refreshing of the genetic systematics that both drives the eight specialty and enters into the enlargement of what I call the Standard Model. The main elementary point here is the help it gives to get to grips with the ambiguity of the question, What is systematic theology? The full system of theology is the cyclic system; systematic theology is the ongoing product of one specialty.¹⁰

¹⁰See chapter 6 of *Method in theolog: Revisions and Implementations*.

Periodic Table in
ongoing genesis of
chemical system

Periodic Functional Cycling
in ongoing genesis
of genetic systematics

(track... and
baton exchanging)
Quadrant 2



(250) Dialectic Achievements:

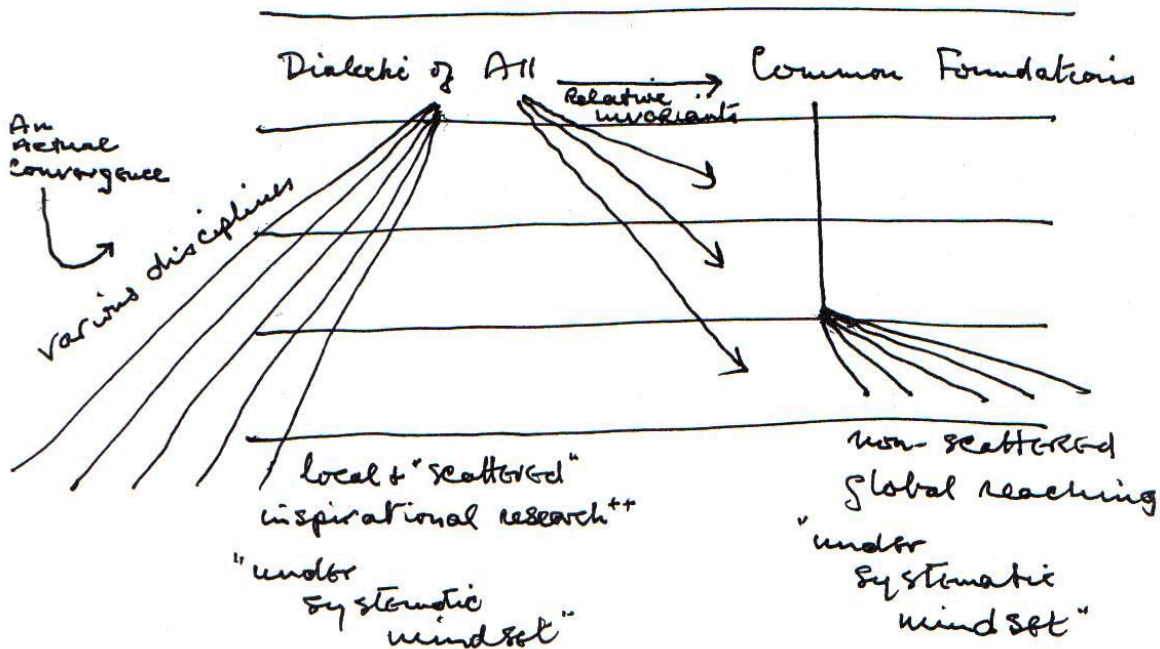
versions of 286-7+

→ "BATON" →

N.B.
Foundational
Acceptance
of Tradition

Foundational Reaching:

Fantasy and its Circulation



W7, etc

W6 is the last of the metagrams of the book *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*. A candidate for W7 is the fundamental diagram of economics as I present it in *Economics for Everyone*.¹¹ And so on, in both additions to and improvements on, the previous efforts. The list is neither complete nor fixed: think of the manner in which the periodic table diagram is supplemented, e.g., in an organic chemistry text.

This incompleteness and openness are brought out by some final reflections on what I might call Wz but usually name W0. It is, in its simplest form, the least symbol-laden of the words listed so far. That simple form was central to my first-year university teaching of the years 1974-1993.

W0

In its simplest form W0 is a set of four proposals, propositions, offered in a very existential sense. "I have a proposition for you": that sort of thing. The sort of attitude-adjustment that Lonergan invites on the turn of page 388 in the first edition of *Insight*, layed out in a helpful nudging way that is lost in the new edition.¹² Not only is it not a new page - this cannot be helped - but the editors, wrongly I would suggest, eliminated Lonergan's pattern of listing.

Anyway, here is the list of four Propositions, **Proposals**, that I used for,

¹¹See, for example, page 92. It is the same as Lonergan's baseball diagram. I have found this version easier to teach from and with: basic and surplus on horizontal levels. Prehumous 1 give a good context for the practical problem of moving globally into this perspective.

¹²*Insight*, 388[413].

offered to, my first year philosophy students during my two decades of teaching in Halifax:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{CUE} & \text{---->} & \text{K} \\ \text{P} & = & \text{SI} \\ \text{K} & \text{---->} & \text{R} \\ \text{P} & \text{////} & \text{R} \end{array}$$

Let us sort out, nominally at least, the meaning of the symbols here. We easily put words on the four:

Correct understanding gets me to knowledge;

My Perception is my Sensitive Integration;

Knowledge gets me to Reality;

Perception is nothing like Reality.

Getting these simply-understood Props into one's perspective is a massively difficult task.¹³ With a good deal of patience and fun, over a few weeks, some fraction of the class "got it", in some slim fashion. Oddly, the real stumbling block is the fourth Prop on the list: you can wiggle your glasses and come to a YES those moves are behind my eyes, yet still there is the solid sense that, well, the outside is like what I perceive!

Now am I going any further here. My original essay went on to complexities regarding the **Props**, pointing to further axioms regarding "The Position". Since then I have moved through Posthumous 4, "Foundational Prayer I" and "Foundational Prayer II", and found¹⁴ - should I say founded?! - a larger

¹³The **Proposal** was made to my students in the context of our struggle with the book *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations*, and the key struggling was with the exercises of chapter 6.

¹⁴Another step of startling strangeness. I expressed the step, that day in November, in footnote 8 of Prehumous 5, and there seems no harm in repeating that note here. It begins with a piece of Thomas, in his discussion of charity,

context for the problem of enlarging and refining the statement of “The Position”. So it seems to me best to halt here, without elaborating on how, metaphorically, W0 becomes slowly, existentially and historically, WZ, an eschatological state of The Position.¹⁵

Still, it is worth connecting up my position on The Position with the movements of the book *Insight*. My position on this goes back to 1961, yet it does not seem a common view.¹⁶ It was expressed first in “The Contemporary Thomism of Bernard Lonergan”, and I reproduce the pedagogical pointing here.¹⁷

Back then to chapter 11 of *Insight*: what do you have by the end of the

roughly translated as “taking time off to muse about God and the things of God”. “Ut homo studium deputet ad vacandum Deo et rebus divinis”(*Secunda Secundae*, q.24, a.8). Perhaps here is a good place to come to the heart of the matter, the topic that is to occupy us in the next several essays on foundational prayer. Thomas is dealing here with a high calling. But is not the global call of Faith seeking pragmatic understanding that high call globalized? And is not that the call of cosmopolis, identifiable now methodologically as functional specialization?

“It would be unfair not to stress the chief characteristic of cosmopolis. It is not easy.”(*Insight* 241[266]). So I would claim, bluntly, that foundational prayer is the core of the challenge of cosmopolis, the heart of that collaboration mentioned 29 times in the second-last section of chapter 20 of *Insight*. It is to be “not only a new and higher collaboration of intellects through faith in God, but also a mystery that is at once symbol of the uncomprehended and sign of what is grasped and psychic force that sweeps living human bodies, linked together in charity, to a joyful, courageous, whole-hearted, yet intelligently controlled performance of the tasks set by a world order in which the problem of evil is not suppressed but transcended.”(*Insight*, 723[745]). Are we not close to the mood of the appeal in the verse quoted at the end of the previous footnote? And there are the further pointers of notes 18-25 below.

¹⁵No harm in mentioning that one has to add, to a refined version of Lonergan’s gentle proposal, various axioms: of intentionality, of infinity, of incompleteness.

¹⁶I shall have something more to say about that in Prehumous 7.

¹⁷The article appeared in *Philosophical Studies*, Maynooth, Ireland, 1962. It is unavailable to me, and probably not easily obtainable. I write from memory.

chapter? That you have this inner activity, CUE, and you call its achievement “knowing”. DON’T take this in its normal sense. Next add the beginning of chapter 12. What happens here. Well, you put a name on what knowing gets you at.: call it “being”.¹⁸ In that old article I suggested that it might have been better to call it “oompa”, and I hold to that suggestion. What is oompa? Well, you struggle on with the book, find at the end of chapter 13 that Lonergan suggests that there is an unsolved problem. What is it? It is connecting oompa with what we normally - when we are using our heads !!! - call, say is, real. So, you arrive at page 388 [or now page 413] and he lays the proposal on you. Like in a court of justice! “Do you swear to...”, but here it is “Do you take yourself seriously”, hold to your own freeing truth? And if you take to heart The Position then you have left Kant and Hegel behind [or within or out-there or whatever] and you have become an extreme realist.

¹⁸Notice the difference in my classroom strategy. There was little sense in introducing the word “being” in that classroom context.