

PAUL'S EPISTLES AND FUNCTIONAL SYSTEMATICS

Paul? In the Garden of Jesus, not a new or second Adam: an InWithTo new creation that yet was there, Bigbang Class-ping. Now in Your garden, Guarding, Double Big-Banged, I tune thornily—and tend and guard and bind and greet.¹

I begin this short paper for the Easter Loyola Marymount University gathering of 2017 as I did two other papers of the year, with this curious text and footnote.² But the intent of my paper here is very different from that of the two other papers. My intent here is to have a shot at a helpful communication of the systematics that I refer to in the title. Many of my audience here will have only beginner's notions of either functional collaboration or the new systematics that belongs to it. Indeed, the group being, primarily, one working in philosophy, may well be pretty vague on Paul's Epistles. So, let me assure you that I am not venturing into any subtleties here about the writings of Paul. I use his writings here, because I have been preoccupied with them and the study of them in recent years.³ I could well have

¹ A little fiction here hear: Lonergan puzzling about Paul, and echoing Rilke. I am thinking of the broad context fermented forward by the brilliant Albert Schweitzer, with his *Quest for the Historical Jesus* of 1906 and his Paul-quest of later years. I have his 1931 *Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (London: A. and C. Black) open before me, at the final chapter, "The Permanent Elements in Paul's Mysticism," and you might muse of the geohistorical heuristic that could connect Paul, him, and Lonergan as you read a few quotations. The chapter starts: "Paul vindicated for all time the rights of thought in Christianity" (376); "Paul is the patron-saint of thought in Christianity. And all those who think to serve the faith in Jesus by destroying the freedom of thought would do well to keep out of his way." (377)

² The two other papers are in the two commemorative volumes of *Dinyadaan* (28) 2017 in honour of the 60th anniversary of the publication of *Insight*. The first volume deals broadly with *Insight* and contains my essay, "*Insight* and the Trivialization of History"; the second volume focuses, in five essays, on the heuristics of 2020–2050 through a collaborative cycling through the specialties dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, communications. That volume contains my essay—in systematics—"Insight and the Interior Lighthouse."

³ The focus of my attention during that time has been mainly on the writings of that outstanding scholar N.T. Wright. See the present series of essays *Disputing Quests*, in particular numbers 4, 5, and 8: "Scripture Studies: Turn Wright" I, II, and III. See also the essay mentioned in the following footnote. I note that in those essays I do not tackle the tricky issue of the need for a shift to genetic thinking in order to escape descriptive entrapment, nor do I tackle that question here. Helpful in this

turned by essay around the Epistles of Plato or of Pliny the Younger, but then we would be into the task of locating these and giving some notions of the bits of which I would have to make use in either case. In contrast to such work, I suspect that the two bits of Paul we need are already familiar to my audience: the bit about the “groaning of the cosmos” in chapter 8 of *Romans* and the bit about “self-control” in his Epistle to the Galatians.⁴ What about the bits that are referred to quaintly in my odd beginning quotation? Well, Paul’s view of Jesus as the second Adam is well enough known, but yes, we shall be doing a little wandering and weaving to make sense of the rest of that odd beginning. The wandering and weaving is calculated—what an uninviting word—to get you a decent glimpse of what functional systematics is like. That part of the paper, then, illustrates, as neatly as I can make it,⁵ work in the functional specialty, Systematics.

It is useful to begin by noting my own twenty-year struggle with the new meaning that Lonergan gave to systematics. How could I have been so slow? I recall now Lonergan’s grin talking about such difficulty, and telling the old story of Columbus dealing with the Grandees who thought nothing of his discovery of America. Columbus challenged them to poise an egg on its end. They messed around fruitlessly. When you see it done, as Columbus showed, it is embarrassing. Could this fit in with Lonergan’s amused hands when he typed, “Doctrines that are embarrassing will not be mentioned in polite company.”?⁶

problem is the paralleling of the two sets of canons in [Cantover XIV](#), “Communications and Ever-ready Founders,” pp. 7–12.

⁴ A context here, and indeed for our search for a larger perspective, is [Disputed Quests 7](#), “Self-Control in the New Testament and in the Economics of the positive Anthropocene Age.” On the Anthropocene Age, see note 7 below.

⁵ I have been struggling, since chapter 3, “*Haute Vulgarization*,” of *Lack in the Beingstalk* (Axial Publishing, 2006) with the heuristics of what I call positive *haute vulgarization*. Now I muse over its blossoming as paralleling the shift to a positive Anthropocene age mentioned in note 7 below. Lonergan is quite blunt about its negative aspects: see *CWL 6, Philosophical and Theological Papers*, 1958–1964, 121, 155. The shift to positivity would seem to pivot on serious exercising, be it in meta-aesthetic or metascientific patterns. See note 47 below. I suggest as illustrating this rather neatly, that of Richard Feynman’s magnificent three volumes, *Lectures on Physics* (Addison Wesley, 1964), the first two err towards siding with negative *haute vulgarization*, though on a very high level, quite higher than the pretense of *Scientific American*. On Feynman’s third volume, which is a brilliant introduction to quantum physics, see note 53 below.

⁶ *Method in Theology*, 299.

I shall return to my struggle later in musing over the long road ahead that will get us all out of the negative Anthropocene age into the global radiance of the positive Anthropocene age of later millennia.⁷ But now I wish to embarrass you cheerfully⁸ by showing what a simple business this new functional systematics is.

Paul, like Plato and Pliny and, now, ourselves in the human alphabet, was trying to understand history and God. He mooched around with the past of the Hebrews, and messed around with the future of the Romans and wrote heavily of Adam and his replacement by Jesus and rambled quite oddly about a swiftly approaching end to the Anthropocene age.⁹

You can now pause to suspect, with some ease, after quiet rambling musings over the 60 words of that paragraph, that figuring out what Paul was at is greatly helped by having a better idea than he had of the broad story, what Lonergan talks of as “the successive stages of

⁷ I made the distinction between the negative and positive Anthropocene in my recent book, [Profit: The Stupid View of President Donald Trump](#) (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2016). The Anthropocene Age has become an accepted geological age, related to the emergence of human interferences. Its beginning is dated variously, starting with Lucy falling from the tree or starting with the industrial revolution. Let’s take 10,000 years as convenient here. Then think, for the negative period, of the emergence of linguistic meaning as dominant, and in terms of the “first time of the temporal subject” (See *The Triune God: Systematics*, CWL 12, 401–13) with its neglected subjectivity (see note 47 below) rolling on into and in truncatedness for perhaps another one or nine (depending on you) millennia. The positive Anthropocene then emerges with its schemes internal and external to a functionally luminous global Tower-of-Able control of meaning and mystery.

⁸ The cheeriness relates to Lonergan’s musings on “Possible Functions of Satire and Humor,” *Insight* 647–49. We need this especially in these next transitional centuries, when sensation and “knowledge of all that is lacking” (*Insight*, 559) reveals our living as shockingly trapped in “initial meanings” (*Insight*, 567: at note 5), a key topic of my recent *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History* (Axial Publishing, 2015), where I weave that problem into the problem of meshing *Insight* and *Method in Theology* through creative functionality. The prime threatening illustration of initial meanings meshed with numbers is, of course, present voodoo economics: the long haul to sanity is discussed in *Profit: The Stupid View of President Donald Trump*.

⁹ You are surely assured by the first footnote above that I am not slighting Paul, a magnificent adventurer in the search for the meaning of the Incarnation. His eschatology was a risky reach, as is my own. His was proved wrong by time; mine could be proved right by eternity, but has its genetic plausibility from Thomas. But the deep problem is to face the explanatory task of getting the various views into a genetic and geohistorical sequence. A perspective on this is given in [Disputing Quests 7](#) “‘Self-Control’ in the New Testament and in the Economics of the Positive Anthropocene Age.” There is an introduction to my eschatology in [HOW 11](#) “Into the Neurodynamics of Jesus.” It leaps forwards from the last footnote of my little book, *The Everlasting Joy of Being Human* (Axial Publishing, 2013).

this, the greatest of all works.”¹⁰ There is nothing odd about that. A discoverer of the wonders of the growing sunflower can be eloquent about tending to it appreciatively but not have much of a beginning of understanding the molecular wonders of the 100 days from seed to smile. Further, a good gardener can be quite brilliant in talking of strategies of care during that 100 days. How brilliant, how accurate?

Strategies of care evolve. Let us shift from botany to medicine, and muse over care of animals and humans over the ages: think of Australian care of 50,000 years ago, of the later Chinese and Native Americans and Europeans and Africans. As you think thus, or even slide along the names in reading, do you not find yourself leaning on an imagination that strings the Tribal-indicators into a geohistory? Back now we go to muse about the Chinese with a focus on acupuncture: How brilliant was it and is it?¹¹ The full answer is not a simple business of local achievements and benefits. We all, in our situations, know of situations of success for friends, for ourselves perhaps. The full answer had best be one that carries over to, so to speak, situations the world over.¹² But that full answer is a goal, not an achievement: and this is true whether we are thinking of sunflower stems or human spines. Taking care of either stems or spines is quite different in Vancouver and Vanuatu.

Let me shift the problem and the image to a television series about care. You may not know it, so please be patient and reach elsewhere for a parallel, or even go Googling *House*, for that is the program I have in mind.¹³ I have used the parallels offered by the program regularly

¹⁰ *The Triune God: Systematics*, CWL 12, 491.

¹¹ Acupuncture has a long and strange history, going back to 2000 B.C. One would be well to pause over the apparently simple question within the context of “all that is lacking” (see notes 7 and 8 above) in the negative Anthropocene ethos of initial meanings and putterings.

¹² I have used the word *situations* three times here, to draw your attention to a quite new meaning of “our situations” when we are thinking functionally. Thinking thus one can move to an operable image of eight situation rooms hovering, as it were, over any concrete situation. The terminology is introduced in my recent book, *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History*, but it is succinctly presented in chapter 12, “Situation Room: The Stupid View of Wolf Blitzer,” of the book *Profit: The Stupid View of President Donald Trump*. My move sublates the eight occurrences of situation on page 358 of *Method in Theology*.

¹³ The program ran for eight seasons, 2004–2012, featuring Hugh Laurie as Gregory House, a medical expert who worked with a team of students, on special cases. The activities lead to a neat image of the processes involved in moving through the dialectic operations of *Comparison. Method in Theology*, 250.

in the past decade,¹⁴ and those parallels should make sense to you here without diverting from your reading of the moment. The team are gathering round a case of spinal troubles. How to care? The team is international: British, Kenyan, Australian, and Chinese. They bring a decent perspective on spinal growth, variations, and disorders: they can care with more than normal adequacy. O.K.¹⁵

Now let's take a curious turn here. Think of the long history of spinal care, and people like this team studying suggested care-patterns of earlier times. Such suggestions are increasingly informed as humans move from primitive times through cruelties and alchemies to enlightened views. But our stumbling bungling humanity does well not to cultivate an unenlightened amnesia.¹⁶ Yesterday's cruelty, tempered by anesthesia, could be tomorrow's cure. So, one goes back to China or Connemara to see what sharp sticks or hot seaweed might do to troubled neurons. One goes back with the best of today's care weaved into its understanding: not one but many, a many who are found to be good at that sort of searching. But note that that many depends on another many who put together for them the view that is the today's best. Note further—and this needs pausing over—that that view is not a simple view, a nice contemporary handbook of care and the grounds of such care in science. Can you think its character out in terms we have already used: a sort of a geohistory of intelligent care? But further I would ask you to think of that geohistory as somehow cleaned-up. Leeches along the spine only work in particular circumstances: the view needed has to shake off or transform flawed leeching.¹⁷ And so on. If you push on quietly in imagination you may arrive at a decent

¹⁴ For example, in *Futurology Express* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2013): a secular presentation of functional specialization.

¹⁵ Your O.K. here can lift off from Lonergan's idea of "understanding the object" (*Method in Theology*, 156–58) to rise slowly to the shock of the turn-of-the-page paragraph, *Insight* 609–10.

¹⁶ Historical amnesia is to be cured by the cyclic spiralings of functional collaboration. There is a useful short introductory reflection on avoiding autobiographical amnesia in *Method in Theology*, 182–84, followed by a goodly paragraph (185) on pre-critical history which concludes with comments of the *prophetic*, an important aspect you-hear-now reading, finding your way into the sense written of later in *Method* (250, lines 4-6): history in the style of Burckhardt, leaning forward, perhaps even seeing your life's past or its historical context as, curiously, "something better than was the reality." *Ibid.*, 251.

¹⁷ This is an interesting lead into the process by which one moves from operating towards the line-up of the universal viewpoint, to lifting the result ("counterpositions are reversed": the last words of *Method*, 250) into a genetic systematic structure.

notion that what we, or I, or/and medicine, has in mind is the story of promising treatments. Is it not an easy addition to this to accept that the story is genetic? Even that, with some ease, you can think of a genetic system of systems of treatment?¹⁸

I suspect, and hope, that, so far, you are comfortable with all this. Full comfort: well, that's quite a different ballpark. But more comfort, and indeed encouragement, should come from our two next ventures here. First, I wish to bring us from the previous rambles to a plausible notion of genetic systematics. Then I want to enrich that seeded notion by doing—yes, actually doing—advanced creative genetic systematics in relation to Paul's letters.¹⁹

Do we have far to go to get a glimpse of what Lonergan means by genetic systematics?²⁰ My footnote saves me distracting you from my own struggle towards that glimpse, but it certainly should be an encouragement. And please, swing in the molecules of your sense of humor in this massive ethical problem of culture.²¹ I think of the humor of Lonergan starting

¹⁸ You perhaps notice the shift here to a simpler imagining in a straight genetics than the Markov sphere (see my *Randomness, Statistics and Emergence*, 237: the matrix needs to be restructured to parallel the surface of the globe) required to hold together geohistorical analysis. However, the geohistorical imaging is better for controlling intersecting, overlapping, etc. contexts of meaning in any zone of culture.

¹⁹ We remain in the world of *haute vulgarization* of course, not venturing on the journey mentioned in the next note of seriously turning the first page of *Method* to a new leaf. But I would hope that the ramble takes positive root, climbing towards the beginning of an existential stand even on the strange needs and hopes expressed in the final two footnotes of this essay. We desperately need “an aesthetic apprehension of the group's origin and story. The aesthetic apprehension of the group's origin and story becomes operative whenever the group debates, judges, evaluates, decides, or acts – and especially in a crisis.” (*Topics in Education*, CWL 10, 230). And in this 60th anniversary year of *Insight* we very clearly face a crisis.

²⁰ I recall a remark of the biologist Paul Weiss, in the Introduction to his *Principles of Development*, (New York: Henry Holt & Co, 1939): “Does not everyone have some notion of what development implies? Undoubtedly most of us have. But when it comes to formulating these notions they usually turn out to be vague.” The crisis we face is best imaged from Lonergan as the challenge of seriously turning from the culture of last two words of *Method in Theology*, 3: “academic disciplines” that is an endless back-and-forth of opinions, to the culture that grounds a Bell-curve of progress, “a third way, difficult and laborious.” *Ibid.*, 4.

²¹ The first part of [Method in Theology, Revisions and Implementations](#), deals with fluctuations in interest in developmental heuristics in botany. A context for such a reach is that mentioned in note 8 above. And I would note that botany and blessedness seem in the same boat: though blessedness is of course a massively deeper issue. Is it infinitely deeper? Plants, as Thomas points out, will not be a presence in the Eschaton, but their blessed molecules shall weave into Christ's neurodynamics. See further notes 70 and 71 below.

his last paragraph of chapter five of *Insight*: “The answer is easily reached.”²² I think of his beginning his sketching for me of functional collaboration, in 1966, holding out eight fingers horizontally between us: “Well, it’s easy: you just double the structure.” So, genetic systematics is as obvious as the growth of the sunflower. Is not the sunflower a genetic system of systems? Each stage of the 100 or so days holds together as a system, indeed a system on the move. So there you have it!²³

You have at least a plausible start: nor do I wish to add enriching complications. But I need to add the essential twist that comes from Lonergan’s brilliant leap of February 1965 by sharing with you the question: Where does the genetic systematics come from, and how does it grow? In the negative Anthropocene which cramps our present global care, it comes, in different domains, from random putterings of strange people, people I think of as evolutionary sports.²⁴ It is pretty shabby in such domains, as you would find if you take a ramble in a university library through books with titles of the form “The Development of X.” I think of my own particular original zone of work, mathematics, and a decent book I have used over the years: *The Development of Mathematics* by E.T. Bell.²⁵ It is a gallant effort to portray a complex

²² *Insight*, 195. The humor of the statement may increase for you when you begin to savor that the paragraph to follow steams with the meaning with which we struggle in this little article.

²³ Indeed, none of us have it. The printed context of our future struggle is section 7, “Genetic Method,” of chapter 15 of *Insight*.

²⁴ This is a tricky and enlightening topic of evolution when it is weaved into the genesis of human meaning. When thematized eventually in terms of the two stages of the Anthropocene Age it will lift into a geohistorical scientific context Lonergan’s quotation from Friedrich Schlegel. “A classic is a writing that is never fully understood. But those that are educated and educate themselves must always want to learn more from it.” *Method in Theology*, 161.

²⁵ McGraw-Hill, 1945. I found this book invaluable over the years. To help nudge people in a hurry I regularly cite Bell’s comment on the struggle to understand the foundations of probability theory: “The necessary mathematics all developed from the fundamental principles of mathematical probability laid down by Fermat and Pascal in about three months by the painstaking application of uncommon sense.” *Ibid.*, 155. Then there is the final paragraph of the book which poses a problem of human understanding that twines in with the searchings of this paper. I quote it now Bell’s final comment on the significance of mathematical understanding. “Alternatives are conceivable, indeed possible. Mystics, to whom the scientific habit of mind is only less repellent than the precision of mathematics with its hard sharp clarity, prophesy a method more intuitive than those of science and mathematics. Adepts will perceive the universe as it ‘is,’ without an effort of sense or thought. Even stranger things have happened; and perhaps the strangest thing of all is the marvel that mathematics should be possible to a race akin to the apes.” *Ibid.*, 594. Perhaps I might interest my reader in an instance of a struggle with a particular mathematical development that should have more significance

reality, but, as Lonergan writes about the long climb of civilization, “we are not there yet. And for society to progress towards that or any other goal it must fulfill one condition. It cannot be a titanothore, a beast with a three-ton body and a ten-ounce brain.”²⁶ I could well pause here over how early we are in the history of humanity: something we need desperately to intussuscept through this critical century.²⁷ But best stay on course and even perhaps sniff the seeds of it by pausing over the text of Lonergan which express his astonishing grip on needs and possibilities. Yes, it is about mathematics, the simplest of studies: Think of its enlarged future as a heuristics of botany, and then boggle at its future in the becoming of humanity, battling thus towards self-tasting that “what is lacking is knowledge of all that is lacking.”²⁸ Share my astonishment of 25 years ago, which hovers in me now as I reproduce the text once more.

The history of any particular discipline is in fact the history of its development. But this development, which would be a theme of history, is not something simple and straightforward but something which occurs in a long series of various steps, errors, detours, and corrections. Now as one studies this movement he learns about this developmental process and so now possesses within himself an instance of that development which took place perhaps over several centuries. This can happen only if the person understands both his subject and the way he learned about it. Only then will he understand which elements in the historical developmental process had to be understood before the others, which one made for progress in understanding and which held back, which elements really belonged to the particular science and which did not, and which elements contained errors. Only then will he be able to tell at what point in the history of his subject there emerged new visions of the whole and when the first true system occurred, and when the transition took place from an earlier to a later systematic ordering, which systematization was simply an expansion of the former and which was radically new; what progressive transformation the whole subject underwent; how everything that was explained by the old systematization is now explained by the new, along with many other things that the old one did not explain – the advances in physics, for example, by

in the study of its creator, Husserl. See my *Lack in the Beingstalk*, chapter 4, “The Calculus of Variation.”

²⁶ *For a New Political Economy*, CWL 21, 20.

²⁷ See Divyadaan 2017(2), with its focus on the heuristics of 2020–2050.

²⁸ *Insight*, 559.

Einstein and Max Planck. Then and then alone will he be able to understand what factors favoured progress, what hindered it, and why, and so forth.

Clearly, therefore, the historian of any discipline has to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of whole subject. And it is not enough that he understand it in any way at all, but he must have a systematic understanding of it. For the precept, when applied to history, means that successive systems which have developed over a period of time have to be understood. The systematic understanding of a development ought to make use of an analogy with the development that takes place in the mind of the investigator who learns the subject, and this interior development within the mind of the investigator ought to parallel the historical process by which the science itself developed.²⁹

There is no way I can pause here to comment helpfully on this extraordinary piece of thinking. What I can do is bring us to a halt over the first and last sentences in it.

The first sentence is, “The history of any particular discipline is in fact the history of its development.” This needs to be thought out, perhaps using the parallels we used earlier here. Then you get a sense of development having two meanings. There is the concrete development, be it of medicine or of philosophy, and that development is a muddled business. Sorting that muddling out for future care is the tricky matter of selectively lifting the muddledness to a genetic structure: that is the push to genetic systematics, a push I have identified as that of evolutionary sports, but can be the work of patient scholars. Think of the married couple, William Kneale and Martha Kneale, and their effort to present *The Development of Logic*.³⁰ Does their magnificent work represent a mature genetics of logic, or is it perhaps the case that “they fail to mature”?³¹

To help us muse over that question I wish us to re-read the final sentence of the quotation from Lonergan. “The systematic understanding of a development ought to make use of an analogy with the development that takes place in the mind of the investigator who learns the subject, and this interior development within the mind of the investigator ought to parallel the

²⁹ The quotation is from Michael G. Shield’s translation, *Understanding and Method*, 130–32. The original Latin text I have of *De Intellectu et Methodo* has the material on page 55.

³⁰ Clarendon Press, 1962. Available in later published forms.

³¹ *Method in Theology*, 355. The *they* of the text refers to the seven specialties that precede the specialty that is the topic faced into on this page, the topic of the eighth specialty, which of course will share the level of immaturity of the previous seven.

historical process by which the science itself developed.” Now to use that analogy requires that they, be *they* the couple of logicians or large teams in that or other areas, as individuals follow Lonergan’s nudge: “the investigator who learns the subject” learns also the learning subject that they are. Is this not a familiar notion? “One has not only to read *Insight* but also to discover oneself in oneself.”³² Kneale and Kneale were not there, nor is the entire world of present logic, nor—wow—any other zone.

So how, we now can ask, is the distant genetic systematics to be generated in coming generations? Again, musing over the hints gathered so far points us towards an answer. Think medicine. Here and there on the globe progress is made, gathered and cleaned up—in the process, crossing borders and oceans, spanning centuries and millennia—tidied up into larger coherences. Might the messy adventures take better shape, more structured constructive flow-patterns? The answer is a matter of the tuning in of mind, and the minding of minding, to the general patterns of nature, where emergent probability ruled from the emergence of chemicals in the first second 13.7 billion years ago. Recurrences can bubble into schemes of recurrence and then there can be added schemes of minding such recurrence-schemes that weave serious minders, scholars, human evolutionary sports, together.

In this case we may suppose that the probabilities of the single events are respectively the same as before, but we cannot suppose that the probability of the combination of all events in the set is the same as before. As is easily seen, the concrete possibility of a scheme beginning to function shifts the probability of the combination from the product $pqr . . .$ to the sum $p + q + r + . . .$ For in virtue of the scheme, it is now true that A and B and C and . . . will occur, if either A or B or C or . . . occurs; and by the general rule of probability theory, the probability of a set of alternatives is equal to the sum of the probabilities of the alternatives.³³

Questions about the emergence of this dynamic globally are complex and must be passed over, but one point is worth making: the lift of minding to the new levels required by the vortex movement³⁴ of the cycle of collaboration from researchings of the past to structures of future

³² *Ibid.*, 260.

³³ *Insight*, 144.

³⁴ I would note that the functional cycling sublates the movement of a century ago associated with Ezra Pound. I may as well quote note 39 of my 2002 [Cantower I](#), “Function and History,” on the topic. “Pound wrote “if you clap a strong magnet beneath a plateful of iron filings, the energies of

hopes and streets is to be intrinsic to the probabilities and success-patterns of the actual cycling. This is one ground of the complex of reasons why Lonergan's appeal for conversions of minding has borne so little fruit.

But let us now move on to the central topic of this little essay: the illustration of creative advancing in genetic functional systematics. Here we need to pause over the question: Is such illustrating really possible? Let me be clear. What I am talking about seems a wild fantasy: a move forward, from a seemingly absent dynamic structure, of a refinement of the non-existent genetic system that would deal, as Paul attempts to do, with God and history.

I get out of the region of wild fantasy by presupposing my sufficient vague heuristic of the explanatory genetic involved, picking up hints from Lonergan, and shaping the front-edge system that leans into the future, but also weaves into the past.³⁵ You might think of my move as jumping from seed to early sunflower, skipping the problem of the sequence of systems in between. Or—a better imaging—skipping forward in frog-study to the young tadpole to glimpse the system of systems that is on the edge of swimming like a frog.

As I mentioned at the beginning, we are not venturing into the subtleties of Paul's view: I settle us on attending, skimpily, to his meaning of "self-control" and of "the groaning of creation." These two namings refer to overlapping meanings. They are overlapping meanings of parts of a single object. But is this an overlapping of meaning Paul would recognize, or is it like the overlapping of meaning that occurs when a good physicist weaves together the concrete meaning of Maxwell's equations with the quantum meaning of the Aharonov-Bohm effect?³⁶ Here we come up against the genius of Lonergan in his struggle to put *Method in Theology* together.³⁷ It flashes forth when he dances into proclaiming the first aspect of

the magnet will proceed to organize form . . . the design in the magnetized iron filings expresses a confluence of energy." "Affirmations, Vorticism," *The New Age*, xvi, 11, Jan 14, 1915, 277.

³⁵ It is interesting to note how Lonergan turns to the past in treating of doctrines in "Doctrines," the 12th chapter of *Method in Theology*. I would note that the shift of the front system of a genetic retrieval of the past systems of meaning lifts the entire prior sequence of systems: but this is a complex topic into which we cannot enter here.

³⁶ See pages 7–8 of [HOW 11](#), "Into the Neurodynamics of Jesus" and the significant follow up at the beginning of [HOW 13](#), "The Interior Lighthouse."

³⁷ Both Patrick Brown and I have written extensively on this process and its problems. All I shall say here is that it is, and has been, shockingly easy to miss the message of the text, starting with the

understanding a text, like that of Paul on “self-control” or on “the groaning cosmos.” Here you have it, and I delight at a momentary inspiration to include it as I now type that bit from Beckett which Lonergan enjoyed, so to speak, markedly:

Here is direct expression – pages and pages of it. And if you don’t understand it, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is because you are too decadent to receive it. You are not satisfied unless form is so strictly divorced from content that you can comprehend the one almost without bothering to read the other. This rapid skimming and absorption of the scant cream of sense is made possible by what I may call a continuous process of copious intellectual salivation. The form that is an arbitrary and independent phenomenon can fulfill no higher function than that of a stimulus for a tertiary or quartary conditioned reflex of dribbling comprehension.³⁸

Here you have it then: “one understands the object to which the text refers.”³⁹

Isn’t that just a hoot? It will be, certainly, when adequate reading patterns emerge from cyclic collaboration in these next centuries or millennia. What is the process to the achievement of understanding the object? Is it not the achievement of the slow climb of humanity’s understanding, paused over the text of genesis, “let there be light.” And so emerge Paul and Maxwell, trying to understand the light that belongs to our finitude.

How do we go about understanding sunlight or Sonlight?⁴⁰

massive contemporary problem in Lonergan studies of missing the point of the turn of the page from the last two words on page 3 of the book: “academic disciplines.”

³⁸ Samuel Beckett, “Dante . . . Bruno. Vico . . . Joyce,” *Our Examination Round His Factifiction For Incamination of Work in Progress*, A New Directions Book, New York, 1972, 13 (first published 1929). I quoted this on page 67 of [Lonergan’s Challenge to the University and the Economy](#) (1980), in chapter 4, “Modernity and the Transformation of Criticism.” On my website there is the photocopy of Lonergan’s own copy of the book, with his markings. There are two marginal markings on this page: the first, the Beckett piece; the second marks my quoting, shortly after that piece, of Lonergan’s comment on page 260 of *Method in Theology*, “To say it all with the greatest brevity: one has not only to read *Insight* but also to discover oneself in oneself.”

³⁹ *Method in Theology*, 155, lines 21–22.

⁴⁰ In note 34 I mention Pound and my first *Cantower*. The inspiration for my *Cantowers* came, that spring of 2002, from reading Pound’s 117 Cantos and so I began the venture of writing one Cantower per month. [Cantower II](#), “Sunflowers Speak to Us of Growing,” and here I quote relevantly the verse with which it began. “Sun, flowers, Son-flowered, / Speak to us of growth / Seed cauled, cribbed, / Kabod yet confined, / Crossed with dark earth, / Light-refined, / Rill open-ends a trill / Annotaste of Throat.”

Here we hit a high point of embarrassment, bewilderment, dismay, named quietly by Lonergan seventeen years earlier.

One may expect the diligent authors of highly specialized monographs to be somewhat bewildered and dismayed when they find that instead of singly following the bent of their genius, their aptitudes, and their acquired skills, they are to collaborate in the light of abstruse principles and to have their individual results checked by general requirements that envisage simultaneously the totality of results.⁴¹

And what is the core of these general requirements? Lonergan presents it six pages later in the genius paragraph of the second canon of hermeneutics that I usually label *60910*.

The explanatory differentiation of the protean notion of being involves three elements. First, there is the genetic sequence in which insights gradually are accumulated by man. Secondly, there are the dialectic alternatives in which accumulated insights are formulated, with positions inviting further development and counterpositions shifting their ground to avoid the reversal they demand. Thirdly, with the advance of culture and effective education, there arises the possibility of the differentiation and specialization of modes of expression, and since this development conditions not only the exact communication of insights but also the discoverer's own grasp of his discovery, since such grasp and its exact communication intimately are connected with the advance of positions and the reversal of counterpositions, the three elements in the explanatory differentiation of the protean notion of being fuse into a single explanation.⁴²

Simply put—LOL—your best shot at understanding Paul is to bring to the reading the “level of the one’s times”⁴³ grip on the meaning of self-control and cosmic groaning. That grip is the reality of an inner word to be achieved only through a contemplative climb, to be communally supported in the future Tower of Able.⁴⁴ We are back with the 46-year-old Lonergan typing his way unerringly through the beginning of the 1950s.⁴⁵

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

⁴¹ *Insight*, 604, lines 2 ff.

⁴² *Insight*, 609–10.

⁴³ *Method in Theology*, 350.

⁴⁴ See [HOW 13](#), “The Interior Lighthouse”.

⁴⁵ I vividly recall my first encounter in the early 1970s with the typescript. Like Salieri in the film, *Amadeus*, viewing some works by Mozart, I boggled: “there are no corrections!” Very few, in fact: it was an astounding solitary climb.

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.⁴⁶

It is pretty clear to me, after 60 years of reading *Insight*, that we face here the challenge of the transition to the positive Anthropocene age.

So: does this cut off our communication? I recall now my time teaching a high-level first year course in mathematic physics. We battled along, problem after problem, to get, for example, the control and self-control—though truncated for most⁴⁷—that would allow us, and modern astronomy, to control Kepler's three laws better than Kepler did.⁴⁸ But occasionally a larger issue would emerge: one, say, being dealt with in my graduate physics class. Then I would shift to what I call positive *haute vulgarization*, the positive pertaining to the fact that the good class-members understood it as such, a flight of their fancy into the thin air of their future. Might we do something similar here? But I already have done it with my first few lines, with the note there that I skip here but replace with further footnote obscurity: “Paul? In the Garden of Jesus, not a new or second Adam: an InWithTo new creation that yet was there, Bigbang Class-ping. Now in Your garden, Guarding, Double Big-Banged, I tune thornily—and tend and guard and bind and greet.”⁴⁹ Might I add to that flight of fancy, a flight to the

⁴⁶ *Insight*, 210, lines 6–12.

⁴⁷ The year of this teaching was 1960–61. It was not either easy or appropriate to communicate generalized empirical method in that class. Further, I would have you note that truncation can prevail and has prevailed even in various cultures of Lonergan studies. It is no easy task (see *Insight*, 411, the top lines) to breathe this rare air in this negative Anthropocene fog of a global truncated subjectivity. It is good, perhaps, to recall here Lonergan's brief pointer. “The neglected subject does not know himself. The truncated subject not only does not know himself but also is unaware of his ignorance and so, in one way or another, concludes that what he does not know, does not exist” (“The Subject,” *A Second Collection*, 73). A dozen or so self-attended problems do not place one in the world of Lonergan's evolutionary sport. Think of the long history of chitchat round Socrates' “Know thyself.”

⁴⁸ A neat treatment of the jump from Kepler to Newton is available in my lecture notes on particle dynamics, “[Mathematical Physics: Dynamics](#),” page 19. These notes, together with “[Mathematical Physics: Statics](#),” illustrate a quite different style of presentation from that of Feynman: detailed exercises were central. See notes 5 and 53 in the present text.

⁴⁹ The further obscurity is paradoxically the pointing towards enlightenment of the next sentence and its attached note. The ultimate obscurity is of self appreciating self within the creative minding of the Three, self luminously In, With and To, respectively, the Three, where “God is not an object.” *Method in Theology*, 342, line 2.

spirituality that is to emerge when the tentative scripture rambles at the end of Lonergan's scramble to the end of *The Triune God: Systematics* is lifted to new levels of a science of subjects-as-subjects, Subjects-as-Subjects?⁵⁰ Then it would intimate to you and me—for is it not self-control blossoming further?—icy warm slopes of the ever-rest and unrest of a new community.

It is an experience of a new community, in which faith and hope and charity dissolve rationalizations, break determinisms, and reconcile the estranged and the alienated, and there is reaped the harvest of the Spirit that is ‘ . . . love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control’ (*Gal. 5:22*).⁵¹

That *haute vulgarization* by Lonergan begins also with a sentence of *haute vulgarization* that repeats suggestively the competence-nudge about “understanding the object.”⁵² Let us poise over that sentence freshly in a fresh printed spread of isolations.

“As man’s being is
being-in-the-world,
his self-understanding has to be
not only of himself
but of his world.”

This is like throwing Schrödinger’s Equation to a first year university physics class, shifting physics to a weird fullness of particularity.⁵³ How, for instance, can this “spooky”⁵⁴ “self-taste,”⁵⁵ understanding be of self’s world? What world is the self in? What world is in

⁵⁰ A helpful push towards this context is the pointers given in the final two chapters of *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History*.

⁵¹ Thus concludes Lonergan’s essay, “Mission and the Spirit” of 1976: *A Third Collection*, edited by Frederick E. Crowe S.J., Paulist Press, 1985.

⁵² The title of section 2 of the chapter in *Method in Theology* on “Interpretation,” a short section of two pages (156–58) that ends with the word “guess-work” that leads Lonergan to cite Bultmann in his note on page 158, where Bultmann pushes for “the utmost liveliness of the understanding subject and the richest possible development of his individuality.” Are we not back again with the reach for genetic systematics?

⁵³ I had originally intended to add details on this, using the climb to chapter 16 of the magnificent third volume of Feynman’s lectures referred to already in note 5. This is a volume significantly turned towards exercises.

⁵⁴ “Mission and the Spirit,” 25, 4th last line.

⁵⁵ “Religious Knowledge,” *A Third Collection*, 132. Lonergan is here recalling Gerald Manley Hopkins.

the self? Is it the world of “the fullness of time”?⁵⁶ The pilgrim- and para-destiny of an evolutionary achievement?

The emergence of humanity is the evolutionary achievement of sowing what among the cosmic molecules. The sown what infests the clustered molecular patterns behind and above your eyes, between your ears, lifting areas—named by humans like Brocca and Wernicke—towards patterned noise-making that in English is marked by “so what?”⁵⁷

For the glory of the Father is this, that just as he eternally speaks the Word in Truth and through the Word breathes forth Love in holiness, so also in the fullness of time he sent his incarnate Son in truth so that by believing the Word we might speak true inner words and understand; and through the Word he sent the Spirit of the Word in holiness so that joined to the Spirit in love and made living members of the body of Christ we might cry out “Abba, Father!”⁵⁸

We are on a roll of *haute vulgarization* so let us fly on in fantasy.⁵⁹ The body of Christ? It presented a massive puzzle to Paul; in Lonergan its place in theology remained a puzzle at the end of *Insight*. “It may be asked in what department of theology the historical aspect of development might be treated, and I would like to suggest that it may possess peculiar significance to a treatise on the mystical body of Christ.”⁶⁰ He carries the question there through a paragraph longer than a page, weaving round light and the fullness of time through

⁵⁶ *The Triune God: Systematics*, CWL 12, 519.

⁵⁷ The first paragraph of the first chapter of my recent book, *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History* (Axial Publishing, 2015).

⁵⁸ *The Triune God: Systematics*, CWL 12, 519–20. I note that I correct the text’s translation. Instead of “we might speak and understand true inner words” I give “we might speak true inner words and understand.” The difference is central: see note 126 on page 39 of *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, CWL 2.

⁵⁹ I was nudged in the early 1970s by Marcuse to serious metathinking on the neuromolecular leanings, learnings, and yearnings of fantasy. “Without fantasy, all philosophic knowledge remains in the grip of the present or the past and severed from the future, which is the only link between philosophy and the real history of mankind” (Herbert Marcuse, *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory*, translated by Jeremy J. Shapiro, Boston, 1968, 155). Helpful here is my book of that period, [The Shaping of the Foundations](#), where Marcuse steers me into chapter four. The two functions of foundational thinking are fantasy and circuit acceleration.

⁶⁰ *Insight*, 763.

Paul's puzzles and Augustine's, through Hegel and Marx, to crave "a treatise on the concrete universal that is mankind in the concrete."⁶¹

Eleven and a half years later he broke through to functional collaboration but never explicitly located, in that new systematics, the treatise on the mystical body. Yet, it finds its place there in a wonderful duplexity which shows finitude oddly as "something better than was the reality."⁶² First, one may think of it as just renaming the field reached for by the self-understanding of the self's world: the goal of any horizon of genetic systematics. The field? "The field is *the* universe, but my horizon is *my* universe."⁶³ But secondly, it is weaved into the heart of the new enterprise by finding its identity as the unfinished "Symphony of Christ"⁶⁴ in its identification with a new very odd name, *Comparison*.⁶⁵ One might indeed, now, begin again with the agonizing question of *Insight*, "what is cosmopolis? Like every other object of human intelligence, it is in the first instance an X." Might we replace X with *Comparison*? "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like the yeast a woman took and mixed with three measures of flour till it was leavened all through."⁶⁶ The yeast that is the methodological struggle of *Comparison* is to leaven history all through. It is to generate a world beyond Keynes and Trump: "effectively augmenting the enlightenment of the enlightened self-interest that guides exchange."⁶⁷ Thus, the self-interest of the negative Anthropocene age is to become the self-control, "*ecratia*,"⁶⁸ of the positive Anthropocene age of a global demo-cratia. The groaning

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 764.

⁶² *Method in Theology*, 251.

⁶³ *Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18, 199. While editing this volume I traced the use of *field* back to an existentialist source, but misplaced the reference. Perhaps some reader might know it?

⁶⁴ I use this title in my *The Road to Religious Reality* (Axial Publishing, 2012: see page 19) to write of the mystical body. *Mystical* is a muddy word: slowly, slowly, the muddy thinking about the "absolutely supernatural" (*Insight*, 747), its neuromolecularity and its conditions, will be replaced by heuristic luminosity. See also note 71 below.

⁶⁵ The book mentioned in the previous note weaves the meaning of the word *Comparison* of *Method in Theology* 250 into the meaning of *The Symphony of Jesus*. Patrick Brown has dealt with the emergence of the meaning of the word on that page of *Method*. See his [Lonergan Gatherings 10](#) "Some Notes on the Development of Method 250: *Comparison*." See also *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History*, 137–40; 148–50.

⁶⁶ *The Gospel of Luke* 13:20.

⁶⁷ The statement concluded the first page of Lonergan's 1944 typescript on economics. See *For a New Political Economy*, top of page 232.

⁶⁸ An indication of the Greek of Paul's "self-control." Related meanings: *Liddel and Scott*, 448–49.

of creation is to rise to joy, where, “finally good will is joyful . . . good will wills the order of the universe, and so it wills with that order’s dynamic joy and zeal.”⁶⁹ But it is to do so with increasing communal luminosity regarding the joy and zeal of each⁷⁰ cosmic molecule arriving, after a molecular journeying of billions of years, into the multipersonal shared neuromolecules of the Everlasting Word.⁷¹

⁶⁹ *Insight*, 722: the final words.

⁷⁰ It is heuristically helpful and sobering to add to one’s perspective such estimates as the number of atoms in the universe—about 10^{80} —and the regular cranial estimate of about 10^{26} . My essay’s conclusion pushes you to think of over 10^{10} persons sharing an eventual neurodynamic visioning home with Jesus, raising a plethora of questions about the extended neurodynamics of the Eschaton. This gives a massive lift to the reading of the word mentioned at the previous note, indeed to that whole glorious page of *Insight*. It pushes me back to think of walking the streets of Dublin with Lonergan at Eastertime 1961, puzzling about an adequate cosmology. In those days, too, he talked about present theologians in terms of “big frogs in little ponds,” more sadly and modestly expressed in his quip of 1942, “theologians, let alone parents, rarely think of the historical process” (“Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection, CWL* 4, 47). This and my final note can perhaps be seen or sniffed to raise massively disturbing and creative questions about how we “tend to center an infinite craving on a finite object or release” (*ibid.*, 49: Lonergan raises disturbing pilgrim questions there, 49–52, blocked then by Rome), a tendency that is to blossom in that common eschatological neurodynamics.

⁷¹ It seems proper to end with this opening to a core piece of the new front system of genetic systematics. It takes off from the final footnote (85, on page 125) of my *The Everlasting Joy of Being Human* (Axial Publishing, 2013), where I pick up from Aquinas’ suggestions of 750 years ago. In section 20, “Eschaton,” of my “*Insight and the Trivialization of History*,” (*Divyadaan*, [28], 2017), I give a brief sketch of the further work to be done. The work is massively important pastorally: it will flow into the meaning of “terminal value” on page 48 of *Method in Theology* and transform the *haute vulgarization* of operative global hopes regarding post-mortem and post-cosmos states.