

## Quodlibet 4.

### Shifting Insight 17.3 into a Functional Specialist Context

August 2004

There are many ways of moving forward with these *Quodlibets*, these aids to functional collaboration. Indeed, one of them is already written in a curious style: *Quodlibet 5* was originally titled *Quodlibet 4*, and its focus is on the mood, the poise, of reading, of reaching out, to these diary-like writings. The reaching out, of course, is a reaching forward towards a post-axial period, oddly, a reaching for a new reaching luminosity of reaching.<sup>1</sup> But I wish to leave that topic with you at present only in footnote leads, which can be skipped over in this reading. And I am going to leave the evident question, What are we attempting here, to the last, third, section, and get right on with what the title names.

#### 1. Clarifying “Universal Viewpoint”.

The title obviously refers to the two little words “observe how” in the note at the beginning of the chapter on Interpretation in *Method in Theology*. The “observe how”, certainly in my own case, points to decades of creative struggling. Can I shorten your struggle? How short and what kind of struggle? Perhaps, after all, *Quodlibet 5* needs to be soaked up a little. Please yourself. But let’s putter on here directly with the two texts involved: *Insight 17.3* and *Method* chapter 5. For starters, it is as well to pause, poise over, that crazy last section of chapter 17, written under pressure by the 49-year-old Lonergan. I find it a great help to brood over the subsection titles, reaching for some sense of the drive, the direction, the context. They are titles of, perhaps, ten days of a

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<sup>1</sup>I have dealt with this ‘triplicity’ previous in the Cantowers. It relates to Lonergan’s view of a third order of consciousness ( in a typescript of a first version of chapter one of *Method*, dating from early 1965). We shall be dealing with it as we move along through the *Quodlibets*: puzzles, suggestions and questions welcome in this as in everything else!

diary, written with astounding control of meaning. I can only invite you to share my wondering brooding, after you have done a first reading here.

A key problem for us, one that dazzled me even in these recent days - as I re-read 17.3 as it were for the first time though I read it first 45 years ago - is that in his non-moving viewpoint<sup>2</sup> he had reached the *Insight* answer to the problem posed the first section. And he dumps you right into that context in the first sentence of section 3.2: “by a universal viewpoint will be meant...”. In the next sentence he uses, as he regularly does, that terrible little word “clarify”. I suppose we might admit that, in this section, he does clarify. But it is, for a beginner, only the clarity of initial meaning.

Here, I think, we need a helpful pause, a venture into allegory or at least analogy.<sup>3</sup> I am twisting Lonergan’s hint, at the beginning of section 17.3.7, about the introduction of tensor analysis and eigenfunctions into physics early in the twentieth century: a shocking business, both for the experts and for students. But now I wish you to think of present popular discussion of Grand Unification Theories, **GUTs** are they are named. Popular presentations - and that is a huge cultural problem that we have to tackle in a later *Quodlibet* - ‘tell us’ what **GUTs** are: accounts of the multitude of particles identified by experimental physics that would somehow pull the whole collection, and their reactions, together. This statement, or more realistically its spelling out over a couple of pages, passes muster as a **clarification**. Indeed, if it is spelled out over a whole

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<sup>2</sup>His viewpoint was, of course, growing on deeper levels. I recall conversations I had with him about such matters in the Summer of 1971 in Dublin. To a question about when he made “is” precise he answered, “when I got that far in *Insight*”. But the viewpoint that dominated *Insight* was a mature one. For instance, he ‘had emergent probability’, as he remarked to me, when he wrote “Finality, Love, Marriage”.

I still recall the shock in 1973 of reading through the typescript of *Insight*: I felt like the Salieri of the film *Amadeus* reading Mozart’s compositions.

<sup>3</sup>I am thinking here of sections 17.1.4 and 17.1.5, on myth, allegory and metaphysics. There is a massive challenge here that relates both to popularization and to what I call **ex-planing** (see note 7 below).

book, you may even get the illusion that you have really arrived at essential clarity.<sup>4</sup> Is this a help towards re-reading that section on the Universal Viewpoint?

Now let us go further. No one has arrive at a GUT in physics: there is only a collection of TUTs, ( my own suggested name), Tentative Unification Theories, some mutually incompatible. Still, there are broad agreements and all share a common context, if you like, a common undergraduate context. “What, professor, do you mean by a GUT?” The professor answers differently to different levels, and only the graduate student may be able to handle a complex compact statement of the situation such as is presented, for example, by Ian Lawrie in ““Forces, Connections and Gauge Fields””.<sup>5</sup> But that compact statement is the common air breathed by all serious contemporary physicists. They can gather together and talk easily in that remote context of meaning.

You can think out the parallel in functional specialization. What is to circulate in any generation is the best available TUV. Nor are we to settle for old-style lags and parochialisms: the word, the Word, gets round. Nor are we to settle with some myth that somehow Research and Communications are lightweight. The Tower of Culture is to move in higher planes of meaning with an embarrassing<sup>6</sup> conformality in remoteness

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<sup>4</sup>“The basic ideas about the origin and fate of the universe can be stated without mathematics in a manner that people without scientific education can understand”. S. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time. From Big Bang to Black Holes*, Bantam Press, 1988, 6. This is a common but false attitude. The challenge mentioned in the previous two notes, and in note 9 is, How does one get round it to intimate to common sense the “central features of the world of sense, intimate its finality, its yearning for God”. (*Insight*, 724[745]).

<sup>5</sup>Ian Lawrie, *Unified Tour of Theoretical Physics*, IPP, Bristol and Philadelphia, 1990, chapter 8. This is a book I recommend as a supplement to Lonergan’s choice of the time, Lindsay and Margenau, *Foundations of Physics*. It is, I know, discomfoting to some for me to recall Lonergan’s answer to the question, “How much physics should theologians know?”: “Well, they should be able to read Lindsay and Margenau”.

<sup>6</sup>The doctrine of remote theoretic and meta-theoretic meaning is an embarrassment for the prevalent commonsense eclecticism in theology and philosophy. “Doctrines that are embarrassing will not be mentioned in polite company”( *Method in Theology*, 299).

and an increasing luminosity regarding the **ex-planing** that reaches street-hearts.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. A Shift in reading “Reflective Interpretation”.

Back then to the first section, “The Problem”. My own recollection of these two pages is that it was very tough reading for me in my early years, even though I was trained in science. The last paragraph of the section comes up with the conditional, “if interpretation is to scientific”. Have you not a spontaneous resistance to this push, one that bubbles up when you begin to read of components A, B, C, D, E, F? It is a struggle to get past the resistance, to delay and diagram, etc<sup>8</sup>. That being said let us get to the main point, which regards the paragraph on reflective interpretation, with its double primings: A”, B”, ... .

What I want us to do here is focus on **the audience**. I have, of course, my own principal insight here, and I risk calling it A”.<sup>9</sup> What audience do I have in mind? To identify it for you I have to grasp your present habits of thinking and figure how to nudge them. So I assume that you are ‘with me’ to the extent that the functional specialist divisions are familiar to you. I can only presume in general a sort of nominal familiarity, but that would be O.K. : like having the periodic table not “under your belt”

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<sup>7</sup>The end of chapter three of *Lack in the Beingstalk: A Giants Causeway*, Axial Press, Halifax, 2004, introduces this and other terms relating to the problem raised in notes 3 and 4 above. A key test of one’s grip on the nature of the remoteness of theology from commonsense is to puzzle over the meaning of any doctrine as cherished by the sixth speciality and as made available to commonsense cultures.

<sup>8</sup>“Delay, Diagram, Think” comes to mind as a slogan merely because I am thinking of that classic piece in *DDT, De Deo Trino II, Pars Systematica*, the sub-section in the appendix on relations, regarding the needs even of the initial stages of a science. That attitude needs cultivation very early on in any field e.g. the first page of *Insight* presents such a challenge..See Cantower 27 on grappling with Archimedes apparently simple insight.

<sup>9</sup>I am picking up here on future directions of note 1. Deeper levels of interiority are the *per se* quest of the two functional specialties dialectic and foundations. One assumes that the consequent advanced third stage culture of the other specialties would share this lift, and mediate it to common sense through a subtle aesthetics of luminous linguistic feedback.

but simply sitting there, as it often is, inside the front cover of the grade twelve or first year university text. The implicit parallel, I hope, gives another angle on the stuff of section 1 above.

So, back to what I mean by **audience**. I mean an audience of historians to which the reflective interpreter is relating precisely as an interpreter. In terms of a symbolism which you will have to get used to in some form, the conversation is pinned down as  $C_{23}$ .<sup>10</sup> I am talking, therefore, about a functional specialist conversation, and you can get a better image for the situation by going back to the diagram, W5, of *Quodlibet 2*. No need, I hope, to put it in here: it is the overlay of an oval on the normal layout of the eight specialties.

Here, of course, you would be the better off working through two relevant articles of volume 4 of *Journal of Macrodynamic Analysis*, where John Benton and I talk about **tracking**. The outside track of the oval I titled the Indigo track. Don't worry about the name: it is where the functional job is being done best.<sup>11</sup> You might pause to name the sequence of conversations on that track, as on any other track. It is a relay, the general term of which is  $C_{x, x+1}$ ,  $x$  going from 1 to 7. Have you got that, even though you are not at present comfortable with it? The research community talks to the interpretative community, and so on, until we get to the systematics community talking to the community involved in the complex tasks of mediating the remote meaning reached within the integral science to the scientist and streets, poets and peasants, of Beijing or Bolivia.<sup>12</sup> The oval hints, of course, that the tracking continues: then you must think out the meaning of  $C_{81}$ .

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<sup>10</sup>The Matrix of specialized communications is presented in *A Brief History of Tongue*, Axial Press, Halifax, 2001, 108.

<sup>11</sup>On this see the articles by Benton and McShane in *Journal of Macrodynamic Analysis* 4(2004).

<sup>12</sup>The final section of Cantower 14 deals the manner in which metaphysics weaves into the streets of New York.

But let us stick with  $C_{23}$  for the moment. One good reason for staying with it is that the efforts of the group of collaborators in the aforementioned volume 4 help us along in understanding the task and its difficulties. Here I am neither summarizing nor systematizing: I am touching on stray points that could freshen the reading of both *Insight 17.3* **and** “the object to which the text refers.”<sup>13</sup>

A few paragraphs earlier I mentioned that the tracking process by the outside track is the process by which the functioning of specialization is most efficient in heading for “cumulative and progressive results”<sup>14</sup>: and don’t forget that the results are to be measured in terms of street-value.<sup>15</sup> I wish to give just one lead here regarding this, a lead which helps towards the reading of that impossible *Sketch* of section 3.6. The “thirdly” of that sketch introduces the notion of “pure formulation”. What could that possibly mean? Well, he tells us in that same place, with no attempt at illustration. [That is a characteristic of this whole hasty sweep. Section 3.6 probably wins the prize for obscurity in the book.]

So: let us pause over the end of that paragraph. “If they proceed...” Now, think of the proceeding as the proceeding along the best track, the Indigo track. We are talking about  $C_{23}$ . The group in the specialty H2 are, we suppose, tuned to the best available UV, so to the contemporary TUV. That being so, each of them can do a decent enough job at producing a TPF, a tentative pure formulation. What might that be like? A tough question we have to come back to helped by your questions and suggestions, in a later *Quodlibet* : but check the efforts in volume 4 of *Journal of Macrodynamical Analysis*. Broadly it is going to fit in with the second canon of hermeneutics and survive criticism based

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<sup>13</sup>*Method in Theology*, 155.

<sup>14</sup>*Method in Theology*, 4.

<sup>15</sup>I am not venturing here into the cluster of problems associated with the forward specialties. I say something on doctrinal specialization in Cantower 41. See also “Systematics, Communications, Actual Contexts”, *Loneragan Workshop Volume 6*, edited by Frederick Lawrence, Scholars Press, 1986.

on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> principles of the third canon. That, of course, doesn't help you at all: but it does serve to remind you that we are dealing here with a massive shift of perspective on the whole issue of interpretation.

Now the TPF is pretty useless unless the folk on the receiving end are in the same ballpark, and that is what we assume for the historians on the track. This is a very important point: if you have reached a decent tentative interpretation. You don't try to persuade all the historians: you write for those on your wavelength. What about the others? They are to be dealt with, communicated with, through the eighth specialty.<sup>16</sup>

Of course, they may read your stuff and find it either strangely unacceptable or intriguingly attractive. Perhaps good and available illustrations of this are Lonergan's various jumps into the heavy perspective of pure formulations in his Christology. What, he says, is really going on in such and such a Council? He plunges you right into chapter 16 of *Insight*, with, for instance, the identification of what was going forward as a move towards settling for real minor distinctions in being.<sup>17</sup>

But I am losing my general reader here, though the general reader of *Method in Theology* could pick up on this stuff in a broader way by following up the idea of sequences of changing contexts in that book. Such sequences help towards thinking in terms of pure formulations, like genetically relating tadpole to adolescent frog.

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<sup>16</sup>See *Method in Theology*, 132, section 8. I am refining its meaning. As well as interdisciplinary relations there are inter-school relations. Some may find my suggestion odd, but it follows the analogy of successful sciences. Research, interpretations etc, etc follow the best available perspective. In the case of theology, other perspectives are to be addressed through the mediation of the eight specialty; their ongoing products swung into the process through the first specialty. They are encountered heartily in the fourth specialty, and I would note especially the precise meaning of *comparison* given by Lonergan there.

<sup>17</sup>Obviously there is required here a venture into the details of Lonergan's Latin works: something for another day.

### 3. What have we been doing here?

Certainly you could associate what we are at here with the beginning of metaphysics: trying “to begin from interest”, proceeding “by cajoling or forcing attention”.<sup>18</sup> So, immediately I would claim that I am not working within a specialty. In those annoying symbols of mine, this conversation may be roughly classified as C<sub>59</sub>. So, I am predominantly talking foundationally in a reasonably popular mode. Still, a ramble here about various aspect of our effort can help.

I use the word *ramble*. If you were looking for system you are disappointed. I nudge in odd directions; I focus on sentences here and there. If you ventured into the Cantowers you would note this strategy.<sup>19</sup> There is a studied incompleteness in my pointings.

That being said, many of you will still note a problem: am I really doing foundational work, or am I rambling round the problem of interpreting Lonergan? Well, yes, I am doing that also. And the rambling becomes fairly evident if you compare what I’m doing here with the formal effort I made at interpreting the word *complete* in volume 4 of *Journal of Macrodynamical Analysis*. There, indeed, you will find what I consider a reasonable shot at that mysterious business, *hypothetical expression*. None of that here. Indeed, you find here quite curious distortions: like the way I used the paragraph on reflective interpretation in section 2 above. Still, you should find it interesting to figure how much of my distortion would survive in a hypothetical expression attributed to Lonergan, say, if he were asked for his changes of view on reflective interpretation after his successful distinction of nine genera of audiences.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>*Insight*, 398[423].

<sup>19</sup>You may find it of interest to go back to a previous treatment of chapter seventeen of *Insight*, in Cantower 17. There is the fuller context of the discussion of **function** in the Cantowers 34-41.

<sup>20</sup>*Lack in the Beingstalk: A Giants Causeway*, Axial Press, Halifax, 2004, chapter 2, deals with the two types of interpretation that can be associated with its two treatments, *Insight*'s and

But there is a sense in which what I am attempting here, and in this general push, has nothing to do with Lonergan. There is a massive need to face present cultural confusion by a global functional division of the task of rescuing and reorienting creatively progressive patterns of thinking and living. The task seems beyond present fantasy, even for disciples of Lonergan who focus on Lonergan's identification and expression of that task. So I would note that, since the expression leads to reductive simple interpretations, the Problem of section 3.1 can be, needs to be, twisted round Lonergan's efforts. Let me take this twisting in two main steps, the first focused on *Insight* as an explanatory doctrinal work, the second on *Method* as primarily descriptive doctrine.

In the late fifties two books drew my attention. The first, Joos' *Theoretical Physics*, was a goodly background to my undergraduate and graduate work in mathematical physics, the second was, of course, *Insight*, which came into my hands in 1957. It was only in the late seventies that there came clear to me a shocking parallel. Both were compendious graduate texts. I recall, indeed, writing then precisely about the section on hand. What I wrote was that Joos gives about the same length to particle dynamics as Lonergan gives to interpretation, yet to get Joos meaning one had to have worked through quite a range of undergraduate texts and problems. The difficulty, I pointed out, was that the undergraduate texts did not exist in the case of Lonergan's compendium. What was missing, and still is, is an undergraduate tradition. I should remark immediately that not a few Lonergan scholars will resent this claim, so I would like to note that it is part of my position, so as far as I am concerned, as far as functional specialization is relevant, it has to be handled not by direct dispute but by an indirect dialectic that is massively discomfoting. We'll get back to that in *Quodlibets 6, 7*, etc. But there is the discomfort that is immediately present when there is talk, or tackling, of interpreting Lonergan.

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*Method*'s.

To see this best we had better bring in the second focus: *Method's* strategically weak presentation of the challenge of cyclic collaboration. So, for example, we are back at an apparently reader-friendly presentation, in chapter 7, of the problem of interpretation. Only apparently of course: understanding object, author, words: now that's no mean task. Let me pause here over two general points and two particular words. First, there is the point of the strategic weakness: you are cajoled along through the book to the section on general categories, where he forces your attention (or did he?) on the merciless categories of *Insight* and follows up by rubbing your nose in the task of re-writing and living, character-wise, the first half of *Method*.<sup>21</sup>

The second general point regards the notion of a classic: "a classic is a writing that is never fully understood."<sup>22</sup> One can of course think here of e.g. written symphonies where the claim has solid validity, but I wish to sober up this classic business. Recall my comparison of Joos' text and *Insight*. A classic may be just a bloody good graduate text. Then you need the "bloody entrance"<sup>23</sup> of the relevant undergraduate work: a pretty tall order, if the undergraduate texts are missing.

My two particular words illustrate that **Gap-problem**.<sup>24</sup> First there is the word *complete* in the canon of complete explanation. What Lonergan means by that is the solution to a massive problem in both physics and metaphysics: but I have already given a few pointers on that. The second word is *consciousness*, a topic of the first section of chapter 11 of *Insight*, and, perhaps surprisingly, I can say the same about this word as I did of the first: Lonergan means a solution to a massive problem of psychology and

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<sup>21</sup>I regularly refer to the discomfiting central paragraph of *Method in Theology* 287.

<sup>22</sup>Quoted from Friedrich Schlegel with approval by Lonergan on *Method*, p. 161.

<sup>23</sup>*Insight*, 186[210].

<sup>24</sup>I am relating the hum-drum difficulty of the missing undergraduate work with the apparently contrasting mood of Lonergan's discussion of "existential gap" in *Phenomenology and Logic*. There are fundamental issues of *ethos* to which we must return later.

metaphysics.

What Lonergan meant by either of these words is obviously an issue of interpretation. The meaning in question is not what he meant the reader to pick up, but his meaning, the meaning in the author. To claim that the moving viewpoint is the focus here is like reducing a teacher's meaning to the meaning possibly conveyed in a class. Think, rather of the relevant moving viewpoint as the viewpoint efficient in moving the moving viewpoint.

I have written of Lonergan's viewpoint on *complete*. What of his viewpoint on *consciousness*? It has all the complexity of the meaning of *complete*, with the added complexities of the layered levels of infolded energy. If you claim that it does not, then you are "arriving on the scene a little breathless and a little late"<sup>25</sup> and you are not one who "can go on"<sup>26</sup> to converse with contemporary searchings after the meaning of consciousness. Indeed, you may be quite identifiable as hanging in with an old-style - but sadly quite contemporary - method of philosophizing that talks of essences within the narrow comfort of precise or enriched descriptions.<sup>27</sup>

Lonergan's push was in quite another, discomfoting, direction: towards the humility of a full explanatory heuristic. How many are there who have clambered and groped their way towards such an explanatory height, where *Insight*'s print and pages and the comforts of an ambient home disappear and one clings to dark symbolic crutches? And part of what I am doing here can be identified as encouraging some few crazies to try.

Back now to the issue of interpreting Lonergan. Peculiarly, I have climbed in these last paragraphs to a description of Lonergan's demanding stand in *Insight*. You can handle Lonergan properly only if you are near enough to having his TUV. Then

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<sup>25</sup>*Insight*, 733[755].

<sup>26</sup>That text again! (See note 21 above). *Method in Theology*, 287.

<sup>27</sup>*Insight*, 505[528-9].

you would be up to interpretation in any of the senses that it gets as it is divided through the specialties. But that really isn't much help to us in our struggle to start a recycling process: it is equivalent to the impossible stand of *Insight*. What to do? There is the cunning of what I call a "Fresh Pragmatism".<sup>28</sup> Treat Lonergan's works as those of any other author: re-cycle them in the context of our present poor TUV and in a century or two of practicing *Method* we will come towards rescuing *Insight*.<sup>29</sup>

But there is something more immediately relevant to be said: the foundations person has to fantasize not only distant probabilities but proximate promising components to be cherished in present schemes. So I come to bring the entire effort of these ten pages to a pragmatic focus.

Getting the cyclic show on the road, or on the roll, is a daunting task, and different groups can slip into the process at different places with whatever poor TUV they share. But it happens that two groups seem to be, and have been, struggling forward in a manner that weaves into a scheming of emergent probability. There is a non-European, non-North-American, group battling with the problems of reading and applying "Dialectic: The Structure".<sup>30</sup> There is the Irish and East-Canadian group that struggled towards applying *The Sketch* to various tasks of interpretation. Curiously, that second group's published efforts draws attention to two definite facets of the full problem: the place of *theoria* in the genesis of method, and the place of method in the genesis of history.

Above I drew attention to the task and problem of interpreters: to find historians

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<sup>28</sup>The strategy, in its minimalist interdisciplinary form, is spelled out in the third chapter of my *Pastkeynes Pastmodern Economics: A Fresh Pragmatism*, Axial Press, Halifax, 2002.

<sup>29</sup>I treat this at some length in "The Importance of Rescuing *Insight*", an article in the *Festschrift* honoring Mike Vertin on the occasion of his retirement: *The Importance of Insight*, edited by D. and J. Liptay, University of Toronto Press, 2005.

<sup>30</sup>Their work is blossoming towards volume 5(2005) of *Journal of Macrodynamical Analysis*.

“on track” in the circuit so that new discoveries would be efficiently and beautifully rolled forward towards the streets. On the other hand there are to be groups of dialecticians who must sift through written history, and the events to which it refers, to discern historians that are genuinely and effectively “on track”. This is the massive task of assembly, completion, etc which the mainly-Australian group has brooded over during this year. It is an impossible task, especially if one envisages it in a fullness that includes the dialectic of all disciplines and cultures. But suppose we work with, and seek to identify, broader perspectives, broader sweeps, in theology, or philosophy, or whatever? Then our interest for the moment does not push us to consider the positioning of MoTi or Maimonides, Tertullian or Descartes, Marx or Friedman.<sup>31</sup> Our modest reach becomes a reach for “sharply distinguishable levels”<sup>32</sup> in the broad genesis of history and inquiry. You might think of this scientific venture in parallel with the sharply distinguishable levels of energy of the standard three generations-model of particle-ordering. Is there a three-generational model of “The Genesis of Adequate Self-Knowledge”?<sup>33</sup> Might we have a community of historians who make their stand on this explicit, “at pains not to conceal its tracks”?<sup>34</sup> Then interpreters would find an aligned audience, and dialecticians ease the baton of progress forwards with a lifted efficiency

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<sup>31</sup>There is a deep problem here which connects with the suggestion below of characterizing periods, macro-ecosystems of meaning as it were. It is the problem of the place of individuals in the history of meaning that Lonergan raised in a scribble, “not individuals except as types, as dominating personalities”(I quote from unpublished notes of the early sixties, available in the Toronto Lonergan Center: here, Batch B,8,6,V). One is discerning on-going concrete meaning. In a later, mature, dynamic of the cycle that discerning is to be mediated categorially by the integral metagenetic systematics. We are back with the problem of pure formulations of content and context..

<sup>32</sup>*Insight*, 578[601].

<sup>33</sup>The title of *Insight*, 17.1.2. This key section points towards the full problem of the stages of meaning in *Method in Theology*, tackled by Alexandra Drage-Gillis in her article of *Journal of Macrodynamic Analysis*, volume 4(2004).

<sup>34</sup>*Method in Theology*, 193.

and beauty.