
Theologies and the Dialectic of History

What comes below the next starry line was a beginning written earlier, but my later thinking leads me to be brief and blunt. The issue is a doctrine regarding the primary methodological meaning of the name *dialectic*. Of my own view and efforts there should be no doubt: my 200 page effort in the eight SOFDAWARES and the first twelve Quodlibets is a stand on the place in The Standard Model of the precise operations that come under that title in the cycle of functional specializations. There I am articulating a meta-doctrine that has a remote meaning, an in-group meaning, even if it can communicate something to non-initiates.

Doran's view, expressed in the large book from which I take my title is certainly complex and nuanced, but the main point is that page 250 of *Method in Theology* has no place in his agenda. Indeed, functional specialization - amazingly - seems to have no place in the perspective of that book. His later work, *What is Systematic Theology?*, mentions it here and there in a peculiarly limited way.¹

On my view functional specialization fulfils the conditions, under grace, for cosmopolis, set out in *Insight*.² It is to become, in the distant future, the humble suffering searching of the

¹*Joistings 20*, "Identifying Systematic Theology" deals with this aspect of Doran's book. But, as I remark shortly in the text, such dealings need to be sublated in serious dialectic efforts. Still, meantime there is the problem as I put it to you, or you put it to yourself, in section 7 of chapter 14. What is your doctrinal position on functional specialization? Do you take it as a convenient filing-system type business, or can you fantasize forward to see such institutions as the United Nations, lead at present by a Korean Moon [no offense is meant by the providential pun on this mild man's name], being lifted by the Sunlight of the parliamentary language of a respected global foundational group? See note 3 below and follow through to the end of the final footnote here.

²See section 2 of Chapter 14.

global community for ways forwards in the next million years, or so.³

I see no reason to go further: debating, criticizing, squabbling. On my view, if there is any worth in either of our views, researchers will cycle that worthwhileness up through interpretation and history to subject it to the precise cleansing of dialectic sketched on page 250 of *Method in Theology*. On Doran's view, the debate can continue, business as usual. Such business a usual is integral to the longer cycle of decline.

My original view of this chapter took in Roger Penrose as a contributor to methodological doctrine and indeed also the methodological pushing of John Bell.⁴ But my main audience is the community interested in Lonergan: these would be distractions regarding the future of foundational characters. Still, it is no harm to draw attention even vaguely to precessions in The Standard Model through the anticipations of the emergence of refinements beyond Goedelian limitations and other aspects of limitations within logic and mathematics: Goedel, Turing, Church, Brouwer, Bell, Wiles, are only a few names in this area of logic⁵ that seed fresh

³*Joistings 8* relates the emergence to a Christian theory of Satisfaction. One can relate Lonergan's achievement both to Plato's problem of running the town - for Lonergan it is a matter of running the globe - and to Paul's reach for collaborative living. *I Cor*, chapters 12 and 14.

⁴Bell's various efforts regarding "Speakables" and "be-ables" (J.S. Bell, *Speakable and Unspeakable in Quantum Mechanics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987) find a new context in section 4 of chapter 14, which deals with a transposition of Feynman's searchings regarding the be-ables that ground the confusion of present quantum mechanics. The notes here place all this in a larger context. I should add that, in this larger contexts, Penrose's efforts, apart from his focus on Goedel, fades in to insignificance, another reason for not moving further into his weak context. Yes, he has good instincts: "It is one of my purposes here to emphasize that there is a great deal of what is essentially in mathematical thinking that is not of a computational character" (Roger Penrose, "Mathematical Intelligence", in *What is Intelligence?*, edited by Jean Khafra, Cambridge University Press, 1994, 108). Penrose's pages 129-36 is good on the Goedelian stuff, but he is otherwise going nowhere.

⁵I recall Lonergan's reference (**PL**, 94) to the work of Helmut Stoffer, "He argues that you are going to need six types of logic if you are going to deal with *Denkformen*, thought patterns, and he distinguishes them as plane, dialectical, existential, magical, mystical and hermeneutical". A underpinning context for the transposition of all logics would be the sublation into the full "come (about)"³ "perspective of the work of Gilbert Duran. This would be the full context of a mature philotherapy, a topic mentioned in the conclusion of this short essay. But, as you will sense at the end of the last note here, there is the discomfoting self-therapy that bubbles

suspicious about limitations of expression and incompleteness theorems to be meshed in the future into the operations of page 250, calling us to a larger humility regarding our positioning regarding dispersedness's drive towards the *Eschaton*.

Not all of you will have noticed the shift in my title from the Title of Doran's book, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*. Here I am shifting from Doran's interest, which is primarily in Christian theology and in the range of meanings and operations that are covered by the word *dialectic*. I am interested in the range of meanings that are theologies, even when - as in Penrose - the title *theology* is missing, and I am interested in a single meaning of *dialectic*. The meaning that I would call your attention to is the meaning Lonergan gives the process on page 250 of *Method in Theology*.

I am writing here to a community that is not "at home"⁶ in The Standard Model and it is necessary for us to advert to that as much as possible but it is especially so in thinking about and reading (about)³ the two functional specialties history and doctrines. So, I began the above chapter 9, on history, with a paragraph on the key problem. Here, in venturing into the issue of the key metadoctrine of Lonergan's life, I make the same point, or simply re-direct you to that previous paragraph. Doctrines as a topic of this sixth functional specialty are to be as remote and incomprehensible as history. An illustration may help: think of the controversy about doctrines of method in quantum mechanics that is symbolized by the two names Bohr and Einstein. Certainly, popular talk is possible and occurs about that debate, but to enter the debate constructively requires a remote horizon, indeed a horizon that escaped both Bohr and Einstein in spite of their theoretic horizon.

up today perhaps through this brief reading, a Damascus road to a doctrinal stand.

⁶I quote *Method in Theology*, 14, but *Method in Theology* 350-51 is worth re-visiting in this context: in a community of adequate maturity, in a hundred years or so, yes, "systematic theology is [to be] elitist" (351), yet "quite a homely affair" (350). Tower talk is to be remote yet a dialogue home, as is the case of any serious science.

Having said that, it seems to me that this particular chapter of my book is altogether readable in a minimalist sense, the minimalist sense that I have been advocating regularly in this past decade, a sense that fits in with history's nudge towards a division of labour in all areas.

That short piece, contained between 'star-lines', was the beginning of what could have been a lengthy essay. It would have dealt with some of Doran's views on dialectic, on history, on psychic conversion. But it would also have picked up on that final Cantower of mine, *Cantower 41*, on Functional Doctrine. That Cantower is already sufficiently long and, I would hope, illuminating - certainly for those who had read the other 40 Cantowers. Indeed, comments on Doran's view of the psyche would require the same context, except that my comments reach back, as I noted in my sketchings of chapter 10, to my own struggles with what I called philotherapy when I was writing the two essays for the Florida Conference. The sketchings in chapter 10 make it sufficiently clear that I do not find Doran's work integral: he seems to be tunneling along in a descriptive manner that is breathless, late, narrow and dangerous.⁷

⁷The implicit reference is to *Insight 733*[755], "a little breathless and a little late". Doran and I corresponded on this issue a quarter of a century ago. At that time he acknowledged the significance of my insistence on a broader perspective when he wrote his article "Theological Grounds for a World Cultural Humanity" (*Creativity and Method*, edited by Mathew Lamb, Marquette University Press, 1981, 105-122): see pp. 106-107. Neither he nor I have done much in the years between to promote the massive doctrinal shift that Lonergan seeded. But I suppose that I can claim that I have at least acknowledged, and aired continually, the global importance of its implementation. The implementation, of course, involves various shifts, especially out of descriptive narrowness in psychic analyses, but the heart of the present matter is the shift to functional specialization. The doctrine of functional global collaboration is the key to the future. This has been increasingly evident to me since my work in 1969 (see chapter 2 of *The Shaping of the Foundations*) on the global need in musicology. Doran does not share my fantasy. Do you? This is the central pragmatic conversion challenge of the present final book. As you follow up on these short notes you might venture into the last of my Cantowers mentioned in the text, *Cantower XLI*, "Functional Policy". But the immediate pragmatic and programmatic shift is to take seriously, even shabbily, the challenge of the doctrinal content of page 250 of *Method in Theology*. That takes you uncomfortably beyond the question of sharing my fantasy, to a doing that is within your present possibilities, a doctrine for today's decisions.