

DIALECTICS: Establishing a Position

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Introduction

In the first three E-seminars I made efforts to explore the nature of and the functionality of the first three specialties; research, interpretation and history. For the main part of that exercise I accumulated data with the intention of exploring the nature of the follow-up to Bernard Lonergan's achievements. The fourth specialty, dialectics, is that challenge to make a judgment concerning the nature of the questions I raised and the interpretations that I have offered concerning the nature of the follow-up. In order to set the stage for establishing a position I bring forth some of the relevant points expressed in my first three seminar essays.¹[1]

Part One: First Half of Page 250 of Method

In my essay on functional research I proposed that the absence of the term *implementation* in the index of the first edition of *Insight* was and is an anomaly. It did appear in the CWL edition 35 years later.²[2] I attempted in the second seminar in two essays³[3] to interpret the term implementation and a third essay interpreting

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[1] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Darton, Longman & Todd, Gr. Br., 1972. I will focus on the first half of page 250.

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[2] 969 entries appeared in the index of the first edition of *Insight*. 1163 appeared in the index of the CWL edition. An indexer is working with various contexts. He or she may be functioning within the common sense, theoretic, or interiority horizon(s), with their own interest, with the interest of researchers in mind, or with the interest of students in mind. An indexer could be functioning with one or more or all of these interests and horizons in mind. On page 750 of the 1st edition's index, "and so forth" appears referring the reader to "etc." on page 758 of the index. "Etc." refers the reader to two instances in the text on pages 14 and 647 of the text. There are 19 occurrences of "implementation" in the text and only 2 occurrences of the term "etc.". These two terms have a very important place in coming to an understanding of the act of insight but their presence in the index and the absence of "implementation" could shed some light on the focus of the indexer at the time of the indexing.

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[3] <http://www.sgeme.org/BlogEngine/post/2011/02/28/An-Exploration-of-an-Apparent-Anomaly-in-Lonergan-Scholarship-by-Robert-Henman.aspx>
<http://www.sgeme.org/BlogEngine/post/2011/05/16/An-Effort-at-Functional-Interpretation-of-Implementation-by-Robert-Henman.aspx>

communications.⁴[4] In doing so I suggested that Lonergan eventually would propose functional specialization as what he would come to mean by the term implementation. The third essay added the further context of the need for the explanatory horizon in order to provide effective internal and external communication within functional specialization. In my fifth essay on functional history I attempted to present the nature of the follow-up to Lonergan's achievements. I presented various data and conclusions on the articles, theses and texts published from 1957 to the present dividing the period into two timelines, 1957 to 1969 and 1969 to the present. One main pattern that emerged from this distinction was the increase in comparison after the 1969 Gregorianum article on functional specialization was published. I made some attempt to manifest the nature of that comparison and raised some questions about its role in terms of value. There was no collaborative follow-up to these individual efforts. This focus on comparison led me to return to Lonergan's work in chapter 17, section 3, of *Insight* to get a better understanding of interpretation and its role in functional specialization. It became a distraction that I eventually realized would require a year's work at least to get even some control of what Lonergan is explaining in that section and to complicate the process I also realized that genetic method needs to be integrated with the process in order to handle levels and sequences of meaning and expression. I put that work aside to continue with the E-seminars which have been a sufficient challenge in themselves. But the effort had some fruitful consequences.⁵[5] I read many of the articles published in both the *Method* journal and the Lonergan workshop papers in preparing for the previous seminars. The articles cover an eclectic variety of topics but no genetic development of individual topics appears. The articles appear as a smattering of interests that shift with little intelligible connection to former work.⁶[6] The

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[4] <http://www.sgeme.org/BlogEngine/post/2011/05/30/Functionally-Interpreting-Communications-by-Robert-Henman.aspx>

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[5] In working through these sections of *Insight* with Page 250 of *Method* in mind, one cannot, or should not, be able to avoid realizing that page 250 is a very compact expression of not just Section 3 of Chapter 17 of *Insight*, but all of the chapters on metaphysics. The chapters on metaphysics are orientated towards a scientific control of meaning within the four methods of the sciences and page 250 of *Method* is an expression of that control within the specialty dialectics. See Patrick Brown's E-seminar essay on functional history, FuSe 14B at <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/fuse-14b.pdf> for an insightful reflection on the reading of page 250 of *Method*.

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[6] There are some few who have spent years focused on one area. I make no analytical judgment here on the quality of that work except to add that the presence of the theoretic horizon may be questionable in some of those

only unity appears to be references to Lonergan and unfortunately, it is a superficial unity lacking a methodical genetic context that blocked any serious orientation towards development.

The above provides a brief summary of the data I accumulated and the process that I have followed through the three previous seminars. In this specialty of dialectics I hope to bring this data and process to some form of conclusion, to “fuse in to a single explanation”, or more appropriately in this specialty, a position. What does it all indicate about the nature of follow-up to Lonergan’s achievements? To answer that question I am going to relate the various individual groups of data in an effort to establish a position on the nature of the follow-up to Lonergan’s achievements.

Part Two: The Second Half of Page 250 of Method

I list below two opposing points regarding the data I have collected.

- 1) The absence of Implementation in the index of Insight is an anomaly, or
- 2) It is not an anomaly.
- 1) Functional specialization is what Lonergan meant by implementation, or
- 2) It is not what he meant.
- 1) Functional specialization and theory have been ignored in the follow-up to Lonergan’s achievements, or
- 2) They are irrelevant to the implementation of Lonergan’s achievements.

Let me take us through the numbered 2 positions first to see where that takes us. First, implementation as absent from the index was not an anomaly. The implication is that the meaning of implementation, whatever it may have meant for Lonergan, was not relevant to the overall program that Lonergan was proposing. Secondly, because of the implied irrelevancy of the meaning of the term implementation Lonergan scholars need not seek a relationship between implementation and functional specialization. It is a filing system. Finally, theory is not required to understand Lonergan, oneself, or to implement Lonergan’s achievements. Where does this leave us? Does it leave Lonergan’s

achievements at the mercy of undifferentiated consciousness and traditional modes of scholarship?

Before reviewing positions numbered 1 above let us determine the relationship between the absences of implementation in the index of the original edition of *Insight* as an anomaly to the absence of an emphasis on functional specialization over the past 40 years since *Method in Theology* was published. As I suggested in my second essay on functional interpretation, Lonergan's invention and discovery of functional specialization is what he meant by implementation. It is expressed in embryonic form in *Insight*, especially in the chapters on metaphysics. He had been searching for a method to implement human metaphysics from the beginning⁷[7] but for many, functional specialization appears to be understood as a method designed to provide a filing system for theological discourse and work. The role and meaning of implementation of metaphysics was lost in the misguided focus as would even functional specialization itself.

It would seem that between the years of 1957 and the present implementation was understood to be an exercise in normal academic processes, teach, write, deliver papers and publish. The appearance of *Method in Theology* did not shift the focus of this activity. It is as if its appearance was an appendix to *Insight* that one could utilize, or not. It was optional. The lack of importance given to the term implementation in the index of the original edition of *Insight* manifested a certain mindset of the times that was carried on through to and after the appearance of a method of implementation in 1972.

In my second essay I raised the need for the explanatory horizon. What relationship does theory have to implementation, or functional specialization? I now use these two terms interchangeably. In my essay on Communications, I drew a distinction between *empirical self-knowledge* and *theoretic self-knowledge*. I now add a third which I call *empirical self-awareness*. I can be aware of my cognitional acts without having any knowledge of them, merely awareness of their occurrence. An undifferentiated consciousness would be vulnerable to accepting this awareness as knowledge. Such

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[7] Patrick Brown in his <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/fuse-14b.pdf> essay points out that Lonergan began writing *Method in Theology* in 1949.

undifferentiated consciousness might have little choice but to align such self-awareness with implementation when involved with academic processes. This acceptance could lead to a devaluing of theory, and of implementation in relationship to metaphysics and after 1969, with functional specialization. Subsequently, this could lead to a devaluing of metaphysics and functional specialization as relevant to the success of the overall program. The non-occurrence of *implementation* in the index of the 1st edition of *Insight* would only be appreciated as an anomaly if in fact one had achieved theoretic self-knowledge. Anything less can lead to the devaluing of the meaning of the terms and processes referred to above.

The relationships between the meanings of the various data accumulated in my e-seminar essays present a thread of intelligibility that manifests an inadequacy in the follow-up to Lonergan's achievements. One could add that we did the best we could. It is not a time to criticize. It is a time for reorientation. If we take as a position critical realism; that reality, objectivity, and knowledge are reached by correctly understanding experiences and all that follows from that understanding of knowledge, does not the implementation of a proper metaphysics depend on a method that is theoretically cyclical in its approach in order to produce cumulative and progressive results? Is not this reorientation the central functioning of functional specialization? The misreading of page 250 of *Method* has its roots in non-theoretic readings of that page.⁸[8]

As a final analysis of the possible two positions it is worth noting that the number two position is not capable of adequately critiquing the number one position or the number two position, whereas the number one position is capable of critiquing both the number two position as well as itself. The main component required to bring us to this conclusion is the presence of the theoretic horizon. As stated before, the theoretic horizon is the position required to adequately comprehend the relationship between implementation and

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[8] Phil McShane has, for many years, been putting forth page 250 in his writings and lectures as the central program and the adequate way forward in regards to the implementation of Lonergan's achievements. See McShane's Sofdaware articles at <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/sofdaware.html> and his Quodlibet articles at <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/quodlibet.html> on the focus of page 250. It has taken me 3 decades to come to my own small appreciation of his focus. See Patrick Brown's essay on functional history at <http://www.philipmcshane.ca/fuse-14b.pdf> A. The Ethics of Reading, page 9 for an analysis of the problem in reading. As I suggest above, that reading requires a shift in horizon to a theoretic differentiation of consciousness.

functional specialization and to reverse counterpositions. Functional specialization is the manner in which an eventual emergence of the theoretic horizon will be made possible.

Conclusion

A renewed reading of page 250 provides the possibility of rereading our past performance. It aids in coming to understand what we missed and what the future focus need be. The next specialty is foundations. The above position that I have arrived at I suggest is foundational to an adequate implementation of Lonergan's achievements. Without theory and without the standard model, which is functional specialization, there is no foundation for further work that will yield progressive and cumulative results. "...while we await common cognitive agreement, the possible expression is collaboration..."⁹[9] What is missing from this quotation is the *form* of such collaboration. I would add two terms, *functional* as a way of promoting a growing authenticity towards a *theoretic* cognitive agreement. So, an edited version of that quote might read as follows: *while we await common theoretic cognitive agreement, the possible expression is functional collaboration*. In light of Lonergan's statements throughout his writings and lecturing on *haute vulgarization* and the lack of the theoretic mentality in scholarship, his statement may have been all he knew he could hope for at that time. Unfortunately, we have failed him in even this.