

## The Pullet's Surprise

What might this final June surprise of the little hen peck be?

I ask Lonergan to take its peck of two pecks.

The issue is the dodging of functional collaboration.

So, let us dodge that issue and go back to *Insight*.

Now we find a different dodging.

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.<sup>1</sup>

Lonergan surely did not expect his diligent followers to be thus bewildered and dismayed. Nor was he disappointed: they were neither bewildered nor dismayed. They simply dodged the entire challenge, summarily expressed in the paragraph I name 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

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<sup>1</sup> *Insight*, 604.

differentiation of the protean notion of being fuse into a single explanation.<sup>2</sup>

Here we have the core of the cyclic collaboration, a core that is a clear challenge of *Insight*.<sup>3</sup> Not meeting it is certainly a good lazy dodgy reason for puttering along, “academic disciplines”<sup>4</sup> fashion. Let’s not rock our little boat, paddling around, comfortably: so “they become effete.”<sup>5</sup>

And that is the other cheeky peck. *Method*’s appeal is to have an eight-layered effective mediation of street-talk: without this “they fail to mature,” where now I consider ‘they’ to be the diligent writers of Lonerganesque papers. They are deeply immature in their “no man’s land,”<sup>6</sup> no woman’s home.

We have backed into another cozy dodging of Lonergan’s challenge in *Insight*: the challenge built into his shifting metaphysics into “implementation.”<sup>7</sup>

Two embarrassing pecks, surely, indecently mentioned in my short final hen-peck of September 2016. “Doctrines that are embarrassing will not be mentioned in polite company.”<sup>8</sup> I have turned the embarrassing mention from doctrines of *Method* in

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 609-10.

<sup>3</sup> This is a massively complex point that regards the paradoxical inclusion of the full cyclic heuristic in the revisable genetic structure of the seventh functional specialty. But the simple point of *Insight* survives right through the multiplicities of Lonergan’s paradigm shift. The shift to genetic ordering lifts the scattered ramblings of pre-scientific interpretation into a science “yielding cumulative and progressive results.” *Method in Theology*, 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Method in Theology*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>6</sup> CWL 6, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, “Time and Meaning”, 121.

<sup>7</sup> “Explicit metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being.” *Insight*, 416: the final paragraph. It is relevant to note that *implementation* was not indexed in the first edition of *Insight* and that really is no pullet’s surprise. The idea that metaphysics should hit the streets was just too weird, even for the sound practicality of Fred Crowe. Fred and I talked about this and shared laughter about making indices. My own index to *Method* was quite a shabby hurried job, done with pen and paper. But when Fred tackled the new index he still did not rise to adequately referencing the dozens of references. There are just two references in the new index, and none to the definition given on page 416.

<sup>8</sup> *Method in Theology*, 299.

*Theology* back to key doctrines of *Insight*. If the mention occurs often enough in these next months, surely people who, in this winter of 2016-17, envisage organizing or writing for, conferences or workshops or volumes, will be bothered into being “somewhat bewildered and dismayed.” What might be thought previously as invincible ignorance now faces a pecking order of recurrence-schemes of “cajoling and forcing attention”<sup>9</sup> that could discomfort it—them—into the suspicion of gross dishonesty.

And if the suspicion blossomed into serious effective repentance,<sup>10</sup> this indeed would merit the pullet’s surprise.

But, realistically, I and those few who side with me, may have to be content with some of the many travelers in decay and destruction being willing to expose their claws and play chicken.

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<sup>9</sup> *Insight*, 423.

<sup>10</sup> The repentance mentioned can be read in an initial meaning. The “repentance” (*Insight*, 722) I speak of requires the long slow effective contemplative climb into alignment with the lonely graced molecular “order of the universe” (*ibid.*), “with that order’s dynamic joy and zeal.” *Ibid.*