

### W<sub>3</sub>ON : ATE THREE : THREE

To those familiar with my efforts to get people to take seriously the challenge of the end lines of *Method in Theology*, page 250 there is little difficulty in recognizing that to which I point in the title, read as “one eight three three”: the last 16 lines (lines 18 to 33) of that page in *Method*, lines I have regularly named *Lonerger’s 1833 Overture*. What comes to mind, and what I had in mind, was the echo of the 1812 Overture with its guns and drums. The dictionary on *overture* has, as first meaning, “an introductory proposal or offer;” then, “indication of willingness to negotiate.” A later meaning refers to a general **assembly** of Presbyterian churches.

What do I wish you to make of all this? First, I wish you to enter the Forum discussion in as elementary a way as you like, perhaps jumping in from one of the last three essays of the Interpretation series, which mused on interpretation for dummies of (a) interpretation, (b) economics, (c) contemplation, finding connections with your particular topic.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, however, I would like you to think of some twists on this general approach, what I might call this “general assembly,” not of presbyteries, but of poises in relation to Lonergan’s challenge. The mention of *Assembly* puts us at the turn of the page 249 of *Method*, but we shall see that I am not pushing for some heavy work of *Assembly*. I am asking for popular, or if you like dummy, musings on the scope or *Raum* of Lonergan’s proposal in the second and third paragraphs of *Method in Theology*. There is at present a massive hidden disagreement about the interpretation of these two paragraphs: so there is need for FoeRaum, for confrontation, for “a measure of bluntness.”<sup>2</sup> The need that Crowe wrote about in 1964 was met by Lonergan,

---

<sup>1</sup> I note that this introductory entry is also published on the website as the beginning of a new series titled *FoeRaum*. It is a common context. FoeRaum? : a *Raum*, a “room for a measure of bluntness.” (See the next note).

<sup>2</sup> “Unless his readers are ready to undertake a parallel labor (not necessarily so prolonged inasmuch as they may be less tardy of intelligence) they have little chance of understanding what Lonergan is doing and talking about. This is rather bluntly said, I am afraid, but is there not room for a measure

implicitly in the next spring, explicitly in the early 1970s. The measure, the *nomos*, of bluntness is there, quite clearly stated, in what I call *Loneragan's 1833 Overture*. What I would like to happen in this Forum is that we assemble, in our different contexts, the interpretations of these two paragraphs.

Now the *we* Loneragan wished for is/was the specialized dialectic community, each speaking for themselves. But here we find ourselves moving into the topic as beginners. How do we go about chatting and collaborating so as to, somehow, reach, in the case of the last fifty years of Loneraganism, “an idealized version of the past, something better than was the reality.”<sup>3</sup>

My suggestion comes from my failure to get my elder colleagues onto this page 250.<sup>4</sup> In connection with that, some beginners might help us forward by trying, stumblingly, to assemble, and submit to the Forum, as well as their particular pointer, some glimpses of their take on the hidden views of their teachers or other authorities on the two paragraphs – views expressed vaguely in classrooms and notes, obviously, but also in broader senses. My senior colleagues won't like this suggestion or its consequent fruit, but, well, perhaps this will shake them up to defend themselves and their positions. But in the present context I would note that the assembly of their views is legitimate: the beginners do so in a popular skim through the first three specialties, continuing the popular effort in their own version of Loneragan's 1833 Overture.<sup>5</sup>

Back I go, then, to my title, “W<sub>3</sub>on : Ate Three : Three,” which summarily expresses my 1833 position. “W<sub>3</sub>on” echoes the “one” in that wonderful paragraph of Loneragan's that he added to his list of general categories. I quote it below, but your main focus is on the claim

---

of bluntness at this stage?” F.E. Crowe, “The Exigent Mind,” *Spirit as Inquiry, Essays in Honor of Bernard Loneragan*, Herder and Herder, 1964, 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Method in Theology*, 251.

<sup>4</sup> Patrick Brown puzzles over this and has given us a sound context for approaching page 250 of *Method* freshly: see, on this website, [FuSe 14B](#): “Some Notes on the Development of *Method* Page 250” and also his article “Assembling Meanings of Implementation,” *Dinyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education*, 28/2 (2017) 203–232.

<sup>5</sup> *My Futurology Express* (Axial Publishing, 2013) expresses the possibility of such a popular shot at all this in chapters 8, 9, and 10: “Critical Paws,” “Paws Poised,” “Checkmates.”

“one can go on.”<sup>6</sup> The one that can go on is the one who grips and is gripped by  $W_3$ . What can that one do? That one can read page 3 of *Method in Theology* properly. Here our focus is in the second paragraph: both Aristotle’s neat but faulty view of science and the modern conventions of “academic disciplines” are digested, lifted by intussusception by the one into “Three”: academic disciplines chatter and Aristotelian (or Thomist) axiomatics are replaced, heuristically, by a “third way . . . difficult and laborious”<sup>7</sup>: it is the way of functional collaboration but now conceived of as an omnidisciplinary global enterprise.

What is all this about, and where is it going in relation to the other topics? That is a subtext-question of the puttering that we now begin. But I would like to note, in conclusion, that there is a clear parallel here with the strategies of my teaching physics in the late 1950s. Whether the class was the first year or the graduate group, we all knew we are working in the present standard model. Questions that arose were assumed to be in this context, even though the beginners were quite vague on that scientific achievement. In the present sad context, 45 years after the published statement regarding that model in 1972, the vagueness about the model clouds and corrupts, to massive public detriment, the activities of the entire community.

---

<sup>6</sup> “From such a broadened basis one can go on to a developed account of the human good, values, beliefs, to the carriers, elements, functions, realms, and stages of meaning, to the question of God, of religious experience, its expressions, its dialectic development.” *Method in Theology*, 287.

<sup>7</sup> *Method in Theology*, 4: in the second of our paragraphs of interest.