

## RISE WITH ME

I continue this peculiar monologue series, a sixteen-year project with focus on those sixteen lines of *Method* 250: lines 18–33, that I have called “Lonergan’s 1833 Overture.” I think now of these periodic pieces as ‘vignettes’, nudged by my wife, Sally’s, venture to do a fictional work of that character titled “The Observer.” Here I would note that my status is not that of observer but gadfly, interferer, having a shot at “a resolute and effective intervention in this historical process.”<sup>1</sup> It seems an appropriate slow-grade “cunning” (Luke 16:8). I am not, then, the Monday morning quarterback, nor—the Irish version—the hurler on the ditch. I am in the game, an unwelcome disturbance to the gamesters who have been playing under illusions for seventy years, or might I say seven centuries? The sixteen years struck me as a neat way of doing a micro-merging of the emergent probability poise of “long numbers” with an effective mentioning associated with Lonergan’s grin on page 299 of *Method*: “Doctrines that are embarrassing will not be mentioned in polite company.” I am focusing on a single doctrinal vignette: the sixteen lines of *Lonergan’s 1833 Overture*. I aim to do so for sixteen years. Can Lonergan experts really continue their little old games, dodging the Aim of the Game, a scrum-down brilliantly detailed in this Lonergan Overture? The Aim of the Game is to get things right regarding effective intervention in history.

The Aim of my Game is the Son-flowering of “the greatest of all works,”<sup>2</sup> by “distinguishing successive stages”<sup>3</sup> of it. Note that “my” replaces “the” of the previous sentence. But might “my” be replaced by “the”? THAT is the issue-issue of lines 18–33. The issue of these vignettes is a “cajoling or forcing attention”<sup>4</sup> on the task of some experts in these next generations: for each to bring their own front-line “my” up front,

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<sup>1</sup> *Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18, 306.

<sup>2</sup> *The Triune God: Systematics*, CWL 12, 491.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Insight*, CWL 3, 423, line 4.

to thus ferment forward a cycle of global collaboration that would give effective front-line meaning to a global moral conversion that would align with the final words of *Insight* 722 and with the final words of *The Triune God: Systematics*, “Abba Father.”<sup>5</sup>

To do this there must be a push into a character-poise quite beyond the present mood of Lonergan studies. Those familiar with my recent writings will hear the echo there of my association of the word “character” on line 12 of *Method* 358 with the Aristotelian *Magna Moralia* first paragraph demand: “If therefore one is to act successfully in affairs of state, one must be of good character. The treatment of character, then is, as it seems, a branch and starting-point of statecraft.” I would have you now pause over my diagram [W<sub>3</sub>](#) for a spell-caste. It is mine, not Lonergan’s, but might you not recognize the weaving of *Insight* and *Method* there? Again, as always here, a question for you of getting into the three objectifications imposed by our lines 18–33. The push may be shared by all, but the push focused on here is the push of those elders who have a moral, intellectual, and religious obligation—now there’s a discomfiting twist!—to come dwell with Lonergan and me in *Lonergan’s 1833 Overture*. They could well start by dwelling in and on the dense pages on moral conversion, 227–37, of Pat Byrne’s book, *The Ethics of Discernment*, and living thus into the characters that Pat invites us to poise over at the end: Rodion Raskolnikov of *Crime and Punishment*, Elizabeth Bennet of *Pride and Prejudice*. Add to the minding a sniffing round and up Sorokin’s search, in his 20<sup>th</sup> century Institute, for characters of leadership. Add further, but with deeper molecular resonances—what Pat Byrne writes about as shifting “horizons of feeling”—the context of Lonergan’s analysis of the longer cycle of decline, and, in that reaching neuromolecular depth, brood on the horrid characters of present statecraft: Putin and Trump, Xi Jinping and Kim Jong-Un. Does the brooding breed and breathe hope?

Does it not rather invited one to settle in behind religious walls, accept the status quo, quoting Mark 14:7, “the poor will always be with you,” give the negative answer to my challenging amendment to all constitutions of states of nations and minds: “Do you

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<sup>5</sup> *CWL* 12, 521.

view humanity as possibly maturing—in some serious way—or just messing along between good and evil, whatever you think they are?”

Your negative answer there—and now I wish it to be a face-off matter, “cards on table”<sup>6</sup> in *Loneragan’s 1833 Overture*—poises you in a rejection of Loneragan who, at age 29, was quite clear on the theological norm.

Charity does not despair; charity is an eternal optimism and of energy, dismayed at naught, rebuked by none, tireless, determined, deliberate; with deepest thought and unbounded spontaneity, charity ever strives, struggles, labours, exhorts, implores, prays for the betterment of the unity of action that is man, for the effective rule of sweetness of light, for the fuller manifestation of what charity loves, Wisdom Divine, the Word made Flesh.<sup>7</sup>

Loneragan ends that great essay by recalling the optimism of Isaiah’s talk (*Isaiah* 2:2-4) of swords and ploughshares. “Is this to be taken literally or is it figure? It would be fair and fine, indeed, to think it no figure.” This is one of many contexts of his minding of what is “compatible with intellectual, moral and religious conversion.” Note the singular—“conversion”—there. I am addressing you as potentially integral,<sup>8</sup> as possibly stepping heroically beyond your local “existential gap”<sup>9</sup> in dread-filled discontinuity, into “a glorious revolution.”<sup>10</sup> Yes, we can follow up my nudges, given in this and the last vignette, of the weave of divine personalities round the three conversions. Yes, we can reach further, in these 16 years of vignettes before 2033, for the “all we know is somehow with us”<sup>11</sup> of Loneragan typing those brilliant 16 lines. But do you need that larger intussusception to tune into the aim of the game and the name of the Father? The sick

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<sup>6</sup> *Method*, 193.

<sup>7</sup> “Essay in Fundamental Sociology,” conclusion.

<sup>8</sup> *Insight*, CWL 3, 499, 537, 722. These references are only part of the pointing to the climb of The Interior Lighthouse, moving one from potential to some form of actual achievement. We shall be weaving round this climb, with focus on *Loneragan’s 1833 Overture*, during the rest of these essays. But you might pause now and re-read, what-read, the title of this one. What might it mean? You may have read it in some simple resurrection or insurrection mode, but the three words point to a distant luminosity symbolized both by the final line of  $W_3$  and by the curious word *InWithTo*. *Me*, then, points to the Cauling Father.

<sup>9</sup> *Phenomenology and Logic*, chapter 14.

<sup>10</sup> *Method*, 73.

<sup>11</sup> *Insight*, CWL 3, 305.

Chinese Empire may well last for millennia, but both its sickness and its end can be in your sights. That end is clumsily sketched in the diagram  $W_3$ , and in the corresponding prayer, “Double You Three, in me, in all: Claspings, Cherishing, Cauling, Craving, Christing.” It would be fair and fine, indeed, if the diagram were no figure of fantasy, but a sketch of a global operation that would slowly be refined into a massive topology of situation rooms. Is such a topology needed to have “a resolute and effective intervention in this historical process”? My position on this is that of Lonergan. Consider his view of the need for such an image:

The comprehension of everything in a unified whole can be either formal or virtual. It is virtual when one is habitually able to answer readily and without difficulty, or at least ‘without tears,’ a whole series of questions right up to the last ‘why?’ Formal comprehension, however, cannot take place without a construct of some sort ... in which are symbolically represented all the various elements of the question with all the connections between them.<sup>12</sup>

And considering my simpler imaging of  $W_3$  makes that point homely: the Image of a Leaning Tower of Able.<sup>13</sup> I could go on, obviously, but these vignettes are little vine leaves sent floating in an alien air: might you notice one blowing past your window of opportunity in these next sixteen years?

Sixteen years ago I began the *Cantover* series that eventually went way beyond the length of the *Cantos* of Ezra Pound that were their inspiration: ten volumes of an appeal, that began, like this little essay, on April Fools’ Day. That April Fools’ Day was Easter Monday of the year 2002, and I was remembering the foolish Patrick Pearse taking a stand against the British Empire at the General Post Office in Dublin in 1916. My first such formal stand was taken in the first International Lonergan Conference of 1970 in Florida, when I pointed to the desperate need of musicology for what I now call “The Leaning Tower of Able.” Even at that conference I got the impression of a community locked in stale common sense, but I did not dream that I would be making the same plea

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<sup>12</sup> *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, CWL 7, 151.

<sup>13</sup> See Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan. His Life and Leading Ideas*, Axial Publishing, 2010. The  $W_3$  image is on page 161; the tower image is on page 163, but not leaning.

48 years later, the plea of Lonergan's *Gregorianum* Article of 1969 on "Functional Specialization." In 1966—fifty years after the folly of Pearse—Lonergan made his plea personally to me in his little room in the old Bayview Regis College. I began pacing the grounds, sometimes literally, pausing to sway physically back and forward in history. I had already been ten years into his quest, and, yes, that was a vast advantage, for the search was in me for a précising of Cosmopolis, for a break towards a structured recurrence-scheme that would be boosted by statistics.<sup>14</sup> And yes, it was to be seen as eventually breaking the powers of corruption that have by now a much deeper grip on humanity than when Lonergan wrote about them in 1935. In his optimism—sometimes lifted by my talk of a million years to a millennial patience<sup>15</sup>—he was in a position to begin to identify in slim heuristic a neuromolecular dynamic "that commands man's first allegiance, that implements itself primarily through that allegiance, that is too universal to be bribed, too impalpable to be forced, too effective to be ignored."<sup>16</sup>

Surely you can begin, in this decade, to sniff his plea for allegiance in those amazing first three paragraphs of *Method*, where he thinks first fondly of early humans being governed by the success of their recurrence scheme, only to have their concrete patterns maimed by "bolder spirits" who would prefer their three-phased sciences to step on the moon rather than feed the poor, and maimed further by their weaker followers in human studies who moon around in academic disciplines that file opinions and defile human loneliness? Come with me, says Lonergan, "that they may be one"<sup>17</sup> in hope and achievement: there is "a third way . . . difficult and laborious."<sup>18</sup> It is a massive sublation of Ezra Pound's Vorticist movement of a century ago,<sup>19</sup> to be resolute and effective in slowly spiraling humanity, in distant millennia, into a Trinitarian history.

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<sup>14</sup> *Insight*, CWL 3, 144.

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., [The Redress of Poise](#), where in the middle of the fourth chapter, "Systematics. A Language of the Heart," I correct flawed editing of *Caring for Meaning*, which simply cut out his references to such talk from the interviews.

<sup>16</sup> *Insight*, CWL 3, 263.

<sup>17</sup> *Method*, 367, quoting John 17:21.

<sup>18</sup> *Method*, 4.

<sup>19</sup> See my [Cantover 1](#), "Function and History," at note 39.