
An Economy of Phenomenology and Logic

“Where to begin?

Everywhere!

Which path to follow?

All of them!”¹

This transition chapter may puzzle you, seemingly thrown in as a final contextualization of the eight chapters on functional specialization. Is economics, and functional specialization in it, an after-thought? Here my twisting mind carries me towards St. Ignatius’ quip regarding his first post-resurrection contemplation on the appearance of Jesus to his mother: “Are you also without understanding?”² No, it is not in scripture: so what? Economics is not a topic in *Insight*; functional specialization in economics was not a topic in those last years of Lonergan’s effort to teach and ‘prime’ economics. But it was the centre of his attention for more than a decade of his early years, and the functional specialty dialectic was a hidden labour even as he battled in his last years towards a primer in economics. Nor did he lose interest in the years between, but discouragement shelved his astonishing achievement for twenty years after the second world war, and it was a mix of annoyance and hope that nudged him to begin again to air his views. There was hope from Kalecki on the economic side; there was annoyance with the likes of Moltmann on the moral side.

But what is the point of entering here into any detail? The only point I wish to make is

¹John leCarre, *The Constant Gardiner*, Penguin, 2005, 300. In the Introduction I mentioned this chapter as being a companion to chapter 7, on research. Let us give Marx his due. Economic relating is the mesh of our modern - I use that word as pointing to axial times - human lives. The mesh and mess needs a new foundational centrality.

²*The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, section 299: “The First Apparition”.

that the institutions of economics, for good or ill, surround the loneliness of human reaching for life more abundant. The horror of that surrounding was with Lonergan his entire life. He expressed that horror with rich vocal tonalities in 1959, speaking of art, and he could well have said the same after 1965 regarding the arts of functional specialization. "That exploration is extremely important in our age, when philosophers for at least two centuries, through doctrines on politics, economics, education, and through ever further doctrines, have been trying to remake man and have done not a little to make life unlivable"³ That exploration, that invention of new doctrines, is, for Lonergan, no longer a matter of Livingston or the lone ranger saddling up and setting out in the dawn light. It is a matter of meeting, in the clear light of day, with the energy of war-games, the demands of history for global functional collaboration in economics.

But I have aired that desperate horror and need too many times before. What would another hundred pages do, even if I did add sophistications to previous reflections, sophistications regarding the fundamental financial problem, or operable counter-inflationary structures, or the fostering of rich meso-economic thinking, or the correction of the business madness, or the re-conception of human life in relation to leisure, or a quite new caring for the gracious earth.⁴ The sophistications would only be sophistications in print until such times as as there occurred serious discontinuities from the dehumanized mind-sets that we now take for granted as the ground of business as usual. The new grounding must come from quite novel and presently unacceptable educational structures. "Coming to grasp what serious education really is and, nonetheless, coming to accept that challenge constitutes the greatest challenge to the modern economy."⁵

³*Topics in Education*, 238.

⁴My original intention here was to pack this sentence with particular references to *For a New Political Economy*, *Pastkeynes Pastmodern Economics: A Fresh Pragmatism*; and *Beyond Establishment Economics*. But the issue is not fragmentary reading of these texts, but a massive shift in empirical economics that is way beyond the present psychology of economics or business.

⁵B.Lonergan, *Macrodynamics Economics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, 119. A context for reflecting on the content and significance of Lonergan's work is Michael Shute, *Lonergan: The Catholic Marx*, University of Toronto Press, 2007.

Lonergan's Cincinnati lectures on Education in 1959 just did not meet that challenge: as he remark to me about them, "I was just trying to work out a few things." In more recent years I have tried to push forward those few things into an operable perspective both on classrooms and on conventions of economic thinking.⁶ The leads are there, the fixings if not the menu,⁷ for the long hard climb to the strange new global economic order. What is desperately needed is the communal effort, especially among Lonergan students, to make a beginning, and the beginning would be an admission into conscious heartiness that there is a gross absence of personal foundational positioning regarding economics in that community, and an equally gross absence of subtle efforts towards a serious shift in the theory and practice of early education.⁸

What to do? Well, that is a question that I did face broadly elsewhere under the title "Proximate Pragmatics."⁹ Here is how I began there, and how I conveniently end here:

"A spectre is haunting Economics - the spectre of complaint. All the powers of old Economics have entered into a holy alliance to exercise this spectre: Pope and Tsar, Meternich

⁶Chapter 3, of *Beyond Establishment Economics. No Thank You Mankiw*, "Thinking Like an Economist," is a useful illustration of elementary oppositions. For the broader consideration see [1] "The Reform of Classroom Performance", *Divyadaan. Journal of Philosophy and Education*, (13) 2002, 279-309; [2] "The Wonder of Water: The Legacy of Lonergan", *Divyadaan. Journal of Philosophy and Education*, (15) 2004, 457-75; [3] "How might I become a better teacher?", *Divyadaan. Journal of Philosophy and Education*, (16) 2005; [4] "What Do You Want?", *Divyadaan. Journal of Philosophy and Education*, (17) 2006.

⁷There is a challenge here of bringing the heuristics of this chapter and chapter 8 below into an operative mesh.

⁸I am thinking here especially of texts in economics for the late years of school that I have come across that condition the students towards the stupidities in first-year university texts. But, as the stuff in note 6 indicates, the problem is quite massive, to be the object of quite peculiar research in the future. In a fresh sense what I wrote thirty years ago is more brutally valid, echoing LeCarre's comment quoted in note 15 below. My grip on the story in the 1970s was tame. "

⁹This is the title of the final chapter of my Axial Press book, *Past Keynes Pastmodern Economics: A Fresh Pragmatism*.

and Guizot, French Radicals and German policemen.’¹⁰

Perhaps, instead of this twist on Marx’s Manifesto, I should have started this final chapter with Derrida’s hauntology or twists on his broad view of *écriture*¹¹ or on his struggles with grammatology. Or, of course, I could start with Dewey and the frustrations of *Natural Development and Social Efficiency*.¹² But my real start has to be with you in your pragmatic reality, the language and gestures of discontent that spring from you and your associates, children, parents, classmates, co-workers, whomsoever. The pragmatics of discontent need not be violent or disruptive: riots at the World Bank or the IMF meetings, music fests of revolution, marches of minorities. There is the deeper bone-rotting pragmatics of apathy and unenriched loneliness, the silent tolerance of small dream-dead children in early grades, the bewildered half-life of conformity in later school years and colleges, the trapped sufferings of graduate students. How much of this voicing is economic? How much of it is due to the cultural expansion of a potentially-sane economy being channeled into arms by industrial-military-government neurotic complexes? How much of it is due to the fact that ‘the long overdue basic expansion is doled out to one’s fellow countrymen under the haughty name of welfare?’¹³

And, As Kurt Vonegut Jr. could end chapters, we may end here with a “so it goes” in our own dainty Dresden *Slaughterhouse*, or we might just decide, today, to face a fuller honest functional phenomenology of our brutalizing economic conventions and reach, even with a

¹⁰The opening words of Marx’s *Communist Manifesto*, where I have substituted the word *complaint* for *communism*.

¹¹There is a reference here to a note at the end of page 97 in that text related to the massive fantasy of linguistic feedback within the third form of generalized empirical method [see chapter 14 here, section 3]. “The reader may recognize in some of my linguistic tactics a sublation of Derrida’s poleonymy, ‘reaching for an *old name* in order to launch a new concept’ (Jacques Derrida, *Position*, translated by Alan Bass, University of Chicago Press, 1983, 71). I twist old names, and shudder at the language *launch a new concept*: Derrida’s language is solidly colonized by conceptualism. I am trying to launch a **sensability**’s self-interest. Still, Derrida’s stretching of *écriture* opens a door to the new twist envisaged by Lonergan in note 34 of *Method in Theology*, page 88.”

¹²The title of chapter 9 of Dewey’s *Democracy and Education*.

¹³B.Lonergan, *Macroeconomic Dynamics*, 86.

friend, for a new logic of life.¹⁴

“I can tell you this. As my journey through the pharmaceutical jungle progressed, I came to realize that, by comparison with the reality, my story was as tame as a holiday postcard.”¹⁵

¹⁴I suggest that the effort be not solitary, but instead even perhaps in revolutionary little cells. My own thirty-year solitary struggle of 1968-98 was a very crazy struggle mainly with the 1944 typescript of 130 pages. There is no need for you to enter that slow craziness. I recall Lonergan being with a group of his followers in the 1970s saying “well, at least you know that you are not crazy: you are not alone.” But one must image forth that non-solitude: “The body consists not of one member but of many” (I Cor 12:14: see *Joistings* 8, “Recycling Satisfaction,” for a contextualization of this within a theology of the cross).

¹⁵John LeCarre, *The Constant Gardiner*, Penguin, 2005, 666. The author is commenting on the objectivity of his tale. Note the page, and the corresponding 666 in the original *Insight!*