

Bridgepoise 2:  
Transition to Educational Collaboration

There is, of course, the significance of this topic for the upcoming conference in Vancouver:<sup>1</sup> but the reach is deeper and wider.<sup>2</sup> The key issue, the axial issue, is the meaning of *transition* that might be increasingly cherished by you are me and generally by those interested in Lonergan's work.

Let me take, then, a use in Lonergan's work of the word *transition* that show an absence in relation to increasingly cherishing the meaning of *transition*. *Transition* is the first word in the title of his magnificent work *For A New Political Economy*, written early after his return to Canada at the beginning of the Second World War.<sup>3</sup> The title, "Transition to Exchange Economy" is quite clear - in a sense that is our puzzle here - on where he is going. He identified the problem of contemporary economics in chapter one, he identifies the two flow of goods and their rhythmic relations in chapter two, and he does all this without an explicit reflection on money. What, then, is money?

Off he goes, with the same brilliance, to add money, to arrive at the key word, *concomitance*,<sup>4</sup> that turns up thrice in the concluding seven lines of page 39, and ends the chapter hovering over the problem of finance,<sup>5</sup> of which "further discussion becomes

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<sup>2</sup>The issue is the lifting of Lonergan studies into the full context of Lonergan's suggestions regarding general categories and functional collaboration. The lifting is to be a global out-reach mixed with a humble and humbling effort at organizing **implementation**.

<sup>3</sup>"For a New Political Economy" is now Part Three of *For A New Political Economy*, volume 21 of Lonergan's Complete Works, University of Toronto Press, 1998. I refer to the volume below as **FNPE**.

<sup>4</sup>See the index to **FNPE** under *Concomitance*: it is the largest entry in the index.

<sup>5</sup>**FNPE**, the final section 49, is on "The Financial Problem", but it is clear that the solution is seen by Lonergan as a long-term collaborative effort. Chapter 3 of my *Sane Economics and Fusionism* (Axial Publishing, 2010), "Imaging International Credit", points towards that long-

possible only after we have analyzed the general exchange process.”<sup>6</sup>

My wish here is to startle you but, oddly, unless you are already in that bridgepoise of creative expectation, my wish would have to bubble forth in scary starey startling statements, and do that at some length. A doing is demanded by my molecules that would be like the wrong-footedness of the beginning of Beethoven’s first symphony, leaving you discomforted about the key and the heartchords in which this comes forth. I would be trying to do for the word *money* what I try to do in the *Bridgepoise 3* for the words *core*, *source*, *question*. And, as I remarked at the beginning of the first *Bridgepoise*, you might well twine this *Bridgepoise* with the next to ask, to ask yourself, to ask in yourself what in your space-time self, is the source of the meaning of *money*.

So the best I can do in these brief beginning pages is to startle you into thinking that you can so easily misread, as the 37-year-old genius might be considered, simplemindedly, to have miswrote, the word *transition*, at Chapter Three’s beginning. Perhaps a strange parallel may help with the startling. In *Insight* the question, “What is being?” occurs midway through the book<sup>7</sup>. But the question “What, then, is being?”<sup>8</sup> bubbles out properly only in the context of chapter 19. Is there a sense in which Lonergan was not, after all, tackling the question, “What, then, is money?” in chapter three of *For A New Political Economy?* And - a further startling nudge - is there a sense in which the 35-year-old genius did not tackle either the question “what, then, is

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term challenge through an analogy with the development of global hydrodynamics.

<sup>6</sup>The concluding words of **FNPE**, chapter 3: page 41.

<sup>7</sup>I am not going to enter into the subtle twists of chapter 12 here. The reader, perhaps, reads chapter 12 with the question, even with an answer to the question, “what is being?”, but Lonergan’s work here is a tricky balancing act. “Our definition of being is of the second order” (*Insight*, 374) and “our notion of being does not decide ...” (*Ibid.*, 408). The reader is invited to decide on page 413.

<sup>8</sup>*Insight*, 665.

grace?” nor the question, “What, then, is decision?” when he worked his mind through his doctorate thesis on “Grace and Freedom”?<sup>9</sup> And is there a possibility that most of our present Lonerganesque questions do not contain the word THEN?<sup>10</sup> And is there a possibility that we grossly misread what Lonergan wrote thirty years later about questions and answers in economics, their source, their effectiveness? “Coming to grasp what serious education is and, nonetheless, coming to accept that challenge, constitutes the greatest challenge of the modern economy.”<sup>11</sup> What, then, is serious education? What, then, is serious collaboration? What, then, is the transition to it? “Tell me, tell me, tell me, Elm. Night night!” I wonder how many of you readers are neuro-startled by this paragraph into a sense of the night night that follows telling unless the telling is followed by months of minding?

But the immediate issue is a brewing of the question, What transitions might occur in you and me during a week of telling each other about the “Transition to Educational Collaboration”? What of the bridgepoises that we are, that we might be? And towards the possibility and, indeed, a Bell probability of a real brewing the previous paragraph is my initial contribution. Transition? What might be its eventual character? “Most of all what is lacking is knowledge of all that is lacking, and only gradually is that knowledge acquired.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>*Grace and Freedom*, University of Toronto Press, 2000, contains both Lonergan’s doctorate work and the articles published in *Theological Studies* in the early 1940s. I am posing a very complex problem regarding the emergence of the thesis and the articles. Lonergan was in a hurry (see *Grace and Freedom*, xix) and, even if he took Thomas’ qq.6-17 of the *Prima Secundae* seriously (e.g. a sign of seriousness is his counted “the sixty three articles in a row” GF, 92), one should reach towards imagining the lift that his considerations would have undergone had he done his work on will after his *Verbum* work.

<sup>10</sup>*Cantower 5* is titled “Metaphysics THEN” and spells out an orientation lurking in all the odd meanings of THEN.

<sup>11</sup>Lonergan, *Macroeconomics Dynamics: an Essay in Circulation Analysis*, University of Toronto Press, 1999, 119.

<sup>12</sup>*Insight*, 559.

Most of all I wish a lift to a sense of [a] the lack of theory, [b] the need for varieties of implementation, including the effective commitment to implementation that is the seeding of the eighth functional specialty. The transitions involved in cultivation that lifted sense? That is to occupy us in the conference and in many future Bridgepoise essays. Here I wish to get people thinking further existentially, ontically, on [a] and [b]. When I use the word *further* I am implicitly noting that the appeal has been made before, by Lonergan, by me.

Let me begin with [b], since it is most closely related to an immediate pragmatic outcome of the coming conference. It requires only a common sense of what Lonergan pointed towards to reach for minor forms of implementation, and we shall be seeking for such minor forms. But the bigger issue becomes thus more evident as we putter round in our commonsense way. That bigger issue need not occupy us further here. I have been expansive on it in recent years. What I wish to poise over here, to help us to appreciate the key historic bridgepoise demanded of us, is the sense of the lack of theory and the possibility of facing it ontically and phyletically.

Facing it, yes, and discomfortingly so. To put it plainly in the context of that discomfort, we need to grimly, graciously and humbly admit effectively that, with very few exceptions, the Lonergan movement has settled for “the substitution of a pseudometaphysical mythmaking for scientific inquiry.”<sup>13</sup> Pragmatically, of course, the admission is to come through the implementation of functional collaboration, but laced into the present pseudometaphysical mythmaking is the myth that we can carry on without having a shot at either understanding or implementing Lonergan’s great final suggestion.

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Why the line? It represents a pause of days as I wondered what to write here that

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<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 528.

might be effective. It reminds me of Lonergan talking to me in the mid-1960s about somehow getting *Insight* into *Method in Theology*.<sup>14</sup> We desperately need a new ethos that would lift our hearts into a humility of human beginnings and of the billion years ahead. The simplest science, physics, is now beginning to shape up and forward, in spite of massive mythologies in both technical and popular physics. A few more centuries may see us locate the simple rambles of Freud and Jung in a more mature context of neurodynamics. Then we shall be in a better position to ask, What is molecular spirit?<sup>15</sup> Meantime, rich descriptiveness holds destructive sway.<sup>16</sup> Might you small-step-help towards the destruction of that destructiveness by such a simple struggle as one that leads you to sense that physics or economics without understanding is just arrogant bluffing?<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>I suppose that neither of us were clear, at that stage, that “getting *Insight* into *Method*” was the existential challenge of functional re-cycling over the next few centuries. For me, now, it is clear that page 287 of *Method* should have contained a tenth pointer: “(10) the location of the previous nine pointers in the concrete global operation of functional collaboration.” Or some such. Then the “one can go on” of the next really-cute Lonergan paragraph would have given a global meaning to the word “one”. The one, realistically, that can go on effectively is the global community under the mediation of the tower community.

<sup>15</sup>The historically-immature character of this question is at the heart of chapter 8, “Spirit’s Appetite and Lonerganism”, Philip McShane, *Sane Economics and Fusionism*, Axial Publishing, 2010.

<sup>16</sup>I think here of my personal - “one can go on” - twisted climb through e.g. *Cantower 23* on description’s flaws, to my most recent struggle with the second canon of hermeneutics. Might we go on? Well, my final note points to a little starting place in the simplest of studies.

<sup>17</sup>I am thinking here of various levels: it is for you to detect where you fit in. Consider first physics. Perhaps you are a grade 10 teacher of physics? Perhaps you are an erudite Lonergan student commenting on chapter 5 of *Insight*? Perhaps you are somewhere in between these? Discomforting texts in Lonergan in any case are the condemnation of descriptive dodging on *Topics in Education*, 145; *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-64* (vol. 6, *Collected Works*), 121,155. What of economics, a topic early in this essay? Significant elementary points are given in *Bridgepoise 4*, “Promises Promises”: the elementary points, however, are deeply related to methods of education and exchanging in the presently-remote third stage of meaning..