

Fusion 9

Functional Marketeers in Economics

A. The Direction of this Effort

There is the direction of this essay and the direction of the group-effort towards which it points. The essay points to the formation of a group, named and known to each other, members and associates, people who share a conviction - it may be the not-knowing sharing of belief - that Lonergan did not come up with a blank in the decades he devoted to producing "A New Political Economy". When I first battled with his 1944 typescript in the 1970s I recall expressing my wonder to Fred Lawrence that "Lonergan had gone, in economics, from Tycho Brahe to Laplace." The parallel with physics escapes many of you, but then you are up against the issue of belief. His is an astounding shift from the non-scientific economics of, say, Keynes, to an economic theory and practice to be grounded in clearly identifiable variables, including the variables that are human desires. The direction of the group of functional marketeers is towards seeding the implementation of that astounding shift.

We will focus on economics, but a larger direction cannot but emerge. Hints of that larger direction are given below in sections C and D, but only hints. Our problem is to get the show on the road in an efficient, if amateurish, fashion.

B. Amateur Beginnings

A context for this section is the set of pragmatic pointers in chapters 5 and 6 of McShane, *Pastkeynes Pastmodern Economics. A Fresh Pragmatism*, but the immediate effort needs only [1] a popular notion of the present needs in economic science and practice; [2] a popular notion of "word of mouth" promulgation; [3] an explicit grip on these two notions as the drives of our group's identified strategy as a group commitment.

[3] is important as relating us to our full goal, and it is pointed to briefly in A, B and C, but any of us can start with a minimalist perspective that certainly relates to

belief: we believe [a] that there is something seriously wrong with present economic science, practice and education; [b] that Lonergan's economic and educational perspective has the key to correcting the serious disorientations. The belief can move forward towards different levels of understanding, and it can do this through the very activities of promulgation, as we shall see in the final paragraph of this section. We "make a topic"¹ economic muddles and our escape from them: better glimpses of the muddles and the patterns of escape are to emerge even within the activities of promulgation.

We should not get too detailed or solemn at this stage. What matters is that we begin to talk and indeed to be actively oriented towards such talk. You have heard about this Lonergan effort from someone you regard as trustworthy. So: you make a point of pointing yourself towards passing on the word. The pointing and passing would need to be, eventually, within the context of a mature view of persuasion, but there should be already a popular notion of non-pressured invitation.

The initial outreach, then, is to spouses and children, local teachers of economics - especially in grades 11 and 12 and first year university - local people involved in either business or politics or media. But what is important is that the outreach be grounded in some type of group identity, a point mentioned in [3] above. You are not just out there hugging your local tree. You are linked on various levels, perhaps starting with the identity of this named group, *Functional Marketeers*, or perhaps this named group simply gave your local suspicions a local group identity. Some crisis nudged you into the mood this essay suggests: suspicions about the stupidities manifested in present money-loss, job-loss, mind-loss generally. But, since you are reading this essay, you have already the suggestion that a local group would benefit from the larger culture of

¹"It will make conversion a topic" (*Method in Theology*, 253). But note that we are making conversion a seeded activity in us, the seed of a later functional speciality.

tree-hugging, of hugging the human family.²

There is, then, an “existential category. It is a constitutive component of the group as human. It is an aesthetic apprehension of the group’s origin, The aesthetic apprehension of the group’s origin and story becomes operative whenever the group debates, judges, evaluates, decides or acts - and especially in a crisis.”³ This may seem a remote point, but it is important as the seed of what is to be eventually a group sharing the new differentiation of consciousness that is to characterize the eighth functional specialty.⁴

Going beyond the initial outreach nudges us towards sensing that differentiation: reaching out to the media, but only in a casual way.⁵ So, one puzzles over whether self or acquaintance has a useable contact in any form or level of journalism, a contact that one could ask to consider Lonergan’s innovations.

We come to the promised final paragraph of the section: moving forward to better levels of understanding. For a start, either for oneself or a friend or teacher or journalist, I hold with the minimalism that offers them [a] Mike Shute’s six pages on the

²How many Functional Marketeers are there to be? I have been using a useful image, borrowed from Gandhi, of 10,000 villages. Might we envisage reaching beyond 10,000 marketeers?

³Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 230.

⁴One of the difficulties of accepting and implementing Lonergan’s differentiations of eight tasks has been a failure of fantasy that excludes the conception and affirmation of the need for, and character of, the required new differentiations of consciousness. We have here an entry point: one might usefully think of it in terms of Thomas’ differentiation of, and puzzling over, contemplative and the active lifestyles (See, for a start, *Summa Theologica, Secunda Secundae*, q. 182). So: our initial effort is to draw attention to, and an invite personal experience of, the difference in psychology between “conception and affirmation” in metaphysics and “implementation.” The quotation marks are implicit references to the definition of metaphysics on *Insight*, 416.

⁵Formally, there are to emerge complex media-structures, “there are the adaptations needed to make full and proper use of the diverse media of communication that are available at any place and time.” (*Method in Theology*, 133).

broad need for the shift; [b] Phil McShane’s eight-page presentation for grade 12 students.⁶ There are obviously other entry-readings: if you know of them, and are in control of them, then they too can be shared. It seems to me, however, that at the initial stages identifiable shared meaning is important. We are looking to form a community confident in sharing a “standard model.”⁷ The two readings [ab] are immediately available on the website www.philipmcschane.ca as *Fusion 2* (the McShane class) and *Fusion 8* (the Shute essay), as the identification of a beginners’ standard model.

C. More Advance Reaches

As I mentioned in section A, our effective beginning demands that I remain sketchy, so here I just touch on three illustrations. The broad point, though, is made by recalling the early meaning of backfire: “ an explosive force towards the breech, rather than through the muzzle, of a firearm”. Our initial talk is to friends, local teachers, journalists. Even then, the conversation may backfire in my sense. So, the friend remarks, “my family back in Uttar Pradesh would find that strange”; the teacher says, “there is no way I could get this into school economics”; the journalist says, “ this does not jive with my memory of the industrial revolution”. The back fire is positive in so far as, pleading ignorance, muzzled, you reach back, or elsewhere, for help to fill the breach in the breech! The reaching is enabled by membership in this community: it becomes a community reach. And it may be the case - again viewing it positively - that the reach becomes an active search for something not yet understood by anyone in the

⁶It seems useful, with an eye on the future, to label these two essays as a unity: [ab] .

⁷We shall see later that this confident sharing is to occur through the entire community of what I call “the Tower of Able”. It is analogous to the existence of the “Standard Model” in present physics. This type of “cumulative and progressive results”(*Method in Theology*, 4), shaping refinements of an accepted achievement, is something that, so far, has evaded philosophy and theology.

community, not yet done even outside the community.⁸ The active search leads to a branching out that seeds a new contemplative differentiation.

The case of the teacher is one familiar to me, and indeed at various levels. Over ten years ago I arrived at the stage of convincing a chair of an economics department of essentially what is said in the two readings [ab], mentioned above. But I was blank on his problem: What can you do with an entire department that is stuck in present establishment economics? Now I have layers of solutions to this problem, but we must share them slowly. But at least we can note a beginning in some tricky grade 12 innovations, which give hints of a new systematics that would step into the breach.⁹

Then there is the journalist's question, which throws us back into an unthought and unwritten history. It is eventually to be a specialized zone, but here we just reach to a slim fantasy of it. You can move to that fantasy by considering Lonergan's points regarding "a third objection that we arrive at an historical synthesis without attempting any historical research."¹⁰ His paragraph ends with the proposal, "if we succeed in working out a generalization of economic science, we cannot fail to create simultaneously a new approach to economic history. Such an approach in itself is

⁸I think of the very large question that could come up in friendly conversation: how do we control our conversations as Marketeers so that we really avoid misunderstandings? There you have the unsolved problem of lifting Lonergan's canons of hermeneutics into the context of functional collaboration.

⁹The new systematics is at present a remote fantasy of a genetic comprehensiveness emerging out of sequences of geohistorical syntheses, belonging to a much later fuller perspective. It relates to the issues raised in these few paragraphs. The initial stepping into the breach, in Prehumous 1, "Teaching Highschool Economics. A Common-Quest Manifesto", point only very distantly towards this: there it is a matter of slipping in a few classes at the beginning of the usual orthodox course. A further suggestion I make now is inviting students to dabble in mesoeconomics by viewing the economic activities of a few neighborhood blocks. Some of my readers have, no doubt, noticed that standard texts rarely have local data.

¹⁰Lonergan, *For A New Political Economy*, 9.

already a historical synthesis.”¹¹

Finally there is the question about Uttar Pradesh posed by the Indian friend. It leaves the listener blank, and invites a simple admission of ignorance that is to be carried back, backfired, to the community of marketeers. But the backfiring is a call for a fuller geohistorical perspective on overlapping and merging contexts to be reached by the emergence of scattered amateur back-up teams, the seeds of a future integral global community of collaboration.

D. The Fuller Perspective

But what is that fuller perspective? And what is the missing historical synthesis? What might the patterns of operations and influence be, of such an un-dreamed of community? How, then, would it mesh effectively, efficiently, into the needs of either grade 12 or Central India, into the needs of a battered Africa, into the surges of present China?

In section A above I mentioned the possibility that many of us that involve ourselves in the promotion of Lonergan’s economics will, at least initially, be believers. The gatherings this year, 2009, in Seton Hall University, New Jersey, June 19-21, and in St. Mary’s University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, July 6-10, show that there are sub-groups that have struggled towards an initial scientific and contemplative grip on the matter. And there is a less identified sub-group that shares the belief, with a tincture of science, that Lonergan’s decade after his 50th birthday was not wasted, a sub-group that can come to slowly see better that the dark knight of Cosmopolis became the tired luminary seeding the Global Perspective, a Tower of Able.

The **What** regarding the fuller perspective needs the strenuous effort of fantasy, that, on such an analogy as Galileo’s shift of empirical method, would reach to envisage

¹¹*Ibid.*, 10.

a five-hundred year shift begun by Lonergan's achievement.¹²

E. Pragmatic Moves

Pragmatic moves depend on the group that emerges initially, and that in several senses. First of all, some of those that get in touch will, I hope, have suggestions about pragmatic moves. These suggestions, then, can be gathered together in - let me settle it now - *Fusion 10*, a work to appear in September 2009. That *Fusion 10* should also contain an initial list of those willing to be mentioned as associated publically¹³ with the effort. The association can be one of active membership or merely associated in that staying informed is what is primarily intended.¹⁴

There are layers of possibilities here: suggestions can be about effective groupings, groupings that are local, groupings that are global: think, for example, of a group of teachers of grade 12, or is equivalent, round the world, in mutual support.

But I would like us to entertain particularly the problem of successful out-reach to the media, to journalists. This is obviously a global outreach, depending on individuals knowing someone who knows someone e.g. in local or national press or TV, who might be interested. One may create the interest with the question, "would

¹²This fantasy can only slowly be incarnated in our group, helped forward by the seeding of differentiations in contemplative work. Still, there is no harm in recalling pointers already given that may lift us beyond the distracted descriptiveness of Lonergan's own efforts. So there are the two useful website - www.philipmcschane.ca - books, *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations* and *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*.

¹³In previous invitations I pointed out needs for caution where individuals are vulnerable e.g. half way through doctorate or towards tenure in some disapproving institute. Such individuals can be kept off lists temporarily, even remain in contact with me solely for the present, so that I can keep them informed of progress. To my usual list of vulnerable people I would add economics teachers at any level that are allied to this movement by taking up the strategy suggested in Prehumous 1, "Teaching Highschool Economics. A Common-Quest Manifesto". See note 9 above.

¹⁴All this will, no doubt, be refined by my colleague Russell Baker as he develops his website **LibertyBelle.ca**. Here I am just doing preliminary foraging.

you like to be famous as the promulgator of an economics that will solve Obama's problems?" But obviously what we seek are people or institutions that are willing to seriously tackle e.g. package **[ab]**.

I do not wish to go further here with suggestions. I am content to get the show on the road by inviting those interested to contact me by e-mail (pmcshane@shaw.ca) even if only to request listed membership as active or only to be kept informed. As much as possible, the information will be public, through later *Fusions* or the equivalent on the Baker website, **LibertyBelle.ca** .