

INTRODUCTION: *THE JOURNAL OF MACRODYNAMIC ANALYSIS*

MICHAEL SHUTE

The idea for this journal developed out of discussions among participants at a series of Lonergan Conferences held in Nova Scotia, Canada in 1997, 1999 and 2000. The first conference, coinciding with the publication of Lonergan's *For a New Political Economy*, introduced Lonergan's macroeconomic dynamics in a series of workshop sessions presented by Philip McShane. The second conference expanded the context of the first meeting, exploring the relevance of macroeconomic dynamics to core issues of social justice. Some things became clear: first, that macroeconomic dynamics challenged the root assumptions of present day economic analysis; second, that the probability at this time for gaining a sympathetic hearing for macroeconomic dynamics in mainstream economic journals was slim; and third, that issues of economic justice involved us in a series of questions about the practical implementation of the theoretic discoveries that went beyond economics properly speaking. We recognised that a fruitful forum for discussion of macroeconomic dynamics needs to explicitly incorporate developments in the notion of science in the light of generalized empirical method and functional specialization. The theme of the third conference, "Creating Categorical Characters," brought home to participants the long-term personal and collective challenge of displacing prevailing methods and approaches in the academy. We acknowledged that the inclusion of methodological questions opened up the possibility of a journal addressing issues that pertained to the implications of macrodynamic analysis not only for economics

but for other fields. We decided to go forward with a journal whose explicit aim was to discuss macrodynamic analysis in its full range of application.

What then, do we mean by macrodynamic analysis? The initial idea for the name derives from the title chosen for volume 15 of the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*. In the editor's preface of that volume, Charles Hefling relates the reasons for calling the volume *Macroeconomic Dynamics* rather than Lonergan's working title of "An Essay in Circulation Analysis." Hefling noted that Lonergan had in a letter referred to the volume as a "Primer in Macroeconomic Dynamics." The name 'macroeconomic dynamics' rightfully highlights the crucial shift of Lonergan's economic analysis from static to dynamics.¹ Initially, when we envisaged a journal devoted exclusively to economic issues, we had in mind the name *The Journal of Macroeconomic Dynamics*. With the decision to broaden the context for the journal, the notion of 'macrodynamic analysis' emerged as a neat way to capture the set of issues that we wish to address. 'Macrodynamics' pertains to the long-term and large-scale dynamics of human process, the elements of which are relevant to any specific inquiry. 'Analysis' is theoretic understanding which explicitly takes into account the intermeshing of the operations of the subject with the object of investigation. 'Macrodynamic analysis' then would explore the 'upper blade' or macro-context governing 'lower blade' or micro-inquiry in any field. While our debt to Lonergan's genius is clear, we have avoided including Lonergan's name in the journal title. The simplest explanation for doing this is that Lonergan, like Galileo before him, developed a method. We do not call scientific method 'Galilean method,' so it made sense to continue that tradition.

There is a sense in which we could have called macrodynamic analysis 'post-modern' metaphysics. Classical metaphysics in its best expression provided a framework for

¹ Charles Hefling, "Editor's Preface," in Bernard Lonergan, *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, Frederick G. Lawrence, Patrick H. Byrne, and Hefling, eds. *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* 15 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), xxiii.

directing and integrating the science of its day. However, classical metaphysics was static in conception, preferring to bracket the historical and dynamic feature of world process in order to preserve its conceptual unity. In its dominant decadent forms it was purely deductivist in method, bracketing not only the dynamics of world process but also the dynamics of human intelligence, whether theoretical or practical. Classical metaphysics failed to keep pace with the emergence of the empirical sciences and historical-mindedness. As criticism of the deductivist metaphysics developed, there came with it a widespread rejection of metaphysics itself. The issues of how to unify and implement theoretic discoveries, however, has not gone away by being denied, so the questions that metaphysics asks are not irrelevant. But there is needed the basic shift in context and mood represented by what we are calling macrodynamic analysis. The word 'post-modern' carries with it a connotation deeply meshed with the contemporary academic disorientation which we wish to avoid.

Certainly we aspire to being 'past-modern.' We envisage the emergence of macroeconomic dynamics as analogous to the shift in chemistry achieved with the discovery of the periodic table. Its discovery by Lonergan was based upon his development of a notion of science that is non-reductionist and incorporates fully the dynamic nature of world process. This was made possible by Lonergan's re-discovery of a prior achievement of Aristotle and Aquinas. In *Verbum* and *Insight* Lonergan, taking advantage of the modern developments in empirical science, historical scholarship, and in the understanding of human interiority, makes explicit in terms of the structure of human intentionality an understanding of the dynamics of cognitional process implicit in the metaphysical analysis of both thinkers. The method developing from this Lonergan named generalized empirical method. We would emphasise that a personal shift to generalized empirical method is crucial for the shift to macrodynamic analysis in any field of human inquiry, for "Generalized empirical method operates on a combination of both the data of sense and the data of consciousness: it does not treat of objects without taking into account the corresponding operations of the subject; it does not

treat of the subject's operations without taking into account the corresponding objects."²

We find the first core expression of macrodynamic analysis in Lonergan's two creative achievements: macroeconomic dynamics and functional specialization. Together they intelligently anticipate the broad lines for an effective collaboration in the healing of the fragmentation that characterises contemporary living on this globe. While macroeconomic analysis shows us how to proceed scientifically within a particular zone of inquiry, functional specialization or hodics, rooted in generalized empirical method, efficiently orders, by means of an eightfold division of labour, the dynamics of collaboration among the various sciences and among the distinct specialities within particular sciences. Lonergan differentiates eight specialities: Research, Interpretation, History, Dialectic, Foundations, Policy or Doctrines, Planning or Systematics, and Communications, which operationally differentiate the process from data to results that happens in any field of inquiry. It enables an efficient collaborative movement towards the responsible making of the human history that is integrated with world process. To re-turn a phrase, macro analysis is global-thinking about local acting.

What sort of writing do we imagine in these pages? Perhaps the unity and diversity of issues addressed in this issue will give you some idea. Bruce Anderson's article, "Foreign Trade in the Light of Circulation Analysis," plants our flag in the zone of economics. The article is the fruit of Anderson's work as a research fellow at the Woodstock Theological Center's Global Economics Project. Anderson introduces Lonergan's approach to foreign trade issues by contrasting it to the approach of the textbook tradition current in economics. Patrick Brown's article, "System and History," is an effort in interpretation. Brown develops a context for understanding Lonergan's first efforts to integrate systematics in the philosophy of history essays written in the 1930s. Finally, Philip McShane's article, "Underminded Macrodynamic

² Bernard Lonergan, "Religious Knowledge," *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 129-45, at 141.

Reading,” marks a beacon to the kind of work we would move towards. His exercise in macrodynamic reading points some distance beyond what is expected or desired in most current journals and is a challenge to future contributors to take seriously the shift to theory required if we are to reverse the malaise of current *haute culture*.

We have begun this journal with work from the West Dublin Conference participants. As such this was a matter of ‘convenience’ for the editor. Certainly so in the modern sense of the word. I wanted to get this journal up and running, and what would be more convenient than to ask a favour of those who were part of the initial discussions leading to this venture? But I use that word also with a nod to the medieval origins of the word in *convenientia*, meaning fitting or appropriate. Certainly without each of their personal contributions and support this journal would not be a going concern. The editor owes them a large debt of gratitude. But also fitting because all the authors have made the commitment, however halting, to shift towards a new vision of intellectual praxis.

This brings me necessarily to a couple of points that had been much debated in our discussion about the form of this journal. We have chosen to start a web journal, in order to take advantage of the features made possible by this format. The web allows us to incorporate the comments of readers. To this end we have included a response feature which allows for the readers to follow up and discuss issues raised by the articles.³ This means that we understand these articles as working papers. Nonetheless this does not abrogate the need for peer review of articles. Each of these articles has been reviewed by two external readers before being accepted. Suggestions were made and revisions submitted. Our intent overall is to be helpful and supportive. We think this is important and will continue the practice from here on in.

Our hope for this journal is that it is a first step towards an academic revolution, a quixotic long shot, that shifts the way

³ We are developing the response form for Adobe Acrobat, which should be available for our next issue. Until then, please send comments to the managing editor at jmda@mun.ca or to the author directly at the e-mail address given at the end of each article.

we do business both in the economy and in the academy. That shift won't be realised in a hurry: we must work against the ideologies that have contributed to the dead zone of current academic life and against our own training and defective orientations that will inevitably creep into what we do. To give some indication of the difficulty involved, Lonergan first introduced his idea of functional specialization over thirty years ago. As yet the notion has not noticeably altered the approach to journal writing even in journals sympathetic to Lonergan's work.

Relevant are both the probabilities of emergence and the probabilities of survival of a new idea. The idea has emerged, but it is not a sure thing yet that it will survive. Perhaps we haven't yet figured out how to effectively implement the required division of labour? Nevertheless, we must muster courage to start somewhere. To bring to mind a twisted proverb that was repeated often at the West Dublin Conferences: "Any task worth doing is worth doing badly!" So we will start badly and take our knocks. For the time being we welcome and encourage any contribution that fits into the horizon of our broad, imprecise sketch of macrodynamic analysis. If things go well we will be supplanted by something better. If things go really well, the kind of eclectic mix of material we will bring forth here will be replaced by a thousand new journals precisely conceived along the lines of the species and genera of meaning differentiated by hodic method.

Michael Shute teaches Religious Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland. He is the author of *The Origins of Lonergan's Notion of the Dialectic of History* and is currently working on *The Road to Lonergan's Economics* for the University of Toronto Press's Lonergan Studies Series. He can be reached at mshute@mun.ca.

Comments on this article can be sent to
jmda@mun.ca.