

RAISING EXPECTATIONS: MAKING SENSE, NOT MONEY

William Zanardi

Introduction

This essay is in two parts, the first focusing on conventional ways of making sense in everyday living and the second envisioning future ways of making sense that today are unconventional. Even in the first part, there is something unconventional about focusing on a small business and the routine tasks of a few of its employees.¹ Part One describes their patterns of thinking and living that are quite common and acceptable; yet hidden from view are larger issues and difficult questions. The previous articles also begin with descriptions of ordinary activities and only later question conventional expectations about, for example, making profits and extending credit. Part Two of this essay also challenges some conventional wisdom, both in business and in the academy, and invites us to raise our expectations about making sense of our lives.²

Part One: Conventional Ways of Making Sense

My grandparents, Catherine and Mario Zanardi, ran an Italian restaurant for 35 years. The hours were long what with cooking, cleaning, keeping accounts, ordering supplies and tending to the

¹It is the unconventional approach of this volume, introduced to the problematic of contemporary economics by McShane in chapter one of his *Pastkeynes Pastmodern Economics*.

²The astute reader will immediately note that this invitation is at once at one with the drive of this volume of the journal, and so the reading becomes unconventional. We are asking you to give us credit in the most serious sense, in that you are invited to be poised towards definite changes of behaviour: you are a member of the kitchen staff in the restaurant, and there is a needed change suggested in the menu, service, whatever. The notion of delight is introduced below: we are asking you for the high achievement of genuine delight in the possibility of radical change.

little surprises that occur in any business. The financial success of the restaurant during the Depression years of the 1930s allowed them to raise their two sons and to provide a gathering place for first and second generations of immigrants from the old country. My early memories are of parties at the restaurant and of weekend gatherings at an uncle's farm with music, food-laden tables, homemade wines, games of bocci ball and laughter.

I have a child's memories of a few of the restaurant employees: two waitresses, a bookkeeper and a bartender. I suppose they are in memory because they worked at my grandparents' place for a couple decades and so were familiar 'fixtures' in the years I was growing up. As a child, I assumed they had always been there. Much later I wondered why they had spent so many years at the restaurant. An easy answer was that their jobs provided paychecks and so a source of income; however, that common motive for keeping a job probably falls short of explaining why they would stay at the same workplace for years.

Predictably minor crises occur in every small restaurant. A broken water pipe, a malfunctioning oven, a sudden illness that sidelines a key employee—any one of these can disrupt routine operations. For restaurant managers the usual headaches include employees who call in sick right before their shifts. Today these managers have phone numbers of other employees on speed dial and quickly try to locate a substitute. Consider how two different employees might respond to the emergency call on their day off. The first one answers the manager's phone call and immediately begins thinking of excuses for not being available. The second regrets the loss of time off but recognizes the business faces an emergency and so agrees to fill in for the missing employee. How can we explain this second response?

I would like to think that for new employees my grandparents' restaurant began as just a workplace but in time became for some of them a circle of friends and familiars. A type of group loyalty gradually took shape, so that some were willing to make sacrifices to keep the enterprise going. If asked why, they may have replied, "Because there are some good people here who need it to continue." Of course there were bad days, petty disagreements and justified complaints against both owners

and fellow employees. The fact that some stayed on year after year meant that they at least found reasons for mending relations, learning to cooperate and letting go of past grievances. Persons in any business, large or small, will generate varying degrees of good sense and nonsense in their practices and relationships. So the question is why some employees would give so many years to an enterprise that admittedly was not without its mix of good sense and nonsense. The previous article raised the question of what it means to make sense. A clue to answering this question may be part of an answer to the question about employees giving years of their lives to a single enterprise. Why do they do it? Presumably they believe they are part of something worth preserving. Finding worth in their work is likely less about getting paid and more about believing that they are spending their time well. They could ask, "Is the business making money?" "Is it profitable?" They could also ask, "Are we spending our time on something worthwhile?" "Does it make sense to be doing this?"

Perhaps my grandparents' employees never asked these questions explicitly. For many who lived through the Depression years, just having a job was good fortune. To find work in a place where persons were on friendly terms was an added bonus. In such a situation, even simple things can be enjoyable and not seem like work at all. Imagine how a waitress could find delight in neatly setting a table, serving a good meal and watching customers enjoy themselves. Perhaps special occasions like birthday celebrations, wedding anniversaries or a young couple's first date brought smiles all around. Delighting in others' delight can make hard work seem easy. No great artistic display is needed in either the table setting or the food; simple table arrangements and good food are enough if those serving the customers choose to make the friendly gestures that invite all to enjoy their time together.

When employees routinely make those gestures, they probably have an orientation toward their work that is far from simply expecting a paycheck. Think of how expectations can vary in a workplace. Some employees may show up dreading the day at work and resenting the time spent there. Others may be resigned to their hours of labour as all that life has to offer them,

at least until their days off. Still others may expect that each day can bring new opportunities to greet old friends, please new customers and provide at least a smile for the passing stranger. In the last case, as opposed to the first two, it is more likely persons believe it makes sense to be doing what they are doing.

Making sense here can mean multiple things because expectations vary. Parents expect that their primary responsibility is to raise a family, provide for their security and make a better future for their children. Sticking with a job, even if it is far from ideal, can be a practical means to these ends. Ideally work fulfils further expectations. Many will hope that their work benefits a public broader than the family. Thus, persons in health care, fire prevention and legal aid clinics find their work 'rewarding' in that it serves public goods. They have internalized conventional expectations of civic responsibility, of being good citizens and responsible members of communities. Still others may find their loyalties divided as the demands on them from family and community conflict with their expectations that 'outsiders' be treated fairly. For example, established ways of pursuing public goods may put at risk the well being of immigrants who pick crops at low wages, may assign poor neighbourhoods dilapidated schools because property taxes are the basis for funding, may ill serve the aged in nursing homes because public funding for indigents lags behind rising health care costs. Those who demand reforms and work to achieve them may find their efforts make sense, even if repeatedly unsuccessful, because they believe those efforts serve good ends.

Are we any closer to answering our two questions about spending time at work well and about what making sense means? Talk of 'expectations',³ 'demands' and 'ends' provides clues to an answer.

Suppose that demands are initially spontaneous needs that subsequent experiences orientate toward specific ends. For example, before finding particular jobs, persons have a need to earn a livelihood. They also experience demands for achieving success, proving their competence and enjoying a sense of

³On the problem of the meaning and analysis of expectations, see Shute's article above, at note 11.

accomplishment. Thus, one of my grandparents' newly hired waitresses was initially seeking the job for a paycheck. To keep the job she needed to meet conventional expectations about how to dress, serve meals, adapt to special requests from customers, add up bills and so on. A variety of job skills, once mastered, allowed the new employee to become a reliable partner in the running of the restaurant. Periodic emergencies or simple changes in the menu placed further demands on her for developing new skills. Succeeding in both routine tasks and new ones supplied evidence of competence and a sense of accomplishment in achieving job-specific ends.

Most people also experience a demand for acceptance and being appreciated for their achievements, no matter how commonplace. In a friendly workplace employees will routinely experience casual gestures of respect and appreciation for what they contribute to the enterprise. More importantly, a collaborative atmosphere will encourage trusted employees to show initiative and creativity in handling new problems and in suggesting improvements. For a waitress creativity could take the form of altering the usual table settings. For a bartender, experimenting with mixing new cocktails could be a way of satisfying a demand for creativity. No great artistry, again, is needed, but simple gestures can bring delight.

Routine operations within a business gradually teach employers and employees what to expect from one another and from their jobs.⁴ When they regularly meet their varied demands for competence, flexibility in adapting to changes, signs of appreciation and opportunities for expressing creativity, most employees will find their work to be more than a source of income. Earning a living is a basic end, but once met, as Aristotle noted, persons tend to pursue further ends. Why? Presumably we do not live to work. While a successful

⁴There is no harm in recalling the point made in note 2. There are layers of reading possible here. Think of the routine business of teaching economics, the routine government strategies of imposing national taxes, export and import taxes. On the latter topic one might reach towards the notion that, just as there are two circuits on any business great or small, there are also two circuits of taxes?

restaurant or profitable business provides owners and employees with livelihoods, they usually hope for more from their work. Hence, demands pursue multiple ends, e.g. a sense of achievement, some recognition of one's worth to the enterprise, some opportunities to be creative and even to find a few friends. In contrast, children who had imaginary friends too often grow up to be adults still hoping to find just a few real ones.

I would like to think my grandparents' long-term employees stayed around because they found the restaurant to be a good place where their demands for recognition and friendship were recurrently met. Despite days of disappointment, they expected and trusted that they were achieving these valued ends.

This looking back reflectively on other people's lives and reasons for staying at one place is admittedly speculative.⁵ In reality, my grandparents and their employees were probably inarticulate about much of their experience. Talk of demands, expectations and ends would have seemed strange to them. Remote and even stranger would have been Aristotle's remark that "we are busy so as to have leisure."⁶ For a generation experiencing the Depression of the 1930s, having work was what was first on their minds. The leisure years of retirement were not part of their expectations. Even more remote would be comments that any business emerges and endures because of invisible acts of understanding, hoping, promising, trusting, agreeing and

⁵But the word 'speculative' has very broad and serious meanings, and again I point to layers of meaning. It is worth, for the larger picture, quoting Lonergan's use of the word, in a long and brilliant paragraph on present cultural needs: "It must lift its eyes more and ever more to the more general and more difficult fields of **speculation**, for it is from them that it has to derive the delicate compound of unity and freedom in which alone progress can be born, struggle, and win through." (*CWL* 21:20). The powerful page-long paragraph begins by inviting the culture not to "be a titanothore, a beast with a ten-ton body and a ten-ounce brain." That was written forty years ago. The beast is still on track.

⁶There are deep issues here of a reorientation of modernity. In contrast to Keynes in the 1930s working towards a theory of employment, Lonergan could be said to be working towards a theory on unemployment. See the index of *CWL* 21 under *leisure*.

deciding. ‘Making sense’ of their lives was fairly basic. First it was a matter of feeling that they were relatively secure regarding basic necessities. Then ‘things added up’ if they were successful in running their own affairs, some people respected them and family and friends were appreciative. By these standards what they spent their lives doing made sense. In short, they were meeting fundamental expectations about what is worth doing with their time.

With leisure time and training, some inquirers explicitly ask broader questions about why persons find satisfaction in their work, are loyal to institutions, put self-advancement second to some group good and sometimes even allow more ‘universal’ goods to trump loyalties to family, friends and familiar institutions. Pursuing these why-questions is not at odds with the spontaneous demands persons experience. Aristotle remarked, “All persons by nature desire to know.” Any parent knows that a three-year old has an unceasing flow of questions. Still, the practical demands of everyday living (and early education?) may stifle these questions in most persons. But suppose we have the leisure time to pursue some broader questions. What can we expect to gain from pursuing them? What demands are we responding to and what ends might satisfy those demands? A set of contrasts offers some clues. A general demand in everyday living is “Be practical!” Responses to it show up in efforts to make a business profitable, to care for one’s family, to plan a vacation and to cooperate with neighbours in organizing a party. Guiding the varied responses are conventional expectations that, with hard work, competence, cooperation and some luck, we can achieve these practical ends. When we succeed and so meet these expectations, we find our lives make sense.

In contrast, “Be comprehensive!” is a further demand for those operating in a world of theory and scholarly inquiry.⁷ The why-questions that incessantly flowed in earlier years now occur in more focused and controlled ways. Specialized fields of inquiry pursue their own research puzzles, e.g. economists

⁷In the final essay of this volume McShane deals with this topic in relation to what he calls the scientific spirit, with an emphasis on its blatant absence in establishment economics.

classify the diverse rhythms of a market economy, oceanographers investigate the continuous circulation of waters along ocean streams, astrophysicists wonder why different types of stars vary in their life cycles. Their research projects may promise no immediate or even foreseeable benefits, and yet they go on because the demand is to understand as completely as possible, to answer as many questions as possible. Most specialized fields of inquiry have a history of previous research perhaps extending back over centuries. New inquirers enter into established fields only after years of schooling and training. Their individual biographies could record the earliest years of their education, the subtle influences that led them to one specialized field rather than another, the personal inclinations that led them to focus on one set of puzzles as worth their attention and even years of effort. A common refrain may be that those years of effort make sense since they contribute to a larger enterprise, a tradition of inquiry that pursues good ends. In this case, persons are affirming that their own life histories (H1) 'add up' or make sense by being parts of larger traditions or histories (H2). Imagine, for example, scientists doing research on the rhythms of global heating and cooling. Some may focus on studying the remote past and what ice core samples can tell them about conditions 100,000 years ago. Others may be interested in discovering departures from old patterns and determining whether human activities contribute to any recent anomalies. While the latter focus has immediate relevance, the former may be a puzzle one delights in solving for its own sake.

If interest in the former questions is remote from the demands of practical living, consider how even more remote is a broader question about how any tradition of inquiry (H2) fits into a still larger context. Let 'H3' represent an understanding of how ongoing scientific and scholarly traditions belong to a historical process in which entire civilizations come into being and pass away. What is going on in this broader process, in this more comprehensive context of human living? The demand for understanding, for making sense of what goes on in time, invites us to lift our expectations even higher.

All of this seems a long way from my first question about why some employees spent so many years at my grandparents'

restaurant. The answer referred to various demands that the small business shaped into specific expectations and that subsequent acts of meaning satisfied in concrete ways. Suppose that answers to the remote question about historical process (H3) will similarly involve a correlation between acquired expectations and acts of meaning pursuing anticipated ends. But just as different persons form different expectations about work and their prospects for success, so we should expect they will form different expectations about how to answer questions regarding H3.

Note the remark that “we should expect” something about other people’s expectations. Why is it that we can anticipate their expectations? What experiences allow us to anticipate a stranger’s expectations? We all have at least some reflective understanding of our own efforts to make sense of things. With some exposure to studies in anthropology and historiography, we also recognize how human societies exhibit endlessly diverse meanings and practices. We may also have noticed that what all this diversity presupposes is people having questions, people reaching for the sense of things. This reaching seems to presuppose a fundamental trust, usually unarticulated, that the expected end is not illusory and the efforts to reach it are not a waste of time. In short, we expect that questioning is not futile; we expect to make sense of things.

Of course the range of expectations and of actual questioning may be quite narrow: “The big questions belong to someone else. I’m just trying to find a job, pay the bills and keep my family with a roof over their heads.” When the pressure of meeting basic demands eases, the range of expectations and questions may expand. Too often it may remain the same as persons work more to earn more so as to buy more and so surround themselves and their families with visible signs of success, security and a life above the grim struggle to survive. Still, expectations of a different sort may appear and make their demands on one’s time and attention.

Part Two: Reaching for New Ways of Making Sense

Now to change one’s standard of living in any notable fashion is to live in a different fashion. It presupposes a grasp of new ideas. If

the ideas are to be above the level of currently successful advertising, serious education must be undertaken. Finally, coming to grasp what serious education really is and, nonetheless, coming to accept that challenge constitutes [sic] the greatest challenge to the modern economy.⁸

Part One described ordinary lives going forward in the last century. Also going forward were patterns of living the consequences of which were largely hidden at that time but now are more apparent. For example, recall Mike Shute's description of the fishing around the weir or Darlene O'Leary's recollections of family fishing; now recall news of global warming, rising waters and warnings of an earth becoming too warm for the survival of many ordinary lives. Or think of how just having a job was comfort enough in the 1930s; now think of the millions today who are confused and afraid that another global financial crisis could at any time eliminate their jobs. Part One did not expose such dangers to the survival of the ordinary businesses, the cultural wealth, that Brown, McShane, Shute, O'Leary and I described. Its focus was not on global problems but on efforts to sustain a small business and wholesome relations. Only gradually do broader questions arise about making sense of the bigger contexts of H2 and H3. Those questions ask us to think in a "different fashion;" they challenge us to undertake a "serious education" of ourselves and our times.

Is this too much to expect? Conventionally we know what to expect of good parents and good citizens. Perhaps some of us have experienced challenges to conventional expectations of how businesses should be run because we have seen too many lives, too much human wealth, ruined in the marketplace. As a result, our expectations may have expanded to include educating ourselves about better economic practices and more humane outcomes. Still, dramatic shifts in expectations usually evoke resistance. Besides demands for novelty and adventure, we also experience demands for stability and predictability. Thus, too great a departure from familiar patterns of thinking and living may meet resistance. Usually excuses for resisting changes are

⁸*CWL* 15:119.

not in short supply. Forms of human inertia can always lay claim to being realistic (“That’s just the way things are”) and so dismiss challenges to current patterns as out of touch with reality. Rejecting that excuse, reformers affirm a different realism, one that challenges people to lift their expectations of how their lives might make better sense. If those who respond to the challenge are to be effective, they need more than good intentions. They need a thorough understanding of the problems they face and of the ways they might efficiently implement improvements. In short, they need a serious education, but then we are back to the earlier question: “Is this too much to expect?”

The title of this essay, “Raising Expectations: Making Sense, Not Money,” points toward a new realism both for economics and for the academy. Part One sketched how making sense of one’s life was often a matter of pursuing good ends in a friendly context. The further questions about making sense of one’s time and tribe (H2), while remote from everyday activities, do arise during most people’s lives. My grandparents and their employees had the questions pressed upon them by the confusion and threats of the Great Depression. They could no longer take for granted that the economy or political institutions were meeting expectations or providing a friendly context for their lives. They saw friends go out of business, long lines at soup kitchens and heard loud voices denouncing malevolent powers behind the growing misery; but they also experienced daily acts of kindness and heard words promising a better future. That confusion of voices may have led them to ask a further question about whether there will always be these oscillations between security and insecurity, between kindness and malice. When the Second World War came to their shores, this further question of H3 was probably inescapable. How did they, or indeed any of us today, respond? Do any of us expect to find answers?

Again, demands become specific expectations when one sets about doing one’s work. This was true for my grandparents’ employees. It also occurs in the academy. Ideally scholars are responding to the demand of theoretical inquiry: “Be comprehensive!” When would-be scholars first enter graduate studies, their expectations about their profession begin to become more specific. Today the conventional wisdom dictates they focus

on a highly specialized problem, become experts in its history and the current literature and then make an original contribution to the ongoing study of the problem. For example, a graduate student writes a dissertation in medical ethics on the shortage of organ donors for those in need of life-saving transplants. Then that young scholar spends the next ten years keeping up with the latest popular and scholarly literature on organ transplants and publishing regularly on this and related issues. The maturing scholar has found a professional niche. Conference presentations and grants contribute to a growing reputation as an expert on this subject. At least this part of the scholar's life makes sense since it satisfies conventional expectations.

Suppose, however, that the demands on scholarly inquiry are broader. "Theoretical consciousness... seeks to solve problems, to erect syntheses, to embrace the universe in a single view."⁹ Our hypothetical professional is focused on a problem, but stopping there in one's life of inquiry may risk earning Schrödinger's indictment, "The specialist is a barbarian." It is possible to spend one's professional life mucking around in some narrow corner, enjoying a comfortable niche and winning some acclaim. Given the exponential growth of information today, should anyone expect more?

What of the curious remark about "erecting syntheses," not to mention embracing "the universe in a single view"? The problem of insufficient organ donations easily leads into questions about economics, psychology and policy making. But who has a competent grasp of so many disparate fields? Who could begin to sort through the competing views of markets, motives and obstacles to changing minds and policies? To erect syntheses across a variety of disciplines demands a new convention about scholarly inquiry, one that relies on specialists but integrates their efforts into a coherent enterprise.

Surprisingly my grandparents' employees probably knew more than many scholars about how their own work fit into a larger whole. They knew that doing their jobs well helped keep the business going, and they learned what they could expect from one another in sustaining that common good. Without ever

⁹B. Lonergan, *Insight*, *CWL* 3:442.

reading Adam Smith on the increased efficiency of the division of labour, they saw first hand how dividing up the responsibilities produced a smoothly functioning enterprise. Without ever putting the insights into words, they knew that the ‘whole’ was dependent on the ‘parts’ understanding their roles and routinely deciding to fill them.

Can we envision something similar in academic practices? What new division of labour and routine collaboration might serve a larger enterprise? Already research institutes exploit the division of labour in tackling difficult questions. Medical research perhaps supplies the best examples, but, since our focus is on economics, consider how a ‘think tank’ might study housing trends in a particular country. Research specialists would be gathering data on home sales, new housing construction, rental occupancy rates. Specialists in interpretation could review the researchers’ data to spot patterns of growth or decline and to note areas of stability. Specialists in history could try to fit such patterns into a larger context, e.g. correlating shifts in housing patterns with aging populations and decaying infrastructures. Their task is to suggest the significance of such correlations for understanding what has been happening in a broader economy. Imagine further specialists evaluating the various readings of what has been going on in the broader economy and trying to reconcile competing versions of what actually has been happening. Then there could be future-oriented questions about possible remedies for housing problems and decaying infrastructures. New types of specialists could take up these questions using the findings of the earlier specialists. In this way each specialty would be contributing to a broader enterprise, and the participants would have some sense of their roles in it. Some would focus on diagnosing problems and detecting past changes while others would focus on future remedies and their implementation.

Can we expect that something similar to this pattern of collaboration will eventually become commonplace practice in the academy? The promise is of a culture of inquiry exhibiting the efficiency of the division of labour. Is it too much to expect such a culture to emerge? As O’Leary noted, “the slow process of education... must be the ground of economic change and

social improvement.”¹⁰ The process is slow because serious understanding requires a long climb, one often made all the slower because of the inertia of familiar patterns of thinking and practice. As well, recall the demand “Be comprehensive!” is a standard different from that of common-sense living. So the challenge is multiple: resist inert patterns or habits, envision improved ways of distributing and integrating tasks, and, as with the restaurant employees, go to work and hope to find a few friendly collaborators. How is all this relevant to pursuing the broad questions about making sense of H2 and H3? O’Leary’s article implicitly raised both questions. “Education, for any colour of skin or religious creed, means making sense of the tradition in which one is, and in its fullness it reaches out to the place of that tradition in history.”¹¹ So there is the task of understanding one’s own tradition (H2), its history and prospects. There is also the complex puzzle of what the ‘tribe of Eve’ is all about. Both inquiries respond to the same demand to make sense of things, but concrete individuals and different cultures bring to their responses different expectations both about what they are about, i.e. what they are doing, and about what it is they are trying to understand. Is it too much to expect that, despite their different expectations, they will notice their own dynamic reaching for the sense of things?

But the reaching often confronts competing demands. There is the injunction “Be practical!” and so responses to it will emphasize immediate results falling within the range of a commonsense tradition. There is also the demand to be comprehensive, i.e. to raise the further why-questions that push beyond the usual answers of common sense and into the world of theory. The reaching begins humbly enough with caring about understanding and responding to the challenges of ordinary living. Hence, we hear the question, “How well is the business doing?” A further question reflects an enlarged perspective: “How well are my society, its economy and political institutions doing?” In answering this larger question, one usually will detect

¹⁰See the O’Leary essay, at note 14.

¹¹I quote from the last paragraph of O’Leary’s essay.

a mixture of progress and decline, of good sense and nonsense. That much may introduce the question about H3.

For example, if one abhors the pursuit of ‘profit over people’ but finds too many cases of this priority in conventional economic practices, the question of whether we might eventually do better by one another pushes the boundaries of inquiry past one’s own tribe and its conventions. If one suspects that home loan practices and credit card policies often target those least likely to make sound financial judgments, one might wonder if such policies will endure indefinitely. O’Leary put this wonder in the context of H3: “From the experience of love focused on mystery there wells forth a longing for knowledge, and that welling is aided, lifted forward, by history as it surrounds us with human makings, makings of sense meshed with makings of nonsense.”¹²

Originally the title of this essay was to have been “Liberating Liberty.” Without mentioning liberty, this essay and the other essays in this issue are about raising expectations and liberating ourselves from conventional realisms in economics and in the academy. What this essay points out is the ‘long march’ that the demand to be comprehensive invites us to undertake together. Lower expectations may provide the specialist with a comfortable niche, but the claim is that a liberated theoretical consciousness expects more.

The longing to go forward requires a fundamental expectation, a trust, that nonsense and human stumblings do not have the final word. What is the basis for such trust, indeed, for the credibility of the effort to make sense of H3? May it all be no more than “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”? Certainly there is no shortage of stupidity and not a little malice in human history. Still, we raise questions, and to continue doing so seems to presuppose that we expect we are not wasting our time and our lives. Again, there may be humble beginnings to this trust, e.g. the child’s expectation of parental protection and the employee’s confidence that others will do their part in keeping a business going. From such small beginnings we may learn to collaborate in more ambitious

¹²The conclusion of section 4 of the O’Leary essay.

enterprises¹³ because others have routinely met our expectations in pursuing common ends, and we trust they will continue to do so. Perhaps that trust arises from our knowing persons who have loved and longed for understanding and have striven hard to make sense of things. Their example may have set a high standard for us in turn and lifted our expectations beyond the conventions of the day. But are these your experiences and expectations? At least you can feel uneasy with far lower expectations: “You are on your own in the marketplace. To succeed is to compete, amass money, build a secure stock portfolio and retire to a gated community (and hope the gates hold). The sense of it all is to live and then die in security while having enough wealth to transfer to any offspring so that they can repeat the process.”

Should we expect anything more or is this a sane way of living?

* * *

ABSTRACT

Making sense is the topic of this essay, and it is tackled in a series of sublating contexts. It begins with reflections on the context of a simple family business that makes sense and that calls for its members to continue to create sense. Questions emerge in that making of sense that lift the group beyond its own comfortable context, so that the issue of making sense places this group and all global sub-groups in the fuller problematic of making over-all sense of our living in history. Issues of leisure and expectations are raised in a manner that point to the need for global collaboration.

¹³A final recalling of the point made in note 2 above. The essay may be read on the layer of meaning in which it turns back on itself, on ourselves. Then that phrase above takes on startling meaning. There are the small beginnings suggested by the volume: a growing group, clear on the need for a new beginning of economics and articulate about it could seed the more ambitious enterprise of a new global care.