

Editors' Introduction

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Thanks to the kindness of Banzelão Teixeira, editor of *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education*, we present here, in electronic form, a tribute volume honoring the life and thought of Philip McShane. The volume was originally published earlier this year in print form in *Divyadaan*.¹ Our goal is to make it more widely available to those interested in McShane's life and leading ideas, as well as those interested in the thought of his mentor, the philosopher, theologian, economist, and methodologist Bernard Lonergan.

In addition to republishing the *Divyadaan* volume, we provide this introduction as a brief attempt at supplying a wider context for the essays in the tribute volume. A wider context, but by no means an adequate one. We intend it simply as a kind of invitation, something to help those beginning the climb toward appreciating the achievement of Philip McShane and participating in it.

His achievement is immense, massive, and multi-faceted and, in that sense, much like a mountain, a Mont Sainte-Victoire of the mind, or perhaps the more forbidding Annapurna, named for the goddess of harvests. We can offer here, though, not a harvest but instead only a few helpful images of that mountain of meaning, images mainly conveying a sense of evocation, intimation, and invitation. Further, the images of the mountain are not, so to speak, drawn to scale, nor could they be; that scale is vastly beyond our ken.

One aspect of McShane's achievement concerns his comprehensive, nuanced, and sophisticated heuristic perspective² on matters ranging from

¹ "In Memoriam: Philip McShane (1932–2020)," *Divyadaan* vol. 33/1 (2022). The special issue was edited by Patrick Brown, James Duffy, Alexandra Gillis, and Terrance Quinn. We wish also to thank the Salesian Institute of Philosophy in Nashik, India, which publishes *Divyadaan*.

² A glimpse of one portion of the framework may be found in "Prehumous 2: Metagrams and Metaphysics," <http://www.philipmcschane.org/prehumous>. Elsewhere he refers to his "metaphysical words" as "elements of a logic of method." "The Importance of Rescuing *Insight*," in *The Importance of Insight: Essays in Honour of Michael Vertin*, ed. John J. Liptay and David S. Liptay (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 202.

the dynamics of human interiority, to the dynamics of history, to the emergent order of the universe. As for the latter, it is notable that while Lonergan himself discovered emergent probability, he credited McShane with effecting “a remarkable development” of that notion of world process in his book, *Randomness, Statistics, and Emergence*.³ Regarding his own heuristic framework and viewpoint on the dynamics of human interiority and history, Phil envisioned and encouraged the possibility of a gradual personal and communal climb toward “the slow cherishing of the within”⁴—not an easy task at present, as it concerns a ‘within’ that has been tragically and monstrously⁵ neglected in our Axial times.⁶

A viewpoint on human, historical, and cosmic process, based on a developed explanatory heuristic framework—an “adequate personal *Weltanschauung*,” as he occasionally named the high challenge⁷—is not

³ From a letter of recommendation for Philip McShane dated December 1, 1973. Lonergan was referring to McShane’s 1970 book of that title. A second edition was published in 2021; see below, n.19.

⁴ *Allure*, 24.

⁵ What might Lonergan have meant when he wrote of “the monster that has stood forth in our day”? CWL 14, 41. The paragraph that ends with the monster begins with the sentence, “But continuous growth seems to be rare.” CWL 14, 40. It goes on to say, “There are the refusals to keep on taking the plunge from settled routines to an as yet unexperienced but richer mode of living.” CWL 14, 40. Other elements in the paragraph include bias and *ressentiment* in individuals and groups and their cumulative effects on a civilization.

⁶ Phil’s unique conception of the Axial Age looms large in his understanding of both history and the present situation in which we find ourselves. For a brief but penetrating account, see McShane, “Transaxial Series: A Series within Axial Press,” in *A Brief History of Tongue*, 1–4. More conventionally, one can image how widespread in human history and culture are the deficiencies associated with what Lonergan called “the immanentist subject,” “the neglected subject,” “the truncated subject,” and “the alienated subject.” See “The Subject,” *A Second Collection*, ed. Robert Doran and John Dadosky, vol. 13, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 60–74. Remediating these deficiencies is a matter “of a personal philosophic experience, of moving out of a world of sense and arriving, dazed and disoriented for a while, into a universe of being.” *Id.*, 68.

⁷ *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations*, 2nd ed., James Duffy (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2021), 91; *Randomness, Statistics, and Emergence* (1st ed.), ix (“The present work deals with the central element and the heuristic conception of world process. It tries to lead the reader towards an adequate *Weltanschauung* through a dialectic of personal performance.”)

reached suddenly or easily. Initially it rests on properly conceiving and practicing the "self-attentive method"⁸ first pioneered by Lonergan and explored with such relentless perseverance by McShane. For him it expanded and grew to encompass, eventually, a "heuristics of humanity's evolving luminosity about humanity."⁹

It takes time, talent, effort, and unusual patience and perseverance to spiral slowly into something like that perspective; and it takes sustained dedication to further develop and deepen it. Yet the rewards are many. It sheds a flood of light on who we are as humans and on our place in the universe of being.

It is a rewarding and illuminating path, but not an easy one. The implementation of self-attentive method heads towards "a reinterpretation by us of the subjects we are,"¹⁰ and not a small or minor reinterpretation but a momentous one. It leads to a dawning and daunting recognition concerning "the slow growth of personal and communal understanding," and it requires and entails a "respect for remote meaning" that is slow-grown, lived, and serious.

As McShane stressed, "That respect must be won above all within oneself."¹¹ If that respect for remote meaning is lived with sufficient seriousness and depth, "one becomes an incarnate acknowledgement of the mystery" of the human being, "where to the complexity of the animal is added the elusive intelligibility of human intelligence and the opaqueness of the absolutely supernatural."¹²

A profound reinterpretation of who and what we are, as humans, resting on a method of self-attention and the data of consciousness; a recognition with full seriousness of the slow-growing nature of human understanding, personally and collectively; a deep and developed inner respect for remote meaning; a heuristics concerning humanity's evolving luminosity about humanity; and living the theoretic life as an incarnate acknowledgement of

⁸ McShane, "The Hypothesis of Non-Accidental Human Participation in the Divine Active Spiritation," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, n.s., vol. 2, no. 2 (Fall, 2011), 197.

⁹ McShane, *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas*, 259.

¹⁰ McShane, "Instrumental Acts of Meaning and Fourth-level Functional Specialization," in *The Shaping of the Foundations*, 106.

¹¹ McShane, "Authentic Subjectivity and International Growth: Foundations," in *The Shaping of the Foundations*, 124.

¹² McShane, "Authentic Subjectivity and International Growth: Foundations," in *The Shaping of the Foundations*, 124.

the mystery of the human being—all these themes are emblematic of Phil's life and thought.

Like his mentor Bernard Lonergan, Philip McShane was a profound and wide-ranging thinker, and a brilliant theoretician.¹³ His background was in mathematics, and he held a graduate degree in relativity and quantum mechanics, together with three graduate degrees in philosophy and theology, including a D.Phil from Oxford.

He was a prolific scholar and theoretician. He edited two volumes of Lonergan's *Collected Works*, including one on *Phenomenology and Logic* and one containing Lonergan's two economic manuscripts from the 1940s, *For a New Political Economy*¹⁴ and *An Essay in Circulation Analysis*.¹⁵ He wrote six books on Lonergan's economic theory,¹⁶ and published more than 20 other books, not including four yet-to-be published books.

The last of these, *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Inquiry*, has chapters on "Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem," "The Form of Inference,"

¹³ Unfortunately, no one is likely any time soon to provide for Phil the signal service he provided for Lonergan, an intellectual biography. See Pierrot Lambert and Philip McShane, *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2nd ed. 2013).

¹⁴ See *Phenomenology and Logic: The Boston College Lectures on Mathematical Logic and Existentialism*, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 18, ed. Philip McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); *For a New Political Economy*, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 21, ed. Philip McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998). The latter volume contains a manuscript on economics from 1942, "For a New Political Economy," and another, quite distinct manuscript from 1944, "Essay in Circulation Analysis." CWL 21, xv; 3–106; 231–318.

¹⁵ An additional volume of the *Collected Works* integrates the 1944 manuscript with revised versions Lonergan produced in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Bernard Lonergan, *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, ed. Frederick Lawrence, Patrick Byrne, and Charles Hefling, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 15 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999). As the editors of that volume note, "Professor Philip McShane deserves a special votum of gratitude not only for helping to put the present editors, with many others, on the right track at the earlier stages of grasping Lonergan's economic thought, but also for double-checking our word at the end – as well as for his own pioneering writing in this field." CWL 15, lxxiii.

¹⁶ For the titles, see below, n. 48.

“Geometric Possibilities,” “Mathematical Logic and Scholasticism,” “*Insight and the General Character of Logic*,” “The Economy of Phenomenology and Logic,” “Hodic Logic,” “Modal Logic,” “Terms and Relations,” and “Theologies and the Dialectic of History,” as well as other chapters. These chapter titles provide a useful random index for the range and depth of Phil’s learning.

In addition to editing the two volumes of Lonergan’s *Collected Works*, McShane edited seven books and several book-length journal volumes. He published more than 70 articles on topics ranging from “The Foundations of Mathematics” to “Zoology and the Future of Philosophers,” from “Aesthetic Loneliness and the Heart of Science” to “The Hypothesis of Non-Accidental Human Participation in the Divine Active Spiration.”¹⁷

One of his first published books, *Randomness, Statistics, and Emergence* (1970),¹⁸ was a technical work on probability theory, including an account of Lonergan’s worldview of emergent probability as rooted in “a critical phenomenology of the scientific mind.”¹⁹ It was a modified version of his 1968 Oxford dissertation on “The Concrete Logic of Discovery of Statistical Science, with Special Reference to Problems of Evolution Theory.” His last book was *Interpretation from A to Z* (2020). There is, in addition, a goldmine of Phil’s scholarship and theory available in his many website series.²⁰ His scholarly output in these series alone can only be described as prodigious and voluminous.

Phil ran workshops and delivered keynote addresses in Canada, Australia, England, the United States, Korea, India, Mexico, Columbia, and Ireland. His last conference essay was for “The 3rd Peaceful Coexistence Colloquium” in Helsinki, Finland, in June 2019. It reflects his concern in his later years to distinguish our present destructive era, which he termed “the negative Anthropocene,” from a future era, “the positive Anthropocene,” a

¹⁷ The CV on Phil’s website contains publication details for his many articles; many of the articles are hyperlinked. <https://www.philipmcshane.org/biography-philip-mcshane>

¹⁸ *Randomness, Statistics, and Emergence* (Dublin and London: Gill and Macmillan and Macmillan, 1970). A second edition was published in 2021; see the following note.

¹⁹ *Randomness, Statistics, and Emergence*, 2nd ed., James Duffy and Terrance Quinn, eds. (Vancouver: Axial Publishing 2021), lxiv.

²⁰ The website series are available at <https://www.philipmcshane.org/website-series>. The four yet-to-be published books are also available on his website at <http://www.philipmcshane.org/website-books>.

post-axial period of luminosity about “what’s what,” including the dynamics of statistically effective collaboration.²¹ Drawing upon a distinction between two times of temporal subjectivity in Lonergan’s *The Triune God: Systematics*,²² McShane wrote of “a leap that takes us into a shocking new temporality.”²³

McShane’s books, articles, series, and addresses express his decades-long climb into the thin air of rarefied explanatory theory in both the hard and the human sciences, and they must be read in that context. His writings amount to a map of an inner summit. But one should never confuse the map with the mountain, nor the ease of glancing at a mountain with the long and dangerous labor of climbing it. Phil’s decades-long relentless dedication to hard-won theoretic achievement means there is no short-cut up the mountain of his meaning. It means that most of Phil’s writings require a lot of hard climbing. Nonetheless, the searching and diligent reader will be rewarded with fresh perspectives and sweeping, distant views at almost every turn, even if he or she never makes it out of the foothills.

By request and design, the tribute essays re-published here offer personal and autobiographic views of the effect Phil had on his students, colleagues, and others touched by his life and thought. Each of the essays, in one way or another, offers a perspective on, or an intimation of, how relentless Phil was in pursuing the theoretic life, how effective and evocative he was as a teacher, how generous and supportive he was as a human being. Phil was a profound and penetrating thinker and an extraordinary and generous person. Each contributor to this volume feels the sharp and painful loss of his passing.

²¹ See also footnotes 52 to 54 and 75 below.

²² CWL 12, 399–413.

²³ “Method in Theology: From $[1 + 1/n]^{nx}$ to $\{M (W_3^{9\Phi T})\}^4$,” *Journal of Macrodynamic Analysis* vol. 10 (2018), 105–135, 106. There are scholars who might just clutch their chests and fall over backward in their chairs after merely reading the title of this article. Don’t be frightened. “Immediately I ask my reader not to panic: if indeed you are still with me and curious, and have not fled the seen. The climb to making sense of either of the two compact expressions is tough work ... Getting a glimpse of the aim of my title would be a significant achievement, even if you went no further than musing on my pointing towards symbols as necessary or useful.” *Id.*, 105. The first mathematical expression in the title is from a 1954 letter by Lonergan to Fred Crowe concerning a breakthrough Lonergan had in conceiving “The Method of Theology.” For a facsimile of the passage, see Patrick Brown, “Interpreting Lonergan’s View of Method in May, 1954,” in *Seeding Global Collaboration*, Patrick Brown and James Duffy, eds. (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2016), 45–79, 49. For McShane’s explanation of that equation, see *id.*, “Interlude by Philip McShane,” 66–69.

Those disinclined to wading through longer introductions are encouraged at this point to move directly to sampling the various tribute essays. That is, readers might wish to proceed immediately to the essays and then later return to this introduction for a more expansive context on what is generally only intimated in the essays.

An Initial Context: Reading McShane

Anyone who delves into McShane's extensive writings will soon discover old words used in new ways, familiar words used in unfamiliar ways, and even normal words spelled in non-normal ways. They will discover many Joycean neologisms and encounter numerous diagrams. They will meet symbolisms or equations that—it is both fair and accurate to say—defy common sense. Indeed, that appears to be part of their purpose: to tutor a not-entirely-ready-or-willing reader regarding the limits of the expectations tacitly built into the cognitive procedures known as common sense.

Theory is not just highly sophisticated common sense, as McShane well knew from his decades of work in mathematics, physics, and in what Lonergan called generalized empirical method. Still, it may be that a given reader will only gradually come to recognize that difference and its significance. We are, all of us, to one extent or another in thrall to the general bias of common sense.²⁴

For a thinker attempting to invite readers to climb towards genuinely remote meanings, and away from the merely initial meanings to which we are inclined by the general bias, McShane's writing strategy makes sense. A developed respect for remote meaning is not normally an integral part of the horizon of common sense. For those not trained in an explanatory science, that respect may need to be evoked, and the evocation will normally meet with some degree of resistance or resentment. At the same time, however, Phil was a master of what you might call 'writing that invites.'

As a result, the ordinary reader, venturing into McShane's writings, is liable to feel either intrigued by these various devices and stratagems or frightened by them, or perhaps both. In any event, Phil's use of them was deliberate: setting up a productive dialectical tension within the reader leading to an insight, a shift in the reader's horizon, a grasp of previously unnoticed possibilities, and a refreshed (and more nuanced) set of expectations with which to continue reading.

²⁴ CWL 3, 250–263.

Which of the two normal responses to this strategy—feeling intrigued or feeling frightened or affronted—ends up getting most pointedly evoked in the reader depends on a great many factors within the individual reader. Allowing yourself to become intrigued seems the better of the two options. After all, if you're not reading in the hope, in the expectation, that the text will evoke questions and spark insights in you, and so spur further development, why are you even bothering to read? If you feel affronted by the revelation of your present limitations, do you feel a proportionate desire to overcome them? If your reach does not exceed your common-sense grasp, how high is your aim?

Readers trained in a scientific tradition aim at a high scientific ideal; they are not put off by diagrams, equations, and exercises; they think of them as steppingstones integral to the process of discovery, not distractions or irritations. After all, "theoretical understanding seeks to solve problems, to erect syntheses, to embrace the universe in a single view."²⁵ But there will be readers whose expectations are geared toward more immediately accessible answers, not realizing the gap between their present intellectual horizon and a more distant horizon within which alone an adequate answer will make sense.

In person, Phil patiently shepherded such people in the direction of gently revising their expectations to accord more with the slow-growing nature of personal and communal understanding. In print, he pursued a parallel strategy. He regularly urged readers to pause over puzzles for a day or a month. If you pause the standardized and automated routines of contemporary rushed reading, the pause may allow a moment of active wonder or insight to emerge that is startling enough to be noticed, thematically, by you, the reader, thus contributing to the cumulative results of practicing self-attentive method.

Phil also used techniques such as linguistic feedback and directly addressing the reader, in a manner calculated to evoke the reader's prereflective conscious performance and to challenge, subtly, the reader's prereflective performance as a reader. Put otherwise, he cyclically and cumulatively adjusted—tutored, really—the expectations of readers, turning them toward the practice of self-attentiveness. He moved them away from the standards of obviousness and the sometimes-limited expectations of a narrow common sense and towards the more remote and demanding expectations set by theoretic understanding. He helped tune them to the mystery they are, as humans, and in the process prepared them for a future

²⁵ CWL 3, 442.

of what he once called "expectational reading and living."²⁶ The more conventional scholarly readers, not surprisingly, found these techniques and tactics distressingly unconventional.²⁷

All of which is to say that Phil's writing, though it may sometimes seem off-putting, is always written under the guidance of a profound and developed control of meaning, one that is rare. A suggestive example may help here, if for no other reason than the tonality of its precisions.

What is needed and seeded, then, is an ever more refined openness to the restless heart of the internal dynamic of the personal and total search, in the reflective mode of generalized empirical method and functional specialization, an openness that would carry the search, in centuries to come, into a dialectic and evolutionary heuristic of the genera and species of ultimate meanings existentially present in human groups.²⁸

Of course there is much more to be said about the advanced control of meaning embodied in Phil's flow of expression.²⁹ We would only suggest, in the present context, that McShane's writing functions at a basic level as something like Socratic maieutic. Like Socrates' interlocutors, some readers become irritated at the perplexities or complexities Phil introduces. They are impatient for him to get on with it, to get to the point. But on the hypothesis that genuine human understanding grows only very slowly, the point is that such impatience can be the enemy of genuine discovery, of adequately

²⁶ *Allure*, 146.

²⁷ See, e.g., the university press reader's response to a proposed appendix by McShane for CWL 18 on the phenomenology of geometry, excerpted in McShane, *Lack in the Beingstalk: A Giants Causeway*, 110–111. On linguistic feedback, see CWL 14, 86, n.55, 89, 93. You might say that, like Hegel, Phil sought in his writings "to overcome ... the alienated academic language of philosophy." Hans Georg Gadamer, quoted in Quentin Lauer, *A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2nd ed., 1993), 7, n.17. This is no small task; the alienated academic language of philosophy is pervasive, poisonous, and widely accepted as normal and normative. On a related topic, there is reason to suppose that the experiments in "subject-indicative expression" (*Shaping of the Foundations*, 107) required by developed self-attentive method remain in their infancy.

²⁸ McShane, "Scientific Methods and the Investigation of Ultimate Meanings," *Journal of Ultimate Reality and Meaning* 11(1988), 142–44, 144.

²⁹ On control of meaning, see CWL 4, 235–44; CWL 14, 30, 67–68; CWL 3, 579, 585–86.

apprehended truth, of real progress in the realms either of self-knowledge or explanatory theory. Understood in the proper context, such impatience may even be antithetical to your own humanity.

A Deeper Context: Reading McShane and Reading Yourself

“How do I get my average reader, trained to axial non-reading, to read the non-read self?”³⁰

There is a further dimension to Phil’s writing. He regularly invites you to ‘read’ yourself in tandem with struggling with his meaning. And regularly his meaning is not as obvious as you would expect it to be if you were tacitly expecting comprehension on the level of ordinary initial meanings or nominal understandings. Reading yourself in tandem with reading Phil’s writings, then, contributes to a personal edition of “expectational reading and living” structured by an anticipation of the non-obvious, the complex, the mysterious.

Take, as an example, the phrases used earlier, “slow growth” and “remote meaning.” When McShane writes of the “slow growth” of human understanding, and the difficulty of winning respect for “remote meaning,” even or especially within oneself, those words cannot themselves be read slowly enough, with enough patience, or read with enough respect for what he calls remote meaning.

Unless you’re an unusual reader, though, the claim we just made—that those particular words cannot be read slowly enough—probably strikes you as strange and rather implausible. Surely the meaning of those words is sufficiently obvious? Didn’t we just read them successfully? Maybe. But maybe not.

Either way, your position on the question raises a further question: How do *you* stand with respect to the possibility of deeply non-obvious meaning? Or the possibility of the deeply non-obvious meaning of the phrase, “remote meaning”? Despite their apparent obviousness, these two questions are actually profoundly existential, concerned with the cumulative pattern of your own self-making, your own ongoing self-constitution as a person, a thinker, a reader.

If the meaning of words varies with the act of understanding they express,³¹ and if the relevant act of understanding is the cumulative product of decades of reaching in the realm of theoretic understanding, then the

³⁰ *Quodlibet* 5: A Simple Reading of *Method in Theology*, Page 250, 3.

³¹ CWL 17, 160.

meaning of those words is not going to be obvious, unless you happen to possess the fruit of decades of reaching. If the form of you as a human being is to be reached by remote theoretic meaning—as distinct from initial meanings mediated by commonsense apprehensions of the self, however true and valuable those may be—then respect for remote meaning is a form of self-respect. But how inclined are we to respect that view?

It may be that we are far too used to reading words as familiar and not as strange; it may be that we do not take seriously the principle (really, the position) that the meaning of words varies with the understanding that utters them. It may be that we regularly conflate meanings from the realm of theory with meanings as grasped by common sense.

Consider this: a physicist does not read the word “electron” in the same way we do. To the contrary, he or she approaches the word with enormous respect for the complexity of the reality named by that word—a complexity profoundly beyond the horizon of common sense, whether common sense knows it or not. Similarly, Einstein did not read the word “energy” in the same way we do. On what does the difference in reading depend? And what difference does the difference in resulting meaning make?

Reading McShane’s words about “the slow growth” of human meaning, individually and collectively, about the effort to “win respect for remote meaning,” about the difficulty of persuading yourself to respect remote meaning—doesn’t reading those words in an adequate way hinge on the degree to which *you* appreciate (or not) the slow growth of human meaning? Doesn’t it depend on how *you* understand (or not) the difficulty of remote meaning; how much *you* have succeeded (or not) in persuading yourself to respect remote meaning? Doesn’t it even depend on how *you* read (or not) the “?” mark at the end of the sentence? So the process and challenge of you reading you is somehow involved in the process and challenge of you reading McShane. Your development (or not) is involved, is at issue, is at stake, in your scaling of his development. Your willingness (or not) to read seriously is involved as well.

So the claim that McShane’s words about slow growth and remote meaning cannot be read slowly enough is not, after all, as simple or obvious a matter as it initially seemed. The difficulty of adequately reading McShane ultimately requires us to take more seriously the need to push our own development, to plunge from presently settled routines of reading and living to an as yet unexperienced but richer mode of reading and living.

Phil deliberately set up roadblocks to the rapid reading of his texts. He would frequently ask the reader to pause in mid-text (how many of us did?) to ponder a relevant exercise. He deliberately refused to provide simplistic or

easy-to-digest summaries; he consistently refused to make concessions in his writings to a culture dominated by the drive for easy answers and by—let's face it—sloppy reading. Yet as readers trained in a defective culture of reading and thoroughly habituated to it, we are always tempted to race down the page and call it an academic day.

Effectively resisting the culture's insistence on rapid reading and easily-apprehended truth may require rooting out and correcting long-settled habits and patterns in oneself. It may require a level of existential self-honesty for which we are not yet prepared, or to which we rarely rise.

It may require all the effort and courage involved in a painstaking "rectification of an oblique interior discourse," an interior discourse in which we are deeply and habitually invested, and whose uprooting may therefore require "a laborious undertaking which our idleness would prefer to shirk."³²

At any rate, some such effort is the door through which one must pass in order to enter in a serious way the profound and serious thinking and writing of Philip McShane. In a variation on McShane's "Childout principle," introducing you to reading McShane is a matter of introducing you to reading you.³³

How can we effectively resist the academic culture's settled routines of defective and impatient reading? How can we effectively resist the fact that the culture's routines of reading routinely skip the important task of reading yourself? Perhaps we can make a beginning by adopting instead a Proust-like stance of sustained and patient self-attention, self-remembering, self-evoking, so often advocated by Phil in his writings and lectures, and so necessary to reading Phil's works with profit.

Resistance is fruitful. It is a difficult task, but a rewarding one. In the words of a short-story title by Flannery O'Connor, "the life you save may be your own,"³⁴ even if it is only the life of your mind (but it is never only the life of your mind). Persistence and resistance may turn out to be daily tasks, daily challenges, daily accomplishments. The one thing they will not turn out to be is painless.

And each time the cowardice that deters us from every difficult task, every important enterprise, has urged me to leave the thing alone, to

³² Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past, The Past Recaptured*, trans. Andreas Mayor (New York: Random House, 1971), 148.

³³ See n.47 below.

³⁴ Flannery O'Connor, *The Complete Stories* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1987), 145-156.

drink my tea and to think merely of the worries of today and my hopes for tomorrow, which can be brooded over painlessly.³⁵

The Reception-History of McShane's Writings and "the Tension of Community"

As we have already noted, apart from his introductory works—which are lucidly accessible³⁶—the results of Phil's scholarly and theoretic labors are not particularly easy to read. The difficulty of his written work bears on one aspect of Phil's somewhat complicated relation to the broader community of Lonergan scholars, at least those in North America.³⁷ He was always pushing Lonergan scholars for a higher standard of adequacy in their scholarship—something closer to the highly demanding standard of scientificity articulated by the master himself. He once described, gently, his own situation regarding the Lonergan community this way. "I came upon Lonergan's work in 1956, after graduate work in mathematical physics, and have stayed on his trail since, a matter of 55 years focused on explanatory heuristics, somewhat out of sync with what is called Lonerganism."³⁸ He often spoke and wrote of the most neglected 'conversion' among Lonergan students, the conversion to theory.

Phil implemented open, anticipatory heuristics to name the known unknown and guide inquiry, and regularly noted that organic development is more complex, more difficult to understand, than inorganic development.³⁹ In the *Field Nocturnes*, he wrote a 300-hundred-page commentary on a single paragraph in *Insight* where Lonergan recommends to those studying organic development that they invent appropriate symbols to link physiology with biochemistry and biophysics.⁴⁰ In the epilogue of *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations*, he writes that adopting the strange symbolism $F(p_i, c_j, b_k, z_l, u_m, r_n)$ is part of a "reorientation of one's science, common sense, and the symbolic

³⁵ Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, vol. 1, *Swann's Way*, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: The Modern Library, 1992), 63.

³⁶ See *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations* (1975), *A Brief History of Tongue* (1998), and *Music That Is Soundless* (2nd ed., 2005).

³⁷ See below, Patrick Brown, "Incarnate Quested Speaking: A Tribute in Honor of Phil McShane," 27–30.

³⁸ *The Road to Religious Reality* (2012), 7.

³⁹ The various diagrams McShane used in *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations* are in the *Prehumous* cited above in note 2.

⁴⁰ CWL 3, 489.

filling out of a slow-growing-adequate personal *Weltanschauung*.”⁴¹ In his final book, *Interpretation from A to Z*, development is a central topic.⁴²

Development in the sciences of meaning—say, hermeneutics and history—is far more complex than organic development. McShane’s effort to push for a higher standard of scientific endeavor, no doubt, stepped on more than a few toes. It is worth thinking about this in the context of Lonergan’s treatment of “the tension of community,” as well as the section following it in *Insight* concerning the dialectic of community.⁴³

Developing intelligence makes demands on both individuals and communities. Both have to expand and grow in order to be capable of assimilating the new developments; they have to possess some measure of an antecedent willingness to expand their horizon beyond what it may presently be. Such willingness is not a given; the further developments can be met instead by personal or group “refusals to keep on taking the plunge from settled routines to an as yet unexperienced but richer mode of living.”⁴⁴ Nor are developments in the realm of intelligence somehow automatically accompanied by appropriate adaptations of human spontaneities and human sensibilities, or by relevant and needed revisions of existing routines.

One can well suspect that the demands of developing intelligence wrought by Lonergan’s great breakthroughs, and explained and expanded by McShane, fall under this dynamic. Nor is this unusual. Every community at every stage of its unfolding has a stock of inertial routines that are the product of previous, once-fresh initiatives. The Lonergan community is no exception.

⁴¹ *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations*, 2nd ed., 91. McShane later replaced the commas in the diagrams with semicolons. See, e.g., *Cantower* XXIX, “Physics and Other Sciences,” where he identifies the “huge task of the specialty Communications to nudge culture towards an understanding and an operative sense of the meaning of ‘;’, a sense that would identify our world as aggreformic, which would expose the nonsense in both reductionism and vitalism.” (15)

⁴² The term *development* occurs 75 times in the book. Essay F is “The Full Problem of Development.” In essay J, “Inventing Techniques,” which McShane calls “the crisis essay in the book” (76), he recalls having tried to communicate the importance of aggreformic thinking at a conference in Florida in 1970: “Lonergan remarked to me at the time about the paper, ‘Well, it just opens up area after area! Well, it didn’t: I do not recall a single reference to it in the past fifty years’” (*Interpretation from A to Z*, 78). See also note 89 below.

⁴³ CWL 3, 239–244, 559. See also “Editors’ Introduction,” *Seeding Global Collaboration*, v–vii.

⁴⁴ CWL 14, 40.

In addition, at any given stage there is an operative group sociology and group psychology that support and reinforce the old routines, and those already-operative group orientations possess a fair amount of momentum. That group sociology and psychology, their momentum, and their associated brand of common sense, can be salutary, of course, and even necessary. But the old initiatives now embodied in current routines can also operate to block the acceptance and diffusion of new initiatives, new ideas, and new refinements.

As Lonergan puts it, "there is a tension between the community and the individual, between the old initiatives that through common acceptance become inertial routines and, on the other hand, the capacities of individuals constituted by successive higher integrations that are not static systems but systems on the move."⁴⁵ Suffice it to say that Phil McShane experienced that tension fully and frequently. Yet he continued to push ahead in his solitary climb, especially with respect to promoting Lonergan's two crowning achievements in economics and functional collaboration.

A Wider Context: McShane's Contributions to Advancing Lonergan's Economics and the Method of Functional Collaboration

Insofar as people's horizon is limited, the situation can be as bad as you please and they still will not see in the situation its real significance. They will be looking for all sorts of remedies and cures and ways of fixing things, but the one thing necessary is what they will miss, and they will miss it because their thinking is within the limitations of a given horizon. The result is that the situation progressively deteriorates.⁴⁶

It is not hard to discern signs that our present situation is progressively deteriorating. And if you know something about Lonergan's theory of the economy and its two pulsing flows, it is hard not to notice that his remark about theories and nostrums that miss the "real significance" of the situation, applies rather pointedly to our present global economic situation, contributing massively to the progressive deterioration of a very large situation.

⁴⁵ CWL 3, 559.

⁴⁶ Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18, 304.

But he might be talking, as well, about our present academic situation.⁴⁷ The limited horizon guiding the academy is as defective as the limited horizon guiding the economy. Both are driving the cumulative deterioration of their respective domains, with the latter leaving millions of people mired in poverty and suffering as a direct and tragic result of the present limited horizon in economics.

Phil McShane devoted much of his life to expounding, expanding, and implementing what he considered Lonergan's two greatest achievements: the discovery of a scientific economics⁴⁸ and the discovery of a method for the human and natural sciences called functional specialization (or functional collaboration), a method that might serve as a basis for more efficiently and effectively generating cumulative and progressive results. More than any other contemporary teacher or writer, Phil was devoted to promulgating two-flow economic analysis and to implementing functional collaboration. Over a period of fifty years, he highlighted the need for functional collaboration in areas such as musicology, economics, linguistics, physics, and theology.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ McShane's optimism regarding reforms in education was grounded in what he called "*The Childout Principle: When teaching children geometry, one is teaching children children. ... The word geometry can be replaced with any topic, and the word children can be replaced with teenagers, adults, teachers, and so on.*" John Benton, Alessandra Drage, and Philip McShane, *Introducing Critical Thinking* (Nova Scotia: Axial Publishing, 2005), i (emphasis in original).

⁴⁸ See Mike Shute, *Lonergan's Discovery of the Science of Economics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010). McShane edited CWL 21, *For a New Political Economy*, and wrote several books on Lonergan's economic theory: *Economics for Everyone* (1st ed. 1998, 3rd ed. 2017), *Pastkeynes Pastmodern Economics* (2002), *Beyond Establishment Economics: No Thank You Mankiew* (with Bruce Anderson)(2002), *Sane Economics and Fusionism* (2010), *Piketty's Plight and the Global Future* (2014), and *Profit: The Stupid View of President Donald Trump* (2016). See also chapters 6 to 8 in *Lonergan's Challenge to the University and the Economy* and chapter 1 of *The Redress of Poise: The End of Lonergan's Work*.

⁴⁹ See *A Brief History of Tongue* (chapter three); *Economics for Everyone* (chapter five); *The Shaping of the Foundations: Being at Home in the Transcendental Method*; *Lonergan's Challenge to the University and the Economy*; *The Redress of Poise: The End of Lonergan's Work*; *Lonergan's Standard Model of Effective Global Enquiry*; *Method in Theology: Revisions and Implementations*; *The Allure of the Compelling Genius of History*; and *Interpretation from A to Z*.

Phil knew that implementing the *scienza nuova*⁵⁰ of Lonergan's economics, and implementing functionally structured collaboration, would take more than luck, and he made valiant efforts to "get the show on the roll," as he would sometimes quip. The show—efficient and beautiful global collaboration—is not easily envisioned but will, hopefully and in good time, bear fruit, "liberating many entirely and all increasingly to the field of cultural activities."⁵¹

In the preface to the second edition of *Randomness, Statistics, and Emergence*, McShane described broad discontentment in these words:

There is the randomness of present discontent with disorientations of religiosities and confusions of religious meanings, with corrupt banking and its idiot economic backing, with destructive eco-behavior and its grounding in sick patterns of greed, with hidebound bureaucracies and their stranglehold on government. That randomness can shape up, in tiny collaborative steps, to a statistics of the emergent recurrence-schemes internal to a global Tower of Care.⁵²

⁵⁰ Vico popularized the phrase in his *Principi di una Scienza Nuova (Principles of a New Science)*, first published in 1725. Lonergan's "new science" of economics, which would form the basis for "a new political economy," found preliminary form in 1942, and was significantly revised in 1944. It was only published after his death. See generally *For a New Political Economy*, CWL 21.

It could be applied to Lonergan's innovations in philosophy and theology as well. Lonergan used Vico's phrase in 1956 to refer to what would be required in order for theology to become capable of addressing the new questions and the new context of modern science, questions that arise "on the deepest level of methodology." CWL 20 (*Shorter Papers*), 223. Creating the conditions for the needed "new science" would take Lonergan decades. In a draft for the introduction to *Method in Theology*, Lonergan wrote, "I began work on this book in 1949." Archival document 69900DTE060, at 3. *Method* was published 23 years later.

⁵¹ Bernard Lonergan, *For a New Political Economy*, CWL 21, 20. McShane writes of the two shifts—in economics and in collaboration—in "A Rolling Stone Gathers Nomos," *Economics for Everyone* (3rd ed.), 99–121. One need not be a theologian or economist to appreciate that having more time to paint, dance, read, and work in the garden would be a good thing. The masses are disenfranchised and discontented, many surviving from paycheck to paycheck, while approximately 700 million people live in extreme poverty (less than \$1.90 a day, according to the World Bank).

⁵² *Randomness, Statistics, and Emergence*, 2nd ed. (2021), lxi.

Immediately after this description of current wide-scale discontent, he adds a quote from *Insight* about “the concrete possibility of a scheme beginning to function shifts the probability of the combination from the product $pqr \dots$ to the sum $p + q + r + \dots$ ”⁵³ His long-term optimism about the emergence of a creative minority, intimately sharing understanding,⁵⁴ shifting the probabilities of reorienting discontentment from Poisson to normal distribution, and creating a more livable life, “a plain plane of radiant life,” went hand in hand with his superpower of walking slowly.⁵⁵

McShane wrote about the problem of general history and the concreteness of historical process in a way that does not fit into the silos of academic disciplines or even the silos of the history of the academic disciplines.⁵⁶ The specialist study of history, if not reductionist or vitalist, is the study of merging horizons.

Protons and pansies and personalities are woven together in the policies of Marx. The chemistry of steam is put on the rails of capitalism and Joyce and Lenin can share a train of thought. Music can become the musak of marketing. And so on, in the twists of a specialist critical history in which the process of merging occurs twice.⁵⁷

Likewise, dialectic specialists do precise, demanding omnidisciplinary tasks and indicate that they are aware of and appreciate what is being handed to them by historians and what they are handing on to founders,⁵⁸ whose per se

⁵³ CWL 3, 144.

⁵⁴ In a footnote he adds that “the intimacy is a matter of a shared inner word, ‘*eo magis unum*’ (see the final chapter of Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, CWL 2, 204–208) with a shared neurochemistry of imaged psychic tonalities.” *Randomness, Statistics, and Emergence*, 2nd ed., lxi, n.32.

⁵⁵ When his 44-month-old grandson asked him what his superpower was, McShane replied, “It’s walking slowly.” *The Future*, ii.

⁵⁶ The problem of general history is raised by Lonergan in *Topics of Education*. “And so we come to the question, What has one to know to be able to write general history? What is its a priori? What stands to general history as knowledge of mathematics stands to the history of mathematics?” CWL 10, 251.

⁵⁷ *Cantower VIII*, 16. At the end of this passage there is a footnote to *Method in Theology*, 189 [CWL 14, 177].

⁵⁸ “[T]he seeds of that pair [dialecticians and founders] are the heart of those ancient—oriental and occidental—departments of human concern: philosophy and religion. These seeds are generally battered within the narrow confined mindings of these academic disciplines but show sun-searching when they slip into artistry.” Philip McShane, “Structuring the Reach towards the Future,” an essay written for

activity is footnoteless fantasy.⁵⁹ This is all quite beyond contemporary comprehension, given the current inter- and intra-departmental divisions of the modern research university and the gap between splintered areas of study and the possibility of collaborating. The possibility pivots on hearing a call, receiving an invitation, and responding to a summons.⁶⁰ The one thing necessary, an appeal to the "subject as subject,"⁶¹ is missed insofar as our "thinking is within the limitations of a given horizon. The result is that the situation progressively deteriorates."⁶²

The new horizon demanded by the new context,⁶³ taken with full seriousness, will seem intolerably strange from within the horizon of current academic disciplines, perhaps even resented and resisted, until some distant day when it may be supported and protected by a new framework and a new language, one that elaborates an adequate "conception, affirmation, and implementation of an integral heuristic structure."⁶⁴ What might that mean?

The 3rd Peaceful Coexistence Colloquium, Helsinki, Finland, June 13–14, 2019, available as *Æcornomics* 5, <http://www.philipmcschane.org/ecornomics>. This essay has been published in the book cited in note 75 below.

⁵⁹ "Foundational talk is per se direct speech of—more precisely (about)³—fantasy and recycling." *ChriSt in History*, chapter 4, "Foundations," at page 4 (<http://www.philipmcschane.org/website-books>). Note that the capitalized "is" in the title is deliberate, and the superscript is an exponent, not a footnote.

⁶⁰ "The existential gap is not merely a call to the authenticity of the subject in his private existence. It is also a call to authenticity, an invitation to understand something about the process of human history, and a summons to decisiveness at a rather critical moment in the historical process." *Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18, 300.

⁶¹ "What is the reality of the subject as subject? ... The subject as subject is reality in the sense that we live and die, love and hate, rejoice and suffer, desire and fear, wonder and dread, inquire and doubt." *Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18, 315–316.

⁶² *Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18, 304.

⁶³ See "The New Context," appendix 1 to *Method in Theology*, CWL 14, 341–378, and see also Lonergan's remark there that the new context throws "considerable light on the structures theology is to build and the procedures it is to employ." CWL 14, 371. As the editors note, "The New Context" is the "whole or a large part of an early version of chapter 1. ... The date of the composition should probably be placed between 1965 and 1967." CWL 14, 341, n.1.

⁶⁴ CWL 3, 416. The road to an integral heuristic structure "is primarily a process to self-knowledge." CWL 3, 422.

Lonergan, and McShane, devoted decades to spelling out the answer to that question.

Whatever it might mean, it will seem strange to anyone steeped and stuck in the present limited academic horizon.⁶⁵ Why, though, would we not expect a formidable challenge to present horizons and sensibilities, and to the settled routines and languages generated by them—as well as to present academic institutions—by Lonergan’s proffer of a radically innovative method? “The greater the novelty, the less prepared the audience.”⁶⁶

McShane recognized his personal limits and the limits of the larger community of scholars trying to make heads or tails of either or both of the two breakthroughs, the two “leading ideas,” or of others.⁶⁷ Time and again he identified his efforts as “random dialectics,” and acknowledged that his

⁶⁵ The language McShane uses often evokes a kind of resistance and resentment for the same reason, and it is not hard to see why. It is as if he is pointing to something challenging that we do not yet understand, and why wouldn’t someone comfortably inhabiting the present defective horizon find that mystifying and unsettling, as if Phil were accusing us of not knowing, in the mode of a modern-day Socrates? How dare he? But he did dare. “I am pointing to the distant drums and dreams and dances of the *Oncovering of Global Cool*. *Oncovering* is the challenge of heuristics: a protection of humanity’s **what** and **Om** and **home** in each and all from stupidity and evil.” *Æconomics* 3, “A Common Quest Manifesto,” 8, <http://www.philipmcshane.org/ecconomics>. See also n. 67, below.

⁶⁶ CWL 3, 612.

⁶⁷ There is a list of 40 leading ideas on pages 170–171 of *Bernard Lonergan: His Life and Leading Ideas*. McShane forgot to include on the list what he called HOW language, intimated in a footnote in *Method in Theology*: “At a higher level of linguistic development, the possibility of insight is achieved by linguistic feedback, by expressing the subjective experience in words and as subjective.” CWL 14, 85–86, n.55. In his keynote address for the First Latin American Lonergan Conference “Arriving in Cosmopolis,” Puebla, Mexico, June 16, 2011 (available in English and Spanish at: <http://www.philipmcshane.org/website-articles>), McShane wrote of “a rich linguistic feedback that would seed a new talk, a HOW-Language that would solve the problem posed in *Insight* 17, section 1.” “Arriving in Cosmopolis,” 3, n.10. In the next note he adds: “We must fantasize a quite new and strange *Grundlegung*, a radiance of talk that would make talk, and its molecules, the **Home Of Wonder**, edging towards the eschatological reality of the Word made fresh, homing among us, everlastingly.” “Arriving in Cosmopolis,” 5, n. 11. See also “How-Language: Works?” in *A Brief History of Tongue: From Big Bang to Coloured Wholes* (Halifax: Axial Press, 1998), 49–79.

work did not meet the precise demands of one of the specialties.⁶⁸ Attempting that precise and demanding work takes courage and a rare achievement of openness and humility that are not well sponsored by the contemporary academic world.⁶⁹ Phil would often quote Samuel Beckett's injunction, "Try again; fail again; fail better."⁷⁰

One breakthrough, leading to a reversal of former practice, was Phil's realization that teaching the basics of two-flow economics is more efficient than trying to cover too much or engage in discussion about advanced topics.⁷¹ What is needed to intervene in the global economic and ecological crises, are cunning and creative communications of basic insights.⁷² The key diagram and surrounding text was a staple in his economic writings, an *a posteriori* that will become, in 100 years or so, through decent teaching, so evident as to be an effective *a priori*.⁷³

⁶⁸ "He [Lonergan] wrote the book *Method in Theology* tiredly and, as it were, closed it from himself when finished. In the Rice interviews he remarked that he was leaving that work to his disciples. I take a sad risky stand in claiming that his disciples—including myself—have failed him outrageously." "Arriving in Cosmopolis," 5. See also "Our Stumbling Efforts" in McShane's epilogue to *Seeding Global Collaboration*, 234–237.

⁶⁹ See Lonergan's draft notes for the 1979 article, "Horizons and Transpositions." "Some kinds of work, no doubt, occur within a horizon open to expansion; and expansion can and does occur. But it is rare that openness is built into living and working, rare that its fruit is esteemed by many, rare that much significance is attached to the meanings and values that would change customary ways of life." Archival document 29819DTE070, 5. There is no reason his remark would not apply to academic living and working, or to the changes in customary academic ways of life demanded by functional collaboration.

⁷⁰ *Interpretation from A to Z*, p. iii, quoting Beckett, *Worstward Ho* (London: Calder Publications Ltd., 1983), 7.

⁷¹ See also James Duffy, below, "One Wild and Precious Life: Remembering Phil McShane," 49, n.14.

⁷² Cunningness and creativity are required because those in position to shape economic policies or form the minds of the next generation of economists do not know they are perpetuating a pseudo-science that is wreaking havoc. This, according to McShane, adds an active meaning to converging religions. "Finding an Effective Economist: A Central Theological Challenge," *Divyadaan* 30/1 (2019), 97–128.

⁷³ See "The Key Issue," in *Piketty's Plight and the Global Future*, pp. 5–14; "The Key Diagram," in *Profit: The Stupid View of President Donald Trump* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2016), 7–11; and the Preface to *Economics for Everyone* (3rd ed.), iii–v. In *Profit* McShane describes the breakthrough as a "reversed Newtonian

One of his books on economics was a condemnation of the stupidity of a US president,⁷⁴ but it was not personal, as any world leader is surrounded by advisors, and indeed he wrote of the possible rescue of this same person.

The issue of eventual peace is a matter of finding our what's what, so that we are not blindly sowing what, as we have done right through the negative Anthropocene, however long we think it is. Our initial attempts, through this century, certainly will involve conflicts on all levels. But if we are to move beyond that messy and miserable and mean stage, we must find the basis of therapy for, e.g., the sociopaths, and that therapy requires that we loop around our whats and theirs in order to identify what went wrong in their ontic and phyletic evolution. Think Donald Trump. Think him through and true. Yes, I have surely caught your attention and indeed your agreement that such a thinking is virtually impossible at present.⁷⁵

jump." *Profit*, 10. McShane elaborates on the jump in *Economics for Everyone*: "Newton started within an old culture of two flow: an earthly flow and, to recall ancient searchings, a quintessential flow. Newton went from two to one. Lonergan started with a dominant one-flow economic analysis—think in terms of the household-firm diagram—and separated it into two flows 'to form a more basic concept and develop a more general theory.'" *Id.*, viii (the internal quotation is from CWL 21, 11).

⁷⁴ *Profit: The Stupid View of President Trump* is McShane's transformation of the manuscript *Profit: The Stupid View of Hilary Clinton*. The changes that he made on Wednesday, November 9, 2016, the day after Trump's surprise victory over Clinton, will be made available on the archives of his website. After writing this book, McShane referred time and again to chapter 12, "The Situation Room: The Stupid View of Wolf Blitzer," 91–95. "I introduced the heuristic reach towards Tower and town control of global situations in chapter 12." *Interpretation from A to Z*, n. 10, p. 147. "I return to that page of *Method in Theology* [CWL 14, 330] that has 8 mentions of situations and point you, humorously, to my quite familiar source of inspiration in my efforts: Wolf Blitzer's 'Situation Room' on CNN. CNN generally is just a world of chitchat that has, yes, a subtle effect on the American mind, but one not in any sense to be regarded as 'a resolute and effective intervention in this historical process.'" McShane, *The Future*, 88–89 (the internal quotation is from Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic*, CWL 18, 306; see also *id.*, 305–310).

⁷⁵ "The Noosphere," *Seeding the Positive Anthropocene* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2022), 27.

The Role of the *Journal of Macrodynamic Analysis*

There remains a final task, that of thanking the *Journal of Macrodynamic Analysis* for hosting the electronic publishing of this volume. That is entirely appropriate, given that *JMDA* is actually part of the wider context discussed above.

The idea for *JMDA* emerged from conferences in Nova Scotia in the late 1990s focusing on macroeconomic dynamics and the challenge of transforming contemporary education. The Chestertonian proverb, “a thing worth doing is worth doing badly,” was in the air at those conferences. It’s a useful proverb to bear in mind at the outset of any great or challenging effort. It is, after all, rather silly to expect perfection at the beginning of a serious task or challenge.

That comes, if it ever does, only at the end of the process, when acquired skills or developed knowledge are finally adequate to the task. Knowing that macrodynamic analysis is an arduous task that demands refined teamwork, Mike Shute wrote in the editor’s introduction to the first volume, “We will start badly and take our knocks.”⁷⁶ Phil, who was one of the coordinators of those conferences in Nova Scotia, was fond of the proverb and supportive of starting *JMDA*.

The very name of the present journal signposts both the long-term and large scale of historical process (macrodynamic) and the importance of theoretic understanding (analysis). From the inception of the journal in 2001 until he passed away in 2020, Phil wrote articles for all but three volumes (5, 8, and 12), and edited volume 11, “Do You Want a Sane Global Economy?”⁷⁷ to which he contributed three essays. So it is appropriate that this journal should host the volume from *Divyadaan* honoring Philip McShane.

It is also appropriate that we should end this brief foray into a wider context for tribute essays in honor of Phil McShane on a Chestertonian note and with a Chestertonian twist. With time, the two projects initiated by Bernard Lonergan and promoted so brilliantly by Philip McShane—a new economics and functionally organized human collaboration—will attain degrees of differentiation, specialization, efficiency, and integration of which

⁷⁶ “Introduction: The *Journal of Macrodynamic Analysis*,” *Journal of Macrodynamic Analysis* 1 (2001), 8.

⁷⁷ This volume was originally published in *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy & Education* 21/2 (2010).

we can currently only dream. In their fruition, the results will be vital, life-supporting, and profoundly relevant to daily life, though perhaps not recognized as such by those “never bitten by theory.”⁷⁸ In the meantime, though, we can and should grow in meaning, within the given limits, the circumstances of our lonely thinking, writing, walking, and talking, becoming strangers to ourselves of last month, or last week,⁷⁹ and encouraging others to do the same.

To attend seriously to that realm, that notion of survival which is you at core but also you in kilos, is to open yourself to a new vision of the globe with its natural rhythms overlaid and orbited by [hu]man-made assets. Popularly put, you are larger than the Red Square, taller than Manhattan, deeper than galactic space. Not to contemplate that aspirative universe within is much more than a sorry personal loss.⁸⁰

In short, following the leads of Lonergan and McShane—for a year or a life—is a thing worth doing, even if we know in advance that we will inevitably do it badly.

In his final book, published three months before Phil flew off to an everlasting neurodynamic state of “infinite surprise,”⁸¹ he added detail and direction to what he considered worth doing. His directive, written 45 years after chapter 10 of *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations*, is a further and fuller specification of attending seriously to the notion of survival. In the footnote he “invites us all, yes all Lonergan folk, to turn for at least a decade or three into forward specialists, mainly indeed into the last specialty and its C₉

⁷⁸ “Theory is proposed and studied, but in the subject there is no real serious differentiation of consciousness; all we get as a theory are the broader simplifications offered by a professor to introduce or round off a lecture or course, or the products of *haute vulgarisation*. But he is never bitten by theory; he has no apprehension, no understanding, for example, of the fact that Newton spent weeks in his room in which he barely bothered looking at his food, while he was working out the theory of universal gravitation.” “Exegesis and Dogma,” CWL 6, 155.

⁷⁹ “In a week of growing understanding I leave myself behind: I become a stranger to myself of last week. I could not tell myself of last week my meaning of this seven-day climb. Does it not seem obvious?” Philip McShane, Chapter 5 “Communications in General,” in *ChRISt in History* (2006), 7–8.

⁸⁰ *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations*, 2nd ed., 82.

⁸¹ The last two words in the epilogue to *Wealth of Self and Wealth of Nations: Self-Axis of the Great Ascent*, 2nd ed., 95. See also “Prologue: The Betweenness of Death” in Philip McShane, *The Everlasting Joy of Being Human* (Vancouver: Axial Publishing, 2013), 1–12.

pusher-ons: 2020–2050 needs to be the age of a discontinuity in the genesis of street-smarts."⁸²

Such a strange street focus is to have, of course, a backfire effect⁸³ on the negative Anthropocene's commitment to truncated selfishness, but its main bent—and I am suggesting a jump in the bent of Lonergan studies as "unit action"⁸⁴—is, so to speak, to "field"⁸⁵ the seeds of an aesthetic

⁸² *Interpretation from A to Z*, 207, n.119. The following three footnotes—designated here as 83, 84, and 85—are verbatim quotations from the corresponding footnotes in *Interpretation from A to Z*, there designated 117, 118, and 119. They are the final three footnotes in all of Phil's many books published over more than 50 years. Perhaps we should regard them, and read them, appropriately, as instances of remote meaning—even if we do so badly.

⁸³ The full heuristics of the backfire effect is eventually to be meshed with that of the sublated "theology possesses" (*Insight*, 766, line 29). Indeed the gradual Wi diagramming of the tentative and growing heuristic is to be quite soon—if only I could move the Lonergan group—a countervailing pressure on all disciplines' heuristic symbolizations and their referents in present slum-living. A footnote is not the place to shoot for a fantasy of such a complexity of neurocontrols, but at least you staring creatively at the upper stairs of my stare diagram gives your molecular superego a kick in the assumptions. But more simply you can pause, like Archimedes' screw-jobbery, and try to do a screw-up job on the version of the transcendentals that make present to you staring, your stair, now:

Be inventively attentive, Be inventively intelligent, Be inventively reasonable, Be inventively adventurous, Be inventively responsible. Might the one simple word, *inventively*, J-wrap, change history, gown and town?

⁸⁴ Lonergan, *Essay in Fundamental Sociology*, 45, line 29, but read now in the context of the Lonergan's concluding reflections of "a real and an ideal unity" in the last page of *Method in Theology*.

⁸⁵ See CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic*, index under *Field*. "The field is the universe, but my horizon defines my universe" (*Ibid.*, 199). The challenge of the jump? "They have to be people in whom the horizon is coincident with the field. If they are not, then all they can possibly do is increase the confusion and accelerate the doom." (*Ibid.*, 306). "We are in a situation where the people who can do the most harm are doing it and the people who could do the most good are not." (*Ibid.*, 307). We are in a situation that invites us all, yes all Lonergan folk, to turn for at least a decade or three into forward specialists, mainly indeed into the last specialty and its C₉ pusher-ons: 2020–2050 needs to be the age of a discontinuity in the genesis of street-smarts. Recall my 21 nudges that ended with note 103 above. Recall note 108 and Lonergan's appeal of ¾ of a century ago. I have much on my mind regarding the way forward, not least the problem of sublating The Interior Castle, adequately identified, into The Interior Lighthouse. But I refrain from

new global politics and economics in this millennium, starting in this decade with you.⁸⁶

Turning ourselves towards communications is worth doing, even if it is done badly, which Phil knew it would be. Feedback resulting from communications is needed, desperately needed, to make “a resolute and effective intervention in this historical process.”⁸⁷ In his final Questing2020 essay, Phil identified two ways to generate feedback—the generation of broad feedback, a task each one of us can take on,⁸⁸ and the generation of specialized feedback, the fragile task of dialecticians.⁸⁹

writing further: this seems a decent end-book of a long run. It seems best to venture on a new Website series, Questing 2020, question and tentative answers about these next decades. That series will, I hope, be only the tip of the iceberg of *Assembly* that cools the business of present Lonergan studies in favor of a search for fertile seeds of a global effectiveness. But also I think of the Questing series as just a public tip of the bergamot of private communications with me about that task: a herbing of hearts towards Dionysian drives in these next generations.

⁸⁶ *Interpretation from A to Z*, 207.

⁸⁷ CWL 18, *Phenomenology and Logic*, 306.

⁸⁸ “Might we try this turn to effectiveness, toward each doing his or her little bit of the task of engineering the future, even while bluffing along in conventional Lonergan studies?” Questing2020 G^{jk} “Popularizing Differentiated Collaboration,” 3, n.13, <http://www.philipmcshane.org/questing2020>.

⁸⁹ “Then there is the specialized feedback that I write of in note 37: a task of dialecticians” (Id). Note 37, a commentary on “To sing a song that old was sung” (*Pericles*, line 1, pre-Act 1), reads: “The key issue is the silence of conventional Lonergan scholarship. Wilkins begins his review of Lawrence’s work thus: “The central thesis of Frederick Lawrence’s recent book, *The Fragility of Consciousness*, is that consciousness is fragile because it is conversational.” Lonergan faces that fragility quite simply and bluntly in his final lines of *Method in Theology*, chapter 10, section 5: it is a matter, for ‘him and her’ of “being at pains not to conceal his tracks but to lay all his cards on the table” (*Method in Theology*, 193; CWL 14, 180). I charitably assume invincible ignorance on the part of Lawrence, the crowd at Florida, the crowds in the fifty years since. The tracks are hidden away under and in the molecules of the superego of a fragile axial consciousness. None of the crowds read seriously the key paragraph of *Insight*: the second paragraph of the “canon of explanation” (*Insight*, CWL 3, 609). So they have pattered on, since the 1950’s as I indicated in note 16 above. The way out is the scientific discomfort pointed clearly to in the third chapter, “Self-Assembly,” of *The Future: Core Precepts in Supramolecular Method and Nanochemistry*. My seven decades of climbing will not have been in vain if, in these next decades, you break, you break into, the abominable silence.” Questing2020 G^{jk} “Popularizing Differentiated Collaboration,” 9, n.37. Various groups ranging in number from 2 to 7

have embraced the fragile task of generating specialized feedback in the dialectic exercises published in volumes 13, 14, and 16 (forthcoming) of *JMDA*.