

XII. THE OTHER SIDE OF ECONOMICS: MISSING GENDER EQUALITY AND A LOST ENVIRONMENT

“Woman is the force, man is the focus. One alone is strong, but at random, the other alone may be brave but has no consequence.” Tribe unknown

“If a man is to do something more than human, he must have more than human power.” Tribe unknown

“All plants are our brothers and sisters. They talk to us and if we listen, we can hear them.” Arapaho

“A brave man dies but once – a coward many times.” Iowa

“Pray to understand what man has forgotten.” Lumbee

“The pathway to glory is rough and many gloomy hours obscure it.” Chief Black Hawk

“See your sons and daughters: they are your future.” Oneida

“A child believes that only the action of someone who is unfriendly can cause pain.” Santee Sioux

“Even in Paradise, living all alone would be Hell.” Seneca

“When you die, you will be spoken of as those in the sky, like the stars.” Yurok

It may be safe to assume that no economist so far discussed – excepting the Tribe of the New Frontier – has bothered to listen to talking plants. It may be equally safe to assume that the majority of the Old world mundane thinkers would call you clear off your rocker for even making such a suggestion. And nature? What is nature to an economist? Nothing, of course! There remains only the trifling embarrassment that the thinking householder or nation-steward is himself largely nothing but nature. And an unheeded Nature will come back with a vengeance, in fact it is coming back with a vengeance upon postmodern neo-economic man who is trying not only to deny his roots, but who is also doing his best to deny his destiny!

Which brings us to another embarrassment no less, but probably more embarrassing if that were at all possible. Leaving Nature out of the economic equation is a pretty big howler, leaving Woman out of the equation is no less than mankind signing its own death warrant. We have reviewed just about a half millennium of economic activity and thought, and we have not encountered one woman! That is no accident. Economic Science has made it a systematic practice not only to exclude women, but to exclude any kind of female experience or perspective. Like Nature, Woman is a force not reckoned with in our not so illustrious science. Well, to quote Mary Baker Eddy: Man has wrongly reckoned!

In even the most thorough conventional histories of economic thought women are conspicuous through their absence. Well, you do have Jenny von Westphalen, the sister of the Prussian Minister of the Interior Ferdinand von Westphalen, and wife of Karl Marx. There is little doubt and there are no doubters who would not concede that Marx could not have done the work he did without Engels, and all the more so without Jenny. And then there is their daughter Eleonor Marx, who worked as a political activist and ended up killing herself. Both as exceptional, bright, and strong as they may have been ended up getting victimized by a dark

genius who could not even carry his own economic weight, let alone, help others, his adored “master class” the proletariat, or nations to help themselves. Then there are of course countless other women who enabled our economic thinkers to shine brightly on paper, but they are never mentioned!

To the best of our knowledge until the 1980s there is but one woman, who made a mark in this domaine more exclusively male-dominated than until just yesterday movie directors or orchestra conductors. And that is the distinguished Cambridge Professor Joan Robinson. Not to disown any legitimate intellectual debt the present writer needs to acknowledge that he wrote the equivalent of his master’s thesis on David Hume’s Economic Essay for Economics Professor Michael Bolle, who was neo-Keynesian student of Joan Robinson. Our earliest perception of economics, in fact the only economic perspective that made some sort of sense prior to encountering Henry George is colored and guided favorably by the erudition and insights of the above. One quote may suffice to give a taste of the quality of economic thought and it will equally obliterate doubts that there may be the same confusion as to backbone and spine in Professor Robinson’s character as there happened to be in the absentee character of a number of Old World economists discussed above. After a page or so of describing the nature of the securities and the stock exchange Robinson concludes: “The Stock Exchange is primarily a convenience for rentiers. ... Provided that the investments are successful, the flow of earnings corresponding to a share is continually rising: the stock-exchange value of the share goes up correspondingly. Thus, the wealth created by the workers, managers, and designers employed by the firms is dropping into the laps of the rentiers without their contributing anything to production. As Professor Galbraith has pointed out: ‘No grant of feudal privilege has ever equalled, for effortless return, that of the grandparent who bought and endowed his descendants with a thousand shares of General Motors and General Electric.’ The main economic role of a stock exchange is the preservation and expansion of rentier wealth, rather than the provision of finance for industry or government.”²⁹

It is patently obvious that there is no lack of perspicacity nor a lack of backbone there. The second woman who entered the male-exclusive, woman-keep-out club of economists is the former New Zealand MP Marilyn Waring. And she pretty well sweeps the slate clean and makes any one of the conventional economists - again excepting solely George and the thinkers of the New Frontier - well, look like the fools they were and are.

²⁹ . Joan Robinson, *An Introduction to Modern Economics*, Maidenhead, UK, 1973, p. 226, the Galbraith quote is taken from *The New Industrial State*, p. 394

Her radical stance in parliament in 1984 brought down the then government and made New Zealand a nuclear-free zone. A feat many a radical and activist can only dream of around the world. That not sufficing she published a book in 1987 with the polemical title: *If Women Counted – A New Feminist Economics*. Herein she exposes and explodes the fallacies and idiocies of excluding both Woman and Mother Nature from the economic equation. The poverty and one-dimensionality of the economic man and the monstrosity of the Dr. Frankenstein blueprints of most Old World economists is here replaced by a holistic reintegration of economic thought into the most obvious and blatantly common sense realities of daily life. Our venerable Classical Economics in this perspective proves to be extremely dangerous and excruciatingly uncommon nonsense!

The oil spill of the Exxon Valdez makes excellent economic sense under the old system of book-keeping Waring points. Lethal sense one is tempted to say!

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