

## Lobbyism: Effectively Reaching Out by Phil McShane

11. February 2011 21:09

We have been "on the trail" now for a month, and some people are pushing for a larger view. It is up to each of you to see whether that push is [a] common sense wanting pop-science or [b] a scientific bent pushing for the beginnings of a science. The general ethos in Lonergan studies, sadly, is [a]. Few in these early generations of Lonergan following have had any decent experience of science: positioning yourself in this regard is part of the discomfort of our beginnings that is to be discussed in FuSe 7.

But there is an evident need now to brood together over the larger problem of full functional research. The focus on Lonergan remains, I would claim, the better start towards a future global science, but some broader messing will give a popular impression of where the science is to go in this century and in these next millennia. But I hope that you have now a better notion of the fact that we just cannot get any serious distance in asking the question, 'What is Functional Research?' without detailed work. That was the problem of beginning the seminar with details from Lonergan: there was and is no science, so there was and is needed a focused start. In physics one does not start with planetary orbits or laser beams: one starts with logs rolling down hills or light reflected in mirrors. But there is the existential need at present to extend our musings from thinking of Lonergan to thinking e.g. of something that all of us can, somehow, lay our hands on. So I suggest thinking of books that belong to the educational **institutions of school texts**. [useful here to think of *institutions, roles, tasks* in the context of that spread of words on page 48 of *Method*: I am not here thinking of the roles of teachers and students, the tasks of locating these roles in rooms etc. I am thinking, in a limited way, about print prose - + symbolisms! - on paper or screen].

Now this new focus helps us to think over the challenge of positioning oneself with regard to *acquis*, to mindset. The challenge is to detect for oneself that the present *acquis* of Lonergan studies is not Lonergan's scientific one but a vague pre-scientific ethos of approval. The difficulty of functional collaboration is not intrinsically functionality or collaboration but of the absence of a scientific appreciation, in a disorganised common sense, of its need. The issue I raise, then is the issue of a **pragmatic science of educational texts**.

Let me suppose that I am operating in functional research of progressive school texts {1} in 2111; {2} in 9111. In a century - i.e. {1} - I would be researching the failure of Lobbyism to reach certain areas of the globe or of disciplines in the basic stand mentioned by Lonergan in note 1 of page 336 of *Method*: "the key issue is whether concepts result from understanding or understanding results from concepts". In 9111 the research would be e.g. on slight failures of refinements of imagings in global cultures that are actually happily living in the ethos of the correct view. What of the present

situation? It is one of a gross misrepresentation of the human mind and its cultivation at all levels, from pre-natal to post-graduate life. And I invite you to home in [baton-wise] on texts available to you as evidence of that.

All this, but precisely the latter inviting, fits into our general view of anomaly. I am reading the text of Lonergan on "the key issue", but the reading is within my metaphysical **leaning** (talked of already) : detecting and implementing human progress and handing the **lean reading** on ( in this writing, not effectively batoned) . That jives with the larger view of anomaly that was discussed in FuSe 5 and FuSe 6.

I cannot avoid here something like compact popularization. I am thinking of the distant future of functional communication and its flow, through **glocal** practice, towards further research. The two, research and communications, are to work together in rhythmically closing the **cycle of care. Communications**, luminous about ongoing emergent probability in space and time [with main focus on the 30% land mass on the globe, in its on-going time-layers], is to fragment 'down' **glocally** with the reforms generated by the most recent cycling work. Here the present is shockingly different from the future of 2111 or 9111. There will be, by 9111, a magnificently organized **Lobbyism** - unignorable by world or local governments or sciences etc - mediating delicate adjustments to components of sane cultures. By 2111 there will be a recognisable shift not just among Lonergan people but in the omnidisciplinary acceptance of interdisciplinary cyclic collaboration and related moves towards a new integral multifaceted approach to understanding and its application: think of *Insight* 442, - "all theoretic work becomes metaphysical" - getting a cultural grip.

But we are at the beginning of the road there, and it involves thinking out an up-to-date version [from Lonergan's nudging: again we are back to functional research in Lonergan] of the practice of generalized empirical method and cycling towards the educational aspect of it that is contained e.g. in the "ChildOut-Principle" [already mentioned ... see e.g. *Cantower* 41], AND cyclically - or in short-cut manner - seeing what can be done about it.

The vague heuristic notion that we get from imagining 2111 and 9111 is a help toward envisaging the enlargement of functional research to follow our stumbling seed-sowing. Functional research, in its fullness, is alert to all aspects of human life: all "institutions, roles, tasks", recalling again the useful display on *Method* 48.

But back to school texts as a problem. OR some equivalent problem of present culture. **Envisage the problem as being handled effectively.** THAT is what Lobbyism is all about: a higher level care that reaches cyclically towards improvements in the joy of living. This is radially away from vague ramblings, however learned and richly descriptively, about our present sad cultures. We have to move from discourse about *The Perfectibility of Man* ( I have to hand John Passmore's book of that title) to functional research that can be effectively cycled through some group of interpreters that are capable of rolling a limited correction round to Communications and local, glocal, communicators. So: here we all have a definite challenge, **Envisage the problem as being handled effectively.** What functional interpreters might you

reach with some particular anomaly so that it starts such an effective flow "*ut in maiori parte*", in the majority of cases? [I am recalling Aristotle and Thomas: what we need **now** is an emergent Bell-curve statistics of global effectedness] Does this help to see the barrenness of general comments on, say, unapplied Lonergan texts? I am tempted to venture, as illustrative, into my own shift of focus regarding economics, from broad appeals to identifying particular stupidities in my suggesting such a slogan as "there are two types of firm" [of course, I have still to get something going even "*in minore parte*"! Indeed, I have not reached a single serious economist or journalist ..... so I toss my baton to you ... help, facebooker, twitterer, whatever!]

At all events, let us continue in this larger exchange together, twisting gallantly towards concrete fantasy, **envisaging effectiveness**. Terry Quinn is heading towards giving a context in his emergent submission (check on Feb 15th) regarding physics, which begins with Lonergan pointing to "the concrete intelligibility of space and time". What we are dealing with is the slow genesis of a complex effective mediation of shifts in that global dynamic towards progress and authentic human happiness. I have risked calling that mediation **Lobbyism** rather than the somewhat safe-echoing, remote, even harmless **Cosmopolis**. The title is, basically, of little consequence: but **Lobbyism** is hard-nosed, and should in its slow steps forward be hard-gnosed. As I write on this morning of Feb 11th, the Egyptians have rid themselves of a president, that old General Mubarak: can an emergent **Lobbyism** rid us in this century of the global presiding rule of General Bias?

Tags:

[Submit to DotNetKicks...](#)  
[Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#)

## Related posts

[FuSe One: The Functionally-Specialized Study of Lonergan by Phil McShane](#) FuSe 1 : The Functionally-Specialized Study of Lonergan &nb...[FuSe 14C: An Attempt at Communicating history Functionally by Robert Henman](#) FuSe 14C: An Attempt ...[FuSe 9 "What is Functional Research?" by Philip McShane](#) FuSe 9 AWhat is Functional Research?@ Philip McShane I wish first to thank...

## Comments

2/17/2011 2:12:24 AM #

Phil et al,  
I've wondered as I've looked in on the contributions to date, if at some point one has to ask "what is science?" I know there is the risk of the infinite regress in questioning presuppositions in this way but that is the price one must pay for the "transcendental method" and "thought" serving as a type of first principle. For the assumption is that what ever it is, it is key for getting us beyond the present intellectual malaise. Phil writes of cultivating "a scientific bent pushing for the beginnings of a science." Lonergan's functional specialities have always seemed to me to be a set of logical distinctions more or less clearly defined but not quite the full story of the way things actually unfold in the life of human action and enquiry about matters of justice and injustice, good and evil.  
Anecdotal Evidence from "my village"  
In my "village" I asked about the Stuart Brand (see footnote to one of Phil's communications that refers to Stuart Brand's recent work) claim that the food we eat is produced largely by the big commercial enterprizes. Some say not that 85% comes from

the "subsistence and small scale farms" around the world. This disagreement has profound policy implications for us right now as we eat our meals! There was a brief exchange among the "villagers" around this but things trailed off into "our" various distractions and separate and even lonely ways, and then silence on this issue..... silence! And so does this mean that S. Brand and Monsanto's view of the world wins? I hope not. But the fact that very good people could not mount or sustain a dialogue around this is for me the pressing intellectual problem of our times. .... and this cannot be cast as an issue of science or methodology. with apologies  
Hugh

---

Hugh Williams 

2/21/2011 2:55:14 PM #

---

Hugh:

"What is science?" is answered by Lonergan, with a focus on understanding. It is summarily expressed in the non-Lonergan way of "theory verified in instances" which in Lonergan terms is, roughly, "form, existence, potency" or "understanding, judgment, data" or... (See Cantowers 27-31 for an empirical invitation to answer 'what is science?' and to connect with various views and practices of presentation and teaching).

We presupposed in the group that Lonergan's work was familiar. But what we are at in the seminar is moving back slowly to the presuppositions, the *acquis*. That slowness is going to carry us into the next three seminars, but what may already be emerging, as in your question Hugh, is that we haven't GOT Lonergan's answer. Nor have the scientists. Both Lonergan people and Scientists have to be led to take GEM141 seriously.

Furthermore, Functional Collaboration redefines science so as to include its teaching and application - implementations. So the series of seminars can be redefined as answering the question "What is science?" but in a sound operable way that will sort out the views you point to, and sort them out in a way geared towards implementation. That was the whole drive of Lonergan, from the 1930s on, reaching a global *Praxisweltanschauung*.

Phil

---

Phil McShane 