

Humus 4 Let's Try Talking Functionally

You surely notice¹ a shift from the complex titles of the previous essays in this series to a plain invitation, plain apart from the word *functional*. The shift from “let’s try talking” to let’s try talking functionally” is quite a leap, a leap in fantasy, but now a leap to stumbling. Both are to be meshed together, as is the case when one is a beginner in physics: the good teacher gives both vision and exercises. The problem here, in contrast with physics, is that there is an established tradition of vision in physics. Think - even though it may be foreign² to you - of the suggestion “Let’s try talking quantum mechanics”. Quantum mechanics is “out there” as a phenomenon of the 20th century, as a body of texts, as the reality of difficult university courses. When I muse over the suggestion, Let’s Talk Quantum Mechanics, I quite spontaneously think of my favorite text on the matter, Richard Feynman’s brilliant third volume of Lectures in Physics.³ Well, you might say, when we think of “Let’s Try Talking Functionally”, don’t we have the brilliant text, *Method in Theology*?

And my answer is **NO**.

My answer is complex and I have expressed it in various ways in the past 35 years, but I wish you only to think of the suggestion that the book is **not** functionally directed to getting us to think or talk functionally.

I could spin out a parallel with Feynman’s volume: perhaps someone among us will do

¹I am pushing, especially in this particular *Humus*, for a simplicity which yet is massively, post-axially, complex. So, you might well not bother reading the other footnotes here. Might I madly suggest you to be thinking of the first line of *Ulysses*’ last chapter, Molly seeing her upside-down life and husband in one long sentence: “Yes because he never did a thing like that before”. Then shift to resting in the first words of *Finnegans Wake*: “riverrun past Eve and Adam”. What does “notice” mean, as it bubbles up from its bodied Indoeuropean base, *gno*, to its present truncated type, a gnotice that is an unnotice? This little prelude is a prelude to sight-reading, mind-reading, a self-luminous noticing, a global eightfold *gnosis*.

²The serious noticing calls within you to find some zone of your own life in which you find a parallel to the struggle to break beyond common sense, even when it gives the illusion of larger competence through a richness of description or feeling.

³Richard Feynman, (*The Feynman*) *Lectures on Physics* (in three volumes), Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, paperback edition, with many printings after 1964.

for the Quantum Mediation of functionality what Feynman almost did for quantum mechanics? Perhaps I should have started with the title: **Let's Talk Quantum Mediation?**

In Christian studies it is a matter of getting efficiently from the scroll suggestions of the New Testament to the street needs of the New Millennium, and the efficiency depends - that is Lonergan's badly expressed view - on the slow emergence of a culturally-accepted globally-resonant sequence of operatively-effective well-defined quantum leaps.

What are these strangely qualified leaps? I cannot "tell" you.

What is it to do quantum physics? Feynman, in his little book, gets you right into the messy world of hard imagining and thinking.⁴ It is humus at its earthiest. So here, yes, we look towards a massive distant culture of refined salvific global collaborative: but our look is not supported by communal visioning. We are crippled by the present operative horizon of Lonerganism that is locked away from **the field** by the molecules of the super-ego. A massive earth-groaned-for new set of differentiations of consciousness is noticed as something as simple as a filing system, because centuries of sick cogitating cabins and confines the dream.

Might we try a fresh humble humic climbing, following the advice of *Insight's* first paragraph? And might *Humus 5* emerge from our little leaping stumblings as an authentic if bumbling expression of a communal searching for the seeds of a future global beauty of "a new and higher collaboration of intellectsthat sweeps living human bodies, linked in charity, to the joyful, courageous, whole-hearted, yet intelligently controlled performance of the tasks set by a world order in which the problem of evil is not suppressed but transcended."⁵

⁴And this is my grounding of my non-tellability. Quantum physics baffled me during the past half-century, even though I did brilliantly in a master's degree focus on it over fifty years ago. I return to it serious during the five first years of my seventies. I carved up the third Feynman volume into its lectures and battled with them, surrounding them with scribbles, till I could get beyond Feynman and the present mess and **tell?** I doubt it: the possibility of telling sits there, in *Joistings 24* "Getting into (the philosophy of) Quantum Mechanics", and *Joistings 25*, "Rescuing Quantum Mechanics" What of Lonergan's telling of functionality? Above I mentioned it as unsuccessful. Might you make it a success, or at least lift the culture a little towards its buried post-axial power? Is that not the full meaning of **notice** in our riverrun in history? And there is a parallel shift in the meaning of **telling**.

⁵*Insight*, 723-4[745].