

*Loneragan is engaged in laying out an entire philosophy, which means that he has to provide a carefully worked out logical presentation that covers all bases. But we are not restricted to his formal work flow. There are implications to his work that can help us better understand what is involved.*

*Phase II covers not only his intentional analysis of the hard science’s empirical heuristic structure but a world view of emergent probability that anticipates what there is to know about world processes.*

*There are two primary reasons for tackling this section of Lonergan’s work in this way.*

*The first is that it provides important insights into this specialized intellectual endeavor that unfortunately has become the basis for bureaucratic*

*justifications and political control. But scientific methods are too restricted in their knowing to cover the reality of the human condition. By coming to understand these distortions we can gain a better grasp of what is going on when it comes to understanding fundamental institutional change.*

*The second is that our concept of how the world works—world processes—affects our understanding of metaphysics, ethics, and the possibility of transcendent knowledge. For example, a Newtonian mechanical view of the universe leads to problems of predetermination and the lack of free will. Lonergan’s world view of emergent probability combines the two primary streams of empirical investigation into a complementary whole. In doing so, he lays the foundation for a better understanding of what is going on in the world.*

**Heuristic Structure of Empirical Method  
Chapters 2 through 5 of Insight**

**Section 1: the two streams of empirical investigations**

Classical & Statistical

**Section 2: the canons of empirical method**

Selection  
Operations  
Relevance  
Parsimony  
Complete Explanation  
Statistical Residues

**Section 3: the world view of Emergent Probability**

Schemes of Recurrence  
Probabilities of emergence and sustainability

**Section 4: A problem particular to physics**

Invariance over space and time

We’ll start with Lonergan’s notion of emergent probability as the first of the two take-aways, then go back to the early chapters to explore the specific realm of meaning associated with the hard sciences.

*There are two questions that we should keep in mind:*

- 1. What difference does Lonergan’s world view of emergent probability make when it comes to understanding the world around us?*
- 2. How does a reliance on scientific “reason” as the primary method of controlling meaning affect the body politic?*

Note: Lonergan’s work in *Insight* and *Method* provides an alternative to either a reliance on a normative culture or on hard science methodologies to the control of meaning.

		BASIC TYPES	
		high	low
EMERGENCE	high	1	2
	low	3	4

There are four basic types of recurring schemes depending on the probabilities of each.

1. High probability of emergence and once it does come into being is highly stable for long periods of time.
2. High probability of emergence but with a short shelf life.
3. Low probability of emergence, but once it does it is very long-lasting.
4. Low probability of emergence, with low probability of survival.

*Dinosaurs* are a good example of high survivability, having lasted millions of years. But in doing so, their schemes of recurrence used much of the available resources, leaving little for other species. It was only when they were wiped out that these resources were released for the development of mammals, including our own species.

*Loneragan’s world view of emergent probability anticipates what is to be known. This expands the range of any inquiry.* For example, if one’s primary interest is in changing institutional structures then such a world view postulates the existence of both a lower conditioning and higher sublimiting levels. If such a study of institutional levels is to be complete, then it must include both the energy/material schemes that condition it as well as the Divine Mystery’s activities that sublimate it.

What does this mean?

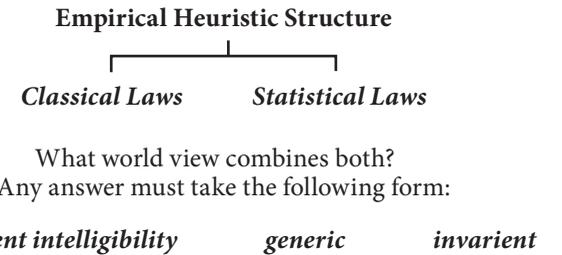
*First of all, the size and complexity of any institutional system is dependent on the flows of energy and materials that it can utilize in its support.* Low level hunter-gather societies had very little in the way of resources, so the only institutions that could develop were nomadic tribes geared around family allegiances. Agricultural communities made better use of the available energy, and so were able to support both kings and large bureaucracies to manage their affairs. Our own industrial age with its wide variety of institutions extending over vast areas is only possible if the concentrated energy bound in fossil fuels becomes a reality.

*Second, any institutional change that does not manage their resource base can only devolve as the energy/material recurring schemes of operation fail to match need.* A good example of this is the Green movement that if actualized will reduce the conditioning schemes to low levels incapable of supporting current national and international structures.

*Third, while human beings are not capable of understanding the Divine Mystery, it is still the case that this higher level sublimes what takes place at the institutional level.* It is likely that this sublimiting effect takes two forms. The first is through revelation, where the Divine Mystery makes direct contact; the second is through the transcendental injunctions and the intellectual, moral, and religious conversion that makes it possible for human beings to reach up to their precepts.

*The fourth consideration is that any institutional structure and the terminal values that guide its good of order conditions what the higher transcendental level can do when it comes to “healing in history.”*

The point is that Lonergan’s world view anticipates far more about world processes than concentrating on any one level of intelligibility to the expense of understanding both the conditioning and sublimiting effects that are in play.



What world view combines both?  
Any answer must take the following form:

*immanent intelligibility          generic          invariant*

Answer is incomplete: still needs the notion of “thing.”

**WORLD VIEW OF EMERGENT PROBABILITY**

- 1. Schemes of Recurrence*
- 2. Probabilities of emergence and sustainability*

(It’s an explanatory theory)

- ♦ *spatial distribution*
- ♦ *absolute numbers*
- ♦ *long intervals of time*
  - ♦ *selection*
  - ♦ *stability*
  - ♦ *development*

*Still to come: layers of intelligibility, such that lower levels condition the emergence of higher, while higher levels sublimate the lower. It is impossible for a lower level to understand any higher level.*

*Insight*, pp. 138-151 (1997 edition)