

## **Assembling *Insight***

I remarked, in the conclusion of the final footnote of the previous essay, that the full shock of the needed change in Christian perspective, indeed in religious perspective, is to be Assembled in *LO and Behold 11*.

But is it not, frankly, a shock to have me suggesting to you that a piece of the religious Standard Model is the book *Insight*? Without its ingested meaning theo-thinking is like electro-thinking without Maxwell's equations.

My suggestion there is a brief, solo compacting of my three objectifications required by *Loneran's 1833 Overture*, so I am getting ahead of myself and yourself. But not really.

When asked to focus on *Insight* in *Assembly*, you cannot but advert to the book's emergence and treatment by others. My compacting is a quite simple but still extravagant warning about the delicacy of approaching *Insight* as a possible component in the future global control of meaning. Your task is to spread your thinking and writing into at least a thousand words to convey to colleagues your first and second objectifications of a positioning regarding the work.

The curiously tricky thing about this task is that you may never have faced the problem of thematizing your positioning.<sup>1</sup> You are/were not asked to do it by teachers, nor is the asking a piece of the present ethos. The talk of positioning is regularly restricted to a generally-vague view of conversions. The tricky twist here is to self-attend to reveal to yourself—and eventually to others—what you really think of the task of understanding, a key piece of intellectual conversion. So, we weave forward in this *Assembly* and *Overture* from and in the general cultural discomfort pointed to in the two pages of *CWL 6* presented in [LO and Behold 3](#): “Refuses.” What do you really really think of them?

I could halt here, but it seems wiser and strangely friendlier to ramble on a bit. If you pause realistically over the question of ‘what you really think?’ the pause should lead you to friendly exchanges. I recall my very first conversation with Loneran, Easter 1961 in Dublin, where we rambled around various positionings. At one stage he remarked about a startling discovery: “I had to go and ask someone.” In puttering and pushing for a self-objectification regarding the

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<sup>1</sup> It may surprise you that this is true of the majority of Loneran scholars.

book *Insight*, you must surely see the advantage of reaching out? There is the simple advantage of thus not making a fool of yourself in your objectifications; there is the other simple advantage of not being discouraged in your battle with the book, in being able to make admissions of failure. Let me be friendly here about both advantages.

IF you get some sense that the book *Insight* was and is an evolutionary sport's self-expression in his best and most opportune years,<sup>2</sup> then you won't mind having a shabby shot at expressing your view about the book and where it is leading, nor will you be discouraged.

But you are faced in the beginning of that paragraph with a big IF. Who are your friends in the matter? Not, I would claim, the present community of teachers, who have the most comic notions of the book and its impact on them and on history. Am I—and there are other daft people like me—to be accepted as a friendly commentator on the Overture task, on the book?

The big difficulty may be that the culture, especially of religion and of philosophy, is very attractive to you: you can chat away in a cosy democracy of the mind in undergraduate years, and, really, have no great difficulty in moving through graduate degrees: they are a matter of correlating initial meanings and, perhaps, such meanings in a spread of authors. And weaved into those years can be a naïve expectation, that, well, Lonergan identified in those two pages.

I am only warming up, so best to conclude abruptly by simply adding my own symbolic page to your potential musing. It is the page of Joos *Theoretical Physics* that parallels page 722 of *Insight*.<sup>3</sup> Here you have it:

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<sup>2</sup> See note 7 below, and follow up the pointers of the footnote 51 referred to there. Lonergan placed epistemological concerns in the center of his proposed two-volume work. Such concerns had occupied him in the years up to beginning *Insight* in 1949. But his heart remained in the project of inventing a “statistically-effective” cycle of direct scientific understanding that would engineer progress. See “Essay in Fundamental Sociology,” *Lonergan's Early Economic Research*, edited with commentary by Michael Shute, University of Toronto Press, 2010, 20. In that brilliant paragraph he mentions “statistically-effective” twice. Effectiveness was central to his poise from the get-go: it, as “implementation” (*Insight*, 416) is essential to any philosophy, and without its “fruit to be borne” (*Method in Theology*, 355[327]) theology remains a barren “academic discipline.” *Ibid.*, 3[8].

<sup>3</sup> Take a serious look at the two pages, and be honest in your effort to puzzle out why you think that McShane is crazy in claiming that page 722 of *Insight* is altogether more difficult than page 722 of Joos' *Theoretical Physics*. But if you suspect that I might be sane, then you have to entertain (and be entertained by ... *Insight* 624–26) the notion that you have been misled by axial history and inadequate teaching. But cheer up, axial history and old style teaching are just the dying wriggles of the negative Anthropocene age. In the next millennium we will sniff the air of the positive Anthropocene, have a better sense of “all that is lacking” (*Insight*, 559, line 24) and savor the amazing ontic and phyletic meaning of the dodged paragraph at the end of *Insight* 609.

terms whose index sum is 4, e.g.  $v_1c_3$ ,  $v_2c_2$ ,  $v_3c_1$ . The equations, solved for  $c_n$ , are

$$c_n = \frac{\sum v_p c_{n-p}}{E - \frac{(k + 2\pi n/a)^2}{\mu}} \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \quad (86)$$

As long as the denominator does not vanish, all of the  $c_n$ , with the exception of  $c_0$ , may be allowed to approach zero as  $v_n$  does. This means that the proper functions and proper values of the electrons in the weak, periodic field differ but slightly from those in the absence of forces. However, it must be noted that the  $k_m$  now form a discrete, yet very dense, set. The situation is different, however, if the denominator vanishes; then the  $c_n$  can no longer be small. Thus for  $k = -\pi/a$  we have

$$c_1 = \frac{\sum v_p c_{1-p}}{E - \frac{\pi^2}{a^2\mu}} \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \quad (87)$$

where, according to (81),  $E = \pi^2/a^2\mu$ .

The same denominator is obtained for  $c_0$ . In order to investigate the character of the result at these places we approach  $-\pi/a$  from neighbouring points by trying to determine  $c_0$  and  $c_1$  for  $k = (-\pi/a) + \delta$ , the corresponding proper value being  $E = (\pi^2/a^2\mu) + \epsilon$ .

Neglecting all coefficients shown above to be small, we get the following equations for  $c_0$  and  $c_1$ :

$$\left. \begin{aligned} c_0 \left( \epsilon + \frac{2\pi\delta}{a\mu} \right) &= v_{-1} c_1, \\ c_1 \left( \epsilon - \frac{2\pi\delta}{a\mu} \right) &= v_1 c_0. \end{aligned} \right\} \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \quad (88)$$

These linear, homogeneous equations can be satisfied only by the vanishing of the determinant. This leads to an equation for  $\epsilon$ :

$$\epsilon = \pm \sqrt{v_{-1}v_1 + \frac{4\pi^2\delta^2}{a^2\mu^2}}$$

or, because  $v_{-1} = \bar{v}_1$ ,

$$\epsilon = \pm \sqrt{|v_1|^2 + \frac{4\pi^2\delta^2}{a^2\mu^2}} \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \quad (89)$$

In the limit, with  $\delta = 0$ ,

$$\epsilon = \pm |v_1| \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot \quad (90)$$

I read Joos' book first in the mid-1950s: it was tough work: such a graduate text requires that you have done some serious climbing in the previous years. At least glance at it, perhaps in

dread.<sup>4</sup> Then have a look-see at the parallel page of *Insight*. It is a much more serious and difficult climb of meaning and “come about.”<sup>5</sup> Pause over the six invitations to repent,<sup>6</sup> a repentance that calls and cauls your good will to weave itself effectively round your own molecules and the molecules of the cosmos. “Do you know these molecules?”<sup>7</sup> “Do you know His Kingdom?”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> It is not at all amiss to draw our attention to the final two chapters of *CWL 18, Phenomenology and Logic*, as a prepping for you two Overture objectifications.

<sup>5</sup> Here you have a reference to page for discomfiting musings. “So it comes about that the extroverted subject visualizing extension and experiencing duration gives place to ...” (*Insight*, 537) to a subject who is self-luminous about an aggreformic finitude. Have you, supermolecular organism, taken the end of the book seriously? “To this end there have to be invented appropriate symbolic images of the relevant symbolic images of the relevant chemical and physical processes ...” (*Insight*, 489).

<sup>6</sup> *Insight* 722, lines 3, 10, 17, 22, 28, 32.

<sup>7</sup> This is the central question, Supermolecule, of my little red book, [\*The Future: Core Precepts of Supramolecular Method and Nanochemistry\*](#) (Axial Publishing, 2019). I would note that that central question is not distracted in the book by questions about the character of knowing, questions that distract from our present century’s crises of culture and survival. Here I would urge a focus on the meaning of the final footnote, 51 (pp. 112–3), of *The Future*. A good deal of discourse about *Insight*, and indeed *Method in Theology*, weaves unfruitfully around various conversions. Here I wish a focus on direct understanding, in continuity with the previous essays stand against *haute vulgarization*.

<sup>8</sup> Lonergan at 30, in the conclusion of his “Essay in Fundamental Sociology,” *Lonergan’s Early Economic Research*, edited with commentary by Michael Shute, University of Toronto Press, 2010, 43. I end with this strange shocking concluding question. Had you ever thought of *Insight* as the next millennium’s Tower-book of Common Prayer?