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Introduction

When the committee in charge of the Donald Mathers Memorial Lectures very generously invited me to give the 1976 lectures, for many reasons I was prompted to accept. First of all, the invitation was charmingly phrased^u and, ~~that~~ that, of course, ~~that~~ puts one in a good mood. But further it ~~it~~ reminded me of Donald Mathers^u himself, whom I met and ~~with~~ with whom I collaborated, very happily indeed, some nine years since at the International Theological Congress held ~~it~~ at Toronto in the centennial year of Canadian Confederation.

I was drawn to ~~Queen's~~ Queen's University, then, both by the committee's encouraging invitation and by my own memory of the man they wished to honor. But motives alone are not enough. One has to have something to talk about. ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Fortunately there came to hand an issue of ~~SR~~ Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses, in which appeared Charles Davis' paper on "The Reconvergence of Theology and Religious Studies;" moreover, the paper was preceded by a stimulating editorial, and followed by the comments and rejoinders of no less than five professors¹. [SR 4, 203 - 236].

Manifestly there did exist a topic of notable interest to those ~~it~~ engaged in Canadian schools of theology and/or religious studies. More to the point, I could see the possibility of my making some contribution to the issue. For I had recently published a book on Method in Theology. I had conceived that method along interdisciplinary lines.

It occurred to me that from an interdisciplinary viewpoint religious studies and theology would be regarded, not as simply identical, nor again as alternative and mutually exclusive options, but as at once distinct and complementary.

There is, I think, a certain plausibility to this approach. Religious studies and theologies are not identical but distinct. The theologies ~~are~~ ^{tend to be} as many and diverse as the religious convictions they express and represent. In contrast, religious studies envisage all religions and, so far from endeavoring to arbitrate between opposed religious convictions, commonly prefer to describe and understand their rituals and symbols, their origins and distributions, their history and influence.

But many, I feel, who will readily grant the distinctness, will hesitate before acknowledging complementarity. Indeed, I myself will agree with their hesitation if it arises from complementarity, not as an ideal for the future, but as an account of the common practise of the past. But precisely because my personal interest is method, I am inclined to see in the practise of the past the beginnings of a new practise for the future. In so far as religious studies have been shifting from detached description to understanding and even empathy, in so far as Friedrich Heiler has been able to view the history of religions¹ as a preparation for the cooperation of religions,² in so far as such cooperation has begun to be realized in ecumenical dialogue, in the clustering of diverse theological schools, in Christian ascetics frequenting Zen monasteries, in that measure there have emerged the signs of the times that invite a methodologist to explore the

foundations for an interdisciplinary approach to religious studies and theology.

My purpose, then, in these three lectures will not be to demonstrate what is necessary. It will not be to forecast what is probable. It will be to invite you to share in an exploration of a proposal. For issues in method are practical issues. They regard possible courses of action. They set forth objects of free choice. They have their pro's and their con's. Only with time do they advance in clarity and precision. Only with a lag do they begin to gain acceptance. Only when they are put in practise, when the fruits of practise are found to be good, does acceptance spread and performance begin to become common.

~~I have been attempting a general introduction and now must try briefly to be specific. The three lectures have the three titles:~~

- I. Religious Experience
- II. Religious Knowledge
- III. Religious Studies and/or Theology

~~In all three lectures the ultimate concern is the complementarity of religious studios and theology. But this theme is treated directly and explicitly in the third lecture.~~

~~The first on religious experience is concerned to work out those aspects of religious studios that favor Friedrich Heiler's view of the history of religions as a preparation for the cooperation of religions. The second on religious knowledge turns to those aspects of theology that underpin its capacity for developing an interdisciplinary viewpoint and so for extending contemporary ecumenical and universalist interests to include familiarity and interdependence with religious studios.~~

of gratitude: for the warm invitation sent me by the Committee
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for the Donald Mathers Memorial/~~LECTURES~~ for the many services
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and, above all, during my stay in Kingston; for the hospitality both
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with students of Queen's Theological College and of the School
of Religious Studies at Queen's University; for the generous
attention of an audience that was deterred neither by the
blustery snowstorm of March 2nd. nor by the ^{slush and} chilling rain of
March 4th.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND / OR THEOLOGY

The Donald Mathers Memorial Lectures for 1976

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**The Donald Mathers Memorial Lectureship is
a trust created by friends after the death
of the late Principal of Queen's Theological
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Second Lecture

Religious Knowledge

Three questions may be put regarding religious knowledge. First, there is a question of fact. Second, there is a question of philosophic possibility. Third, there is a practical question.

The question of fact is whether religious people know anything that non-religious people do not know. With the question of fact we are not concerned tonight and we shall not be concerned tomorrow. It is an enormously complicated and intricate issue that must be left to departments of religious studies and/or theology.

The question of philosophic possibility is our concern tonight. It asks what could be meant by affirming the validity or objectivity of religious knowledge. Our answer will be in terms of the inner conviction that men and women of any time or place may attain. To an account of such inner conviction there will be added a survey of the many ways in which such conviction is formulated as human cultures advance in self-understanding and self-knowledge.

The third practical question adverts to the conditions and requirements of setting up an academic discipline. It confronts the issue whether or not religious conviction at the present time and in the present state of scientific knowledge has to be regarded as at best a private affair. Alternatively it envisages the conditions under which the study of religion and/or theology might become an academic subject

of specialization and investigation. This third practical question will concern us in our third and final lecture tomorrow.

I have been blocking off our present topic by contrasting it with a question of fact and a question of academic appropriateness. The question of academic appropriateness we leave to tomorrow. The question of the factual validity of this or that religion we leave to religious authorities and academic experts with more than three lectures at their disposal for the communication of their views.

It remains that something be said about the connection between yesterday's topic and today's. Yesterday we began by noting a distinction between single elements that are merely an infra-structure within human experience and the larger context within which they may flourish, or intermittently recur, or tend to vanish. We went on to consider the cultivation of religious experience. There was considered the sacralization of man's world in preliterate societies when religious thought and affect penetrated the organization of man's apprehension of his world, the structure of his social arrangements, the content of his cultural and moral aspirations. There was contrasted the emergence of religious specialists, of ascetics and mystics, of seers and prophets, of priests and ministers; of their role as the religious leaven in human experience, of the formation of religious groups and the genesis of their rituals, their beliefs, their precepts. There was raised the question of authenticity in its twofold form: The authenticity of the individual in his appropriation of his religious tradition; and the authenticity of that tradition itself which becomes questionable when the failures of individuals become the rule rather than the exception, when vital reinterpretation is corrupted by rationalization, when heartfelt allegiance more and more

gives way to alienation. Finally, we raised the question of religious commitment, illustrated its nature from the precept of loving God above all found in both the book of Deuteronomy and the gospel according to Mark, but postponed the agonizing question that arises in such a time as our own, namely, how can one tell whether one's appropriation of religion is genuine or unauthentic and, more radically, how can one tell one is not appropriating a religious tradition that has become unauthentic.

To that question, yesterday postponed, we now turn. Our remarks will fall under two main headings. First, we shall attempt to describe the experience of authenticity in terms of self-transcendence. Secondly, we shall attempt to relate the inner conviction of authenticity, generated by self-transcendence, with the various notions of validity or objectivity entertained in successive stages of man's cultural development.

Self-transcendence

In various ways clinical psychologists have revealed in man's preconscious activity a preformation, as it were, and an orientation towards the self-transcendence that becomes increasingly more explicit as we envisage successive levels of consciousness.

Perhaps most revealing in this respect is a distinction drawn by the existential analyst, Ludwig Binswanger, between dreams of the night and dreams of the morning.¹ He conceives dreams of the night as largely influenced by somatic determinants such as the state of one's digestion. But in dreams of the morning the subject is anticipating his waking state;

however fragmentary the dream and however symbolic its content, he is anticipating his world and taking his own stance within it.

It remains that it is on awaking that we begin to be pushed or pulled beyond ourselves. Our felt needs and our multiform sensations, our memories of satisfactions and our anticipations of their repetition, engage us irrevocably in an ongoing interplay with our immediate environment.

A further level of self-transcendence emerges from the exercise of intelligence, the learning of language, the construction of a world mediated by meaning. Thereby man moves out of the habitat of an animal and into the universe that adds the distant to what is near, the past and future to what is present, the possible and the probable to what is actual. By unifying and relating, by constructing, by discovering seriations, by extrapolating and generalizing, there are gradually pieced together the remarks of parents and the lore of one's peers, the tales of travellers and the stories of great deeds, the revelations of literature, the achievements of science, the meditations of holy men and women, the reflections of philosophers and even perhaps theologians.

But the constructions of intelligence without the control of reasonableness yield not philosophy but myth, not science but magic, not astronomy but astrology, not chemistry but alchemy, not history but legend. Besides the questions of intelligence, such as why and what and how and what for and how often, there are further questions of reflection that arch the eyebrows and ask whether this or that really is so. Then the issue is, not more bright ideas, not further insights, but marshalling and

weighing the evidence and presenting the sufficient reason that makes doubting unreasonable just as its absence would make assenting merely rash. Only in virtue of this further level of consciousness can we set aside myth and magic and astrology and alchemy and legend and begin to live by philosophy and science and astronomy and chemistry and history. It is a decisive stage in the process of self-transcendence when we not merely think of the universe but begin to know what the universe really is. In other words, man always lives in his world for his being is a being-in-the-world. But it is far from always true that the world in which he is, is a world that really exists.

Beyond the data of experience, beyond questions for intelligence and the answers to them, beyond questions for reflection concerned with evidence, truth, certitude, reality, there are the questions for deliberation. By them we ask what is to be done and whether it is up to us to do it. By them is effected the transition from consciousness to conscience, from moral feelings to the exercise of responsibility, from the push of fear and the pull of desire to the decisions of human freedom. So it is that on the level of deliberating there emerges a still further dimension to self-transcendence. On previous levels there stood in the foreground the self-transcendence of coming to know. But deliberation confronts us with the challenge of self-direction, self-actualization, self-mastery, even self-sacrifice.

Already I have spoken of consciousness as a polyphony with different themes at different intensities sung simultaneously. Now I would draw attention to the different qualities, to what Gerard Manley Hopkins might call the different self-taste, on the successive levels. The spontaneous

vitality of our sensitivity, the shrewd intelligence of our inquiring, the detached rationality of our demand for evidence, the peace of a good conscience and the disquiet released by memory of words wrongly said or deeds wrongly done. Yet together they form a single stream, and we live its unity long before we have the leisure, the training, the patience to discern in our own lives the several strands.

The basic unity of consciousness reaches down into the unconscious. It is true that conflicts do arise, as the psychiatrists have insisted. But this truth must not be allowed to distract us from a far profounder and far more marvellous harmony. In man, the symbolic animal, there is an all but endless plasticity that permits the whole of our bodily reality to be fine-tuned to the beck and call of symbolic constellations. The agility of the acrobat, the endurance of the athlete, the fingers of the concert pianist, the tongue of those that speak and the ears of those that listen and the eyes of those that read, the formation of images that call forth insights, the recall of evidence that qualifies judgments, the empathy that sets our own feelings in resonance with the feelings of others — all bear convincing testimony that self-transcendence is the eagerly sought goal not only of our sensitivity, not only of our intelligent and rational knowing, not only of our freedom and responsibility, but first of all of our flesh and blood that through nerves and brain have come spontaneously to live out symbolic meanings and to carry out symbolic demands.

As self-transcendence is the meaning of each of the many levels of human reality, so too it is the meaning of the whole. But that meaning

of the whole, when realized concretely, is falling in love. So the experience of being-in-love is an experience of fulfillment, of complete integration, of a self-actualization that is an unbounded source of good will and good deeds. Such is the love of man and wife, of parents and children. Such is the loyalty of fellow citizens to their commonwealth. Such is the faith that has its fount in the love with which God floods our hearts through the Holy Spirit he has given us.

Love, loyalty, and faith can all be questioned. When they are authentic, readily, I feel, they are esteemed beyond price. But so easily they are unauthentic, whether from the failures of the individual or, tragically, from the individual's authentic appropriation of an unauthentic tradition.

Still, even if only in principle they can be authentic, then at least in principle they point to an answer to our question. For the man or woman intent on achieving self-transcendence is ever aware of short-comings, while those that are evading the issue of self-realization are kept busy concealing the fact from themselves. But our question has been the grounds of the inner conviction that informs religious living and the answer we have come up with is that self-transcendence is so radically and so completely the inner dynamism of human reality that one cannot but be aware when one is moving towards it and, on the other hand, one cannot but feel constrained to conceal the fact when one is evading the abiding imperative of what it is to be human.

Inner Conviction and Objective Truth

At first blush inner conviction and objective truth stand at opposite poles. Inner conviction is subjective. Objective truth is the truth about what is already-out-there-now for everyone to see and grasp and handle. It is public truth, and the publicity is spatial. Precisely because it is spatial, because in principle it can be tested by anyone, it is beyond doubt or question.

Still questions do arise. One can distinguish between the world of immediacy and the world mediated by meaning. The world of immediacy includes all the data of sense and all the data of consciousness. It consists of two parts: the totality of the data of sense is the sphere of objectivity that is spatial, public, in principle open to anyone's inspection; the totality of the data of consciousness is an aggregate of distinct and segregated subjectivities none of which can inspect what is going on in any of the others.

To be contrasted with this world of immediacy there is the world mediated by meaning. It consists of all that is to be known by asking questions and arriving at correct answers. It is a world unknown to infants but gradually introduced to children as they learn to speak, to boys and girls as they study in school, to students and scholars in centers of learning.

Man the symbolic animal lives in both of these worlds. As animal he lives in the world of immediacy and, like Macbeth, is liberated from his fantasies when he adverts to the sure and firm-set earth on which he treads. As symbolic, he both suffers from the fantasies and brings about

his liberation, for that consists not merely in the pressure on the soles of his treading feet but also in his certainty that the earth is firm-set and will not give way under his tread.

Still man the symbolic animal has long been a puzzle to man the philosopher. In so far as philosophers search for simplicity and coherence, they opt for one of the two worlds and attempt to get along without the other. Empiricists opt for the world of immediacy, and proceed to empty out from the world mediated by meaning everything that is not immediately given. Rationalists take their stand on demonstrative argument and, if they go along with the ancient Eleatics, will argue that there cannot be more than one being and that that one being cannot undergo any change.

But both of these are extreme positions. Empiricists usually find it convenient to take an occasional excursion into the world mediated by meaning, at the very least to expound and prove their own position. Rationalists can advert to the fact that questions are raised with respect to the data of experience and that answers are confirmed by pointing to data that show what they say. So they are led to supplement the apodictic power of demonstration with the intuitions of sense and/or consciousness. But both empiricist excursions into meaning and rationalist appeals to intuition are compromises. They renege on their initial premise of simplicity and coherence. They point the way to a new starting point that acknowledges the complexity of man the symbolic animal.

The so called 'new' starting point is, of course, very old. It goes back to Plato and Aristotle. It reached crises in the medieval controversy

between Augustinians and Aristotelians and in the later victory of modern science over Aristotelian constructions. It heads into a quite different starting point in the twentieth century in which the notion of method aspires to a foundational role.

In search, then, of the meaning of the phrase, objective truth, I propose to speak, first, of the limitations of the Aristotelian notion of science, secondly, of the shift in the sciences that conceives necessity, truth, certitude more as remote ideals than proximate achievements, thirdly, of the ascendancy of method and the partial eclipse of logic in contemporary investigations.

From Aristotle's Posterior Analytics to Newton's Principia

In his study of The Origins of Modern Science: 1300 - 1800, Herbert Butterfield has argued, convincingly I feel, that from the beginning of the fourteenth century onwards many elements of modern science were discovered by experimenters, but the experimenters themselves were unable to break loose from Aristotelian preconceptions and set up an appropriate conceptual framework of their own.

Now the achievement of Newton's Principia was precisely that it established such a framework and did so in a manner that stood its ground for the next two centuries. It remains, however, that the very title of Newton's masterpiece, Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica, bears an Aristotelian imprint. For the title suggests that Newton's mechanics is not an autonomous science standing in its own right but a set of mathematical principles for the department of philosophy called natural philosophy. In this respect the title is misleading. What Newton achieved was the vindication of mechanics as an autonomous science. But what he could not bring about was that total refashioning of the Aristotelian ideal

that became possible between two and three centuries later.

I must begin by noting that the Posterior Analytics never were normative for Aristotle's own philosophic thinking or scientific work. They represent one of his great discoveries. They express it under the grave limitations of the science of his day. It was their unhappy fate to provide glib talkers with ready answers and serious thinkers with baffling problems until the reality of scientific achievement brought to light a more solidly grounded notion of scientific knowledge.

With the first stage of that transformation we are now concerned. If its triumph was Newton, still its goal was not Aristotelian theoretical knowledge but the practical utility praised by Francis Bacon in his *Novum Organum*. Its conceptual framework took its inspiration not from Aristotle's metaphysics but from Galileo's program of mathematizing nature. Its field of inquiry was defined not by Aristotle's intellect, capable of fashioning and becoming all, but by the cautious rule of the Royal Society that excluded questions that neither observation nor experiment could solve.

In that movement there were two chief complaints against the Aristotelians. It was urged that they were concerned not with real things but with words. It was felt that the Aristotelian priority of metaphysics constituted an insuperable barrier to the development of experimental science. The validity of both complaints can, I think, be argued from a consideration of the Posterior Analytics.

In the second chapter of the first book of that work one is aware that Aristotle's basic concern is with causal necessity. We think we

understand, he notes, when we know the cause, know that it is the cause, and know that the effect cannot be other than it is.² But straightway this concern with things and their causes is transposed into syllogistic theory. We are told how knowledge of causal necessity is expressed in appropriate subjects and predicates, premises and conclusions, and thereby manifests its nature as science. We are told how one science can find its principles in the conclusions of another more general science. But when at the end of the second book it is asked how the initial premises are obtained on which the whole deductive structure has to rest, we are told about a rout followed by a rally. The line breaks. Sauve qui peut! But as the fleeing line scatters in every direction, somewhere someone will turn and make a stand. Another will join him, and then another. The rally begins. The pursuing enemy now is scattered. Victory may be snatched from the jaws of defeat.³ I think this military analogy is sound enough. For it represents the chance accumulation of clues that can combine into a discovery. But it is not at all clear that a necessary truth will be discovered and not a mere hypothesis, a mere possibility that has to be verified if it is to merit the name not of truth but of probability. If the only premises the Posterior Analytics can provide are just hypotheses, verifiable possibilities, then we have many words about causal necessity but no knowledge of the reality.

Further, the syllogistic approach distinguished philosophy and science simply as the more and the less general. It followed that together they formed a seamless robe with the basic terms and basic relations of philosophy ramifying through the less general fields and

robbing them of their autonomy. But experimental science has to be autonomous. For experiment yields correlations. Correlations consist in relations between terms. The terms and relations determined experimentally were the mass-velocities and mass-accelerations of Newton's mechanics; they were to be the electric and magnetic field vectors of Maxwell's equations; and the corpus Aristotelicum knew nothing about them.

From Logic to Method

The Aristotelian hegemony had been broken, but Aristotelian notions not directly challenged by the new science lived on in quiet possession of the field of common assumptions. Among them was the view that science consisted in true and certain knowledge of causal necessity. Indeed, Newton's deduction of the orbits of the moon and of the planets was regarded as a stunning confirmation of that view. Laplace's proof that a planetary system periodically returned to an initial situation went hand and hand with his assurance that, in principle, any situation in the universe could be deduced from any other earlier or later situation. Right into the twentieth century it was common to speak of the necessary laws of nature and even of the iron laws of economics. Even in our own day there have been loud complaints that Thomas Kuhn's work on The Structure of Scientific Revolutions was an advocacy of irrationalism.⁴

But the logic of the matter is simple. Verification is not proof. For verification is an affirmation of what follows from scientific hypothesis, theory, system. But to affirm the consequent of an hypothesis, settles

nothing about the truth of the antecedent from which the consequent follows. A logical conclusion is to be had only when the attempt to verify turns up contrary instances; for then one denies the consequent and from that denial there follows the denial of the antecedent.

Accordingly, the principles and laws of an empirical science, no matter how frequently they are verified, may be esteemed ever more probable but may not be considered to be definitively established.

Moreover, the progress of modern science points in the same direction. Newton was acclaimed because he was considered to have done for mechanics what Euclid had done for geometry. But in the nineteenth century it became clear that Euclidean geometry could no longer be considered the one and only possible geometry. In the twentieth the repeated verification of Einstein's special relativity made it probable that a non-Euclidean geometry was the appropriate conceptualization in physics.

Similarly, Laplace's determinism was found to have shaky foundations. For Heisenberg's relations of indeterminacy (or uncertainty) reveal a knowledge that is not less but greater than the knowledge offered by classical laws. Formerly, indeed, probability was thought to be no more than a cloak for our ignorance. But now the tables are turned. For classical laws hold only under the blanket proviso, other things being equal. So it is that classical predictions can be notably mistaken because they fail to foresee the interference of some alien factor. But further the verification of classical laws is never exact: no more is demanded than that actual measurements fall within the limits set by a theory of

probable error of observation. In brief, classical theory consists of two parts: there is the classical law, and it sets an ideal norm from which actual measurements do not diverge systematically; there is the theory of measurement and it sets the limits within which errors of observation may be considered probable. But as Patrick Heelan has pointed out, the same two aspects are contained within the single formalism proposed by quantum mechanics. For the single formalism admits two interpretations: one interpretation yields an ideal norm from which actual measurements do not diverge systematically; the other interpretation of the same formalism informs us of the distribution of the divergence from the norm.⁵

But quantum mechanics is not some limiting case or isolated instance. Thermodynamics had already drawn upon statistical theory. Darwinian thought easily moved from chance variations to probabilities of emergence and from the survival of the fittest to probabilities of survival. A statistical view of the emergence, distribution, and survival of the forms of plant and animal life naturally suggests a similar approach in the investigation of the emergence and distribution of the chemical elements and compounds. Finally, what seems true of nature seems also to hold for man's knowledge of nature: as natural forms evolve in accord with schedules of probabilities, so too man's grasp of natural forms and of their evolution develops in accord with the probabilities of new discoveries.

There has occurred, then, a transition from logic to method. It has occurred in the field of natural science. It does not, by any means, involve an elimination of logic: for it still is logic that cares for the clarity of terms, the coherence of propositions, the rigor of inferences. But it does involve a shift in the significance of logic. For Aristotle

in his Posterior Analytics made his demonstrative syllogism the central piece in his construction both of the nature of science and of the relations between sciences. That construction has turned out to be a procrustean bed on which science cannot lie. So far from providing the key to the whole nature of science, logic has to be content with the task of promoting clarity, coherence, and rigor in the formulation and application of hypotheses and theories. Further, while it is essential that this task be properly performed, still the significance of that performance is measured not by logic itself but by method. For an empirical science is not confined to logical operations with respect to terms, propositions, inferences. It includes observation, description, the formulation of problems, discovery, processes of experimentation, verification, revision. Within that larger whole logic ensures the clarity of terms, the coherence of propositions, the rigor of inferences. And the more successfully it performs that task, the more readily will there come to light not the definitive immutability but the defects of current views and the need to seek more probable opinions.

Generalized Empirical Method

We were dissatisfied with mere inner conviction and so we asked whether it bore any relation to objective truth. We have been pondering successive stages in the liquidation of the brave view presented in Aristotle's Posterior Analytics. We have come up with a science that yields, not objective truth, but the best available opinion of the day.

But if science does not give us objective truth, where are we to go? At this point each man has to become his own philosopher, and so I have no more to offer than my own solution to the issue. I have called it a generalized empirical method.⁶

Generalized empirical method is a method. It is a normative pattern of related and recurrent operations that yield ongoing and cumulative results. It regards operations, and so it is not just a list of materials to be combined in a cake or a medicine. It regards recurrent operations, and so the same method can be employed over and over again. It yields ongoing and cumulative results, and so it differs from the New Method Laundry which keeps on repeating the same result whenever it is used. Such cumulative results set a standard, and because the standard is met, the pattern of related operations is normative: it is the right way to do the job.⁷

Generalized empirical method envisages all data. The natural sciences confine themselves to the data of sense. Hermeneutic and historical studies turn mainly to data that are expressions of meaning. Clinical psychology finds in meanings the symptoms of conflicts between conscious and preconscious or unconscious activities. Generalized empirical method operates on a combination of both the data of sense and the data of consciousness: it does not treat of objects without taking into account the corresponding operations of the subject; it does not treat of the subject's operations without taking into account the corresponding objects.⁸

As generalized empirical method generalizes the notion of data to include the data of consciousness, so too it generalizes the notion of method. It wants to go behind the diversity that separates the experimental method of the natural sciences and the quite diverse procedures of hermeneutics and of history. It would discover their common core and thereby prepare the way for their harmonious combination in human studies. From various viewpoints man has been named the logical animal, the symbolic animal, the self-completing animal. But in each of these definitions man

is regarded as an animal, and so he is an object for the natural sciences. At the same time, he is regarded as logical or symbolic or self-completing; he lives his life in a world mediated by meaning; and so he is a proper object for hermeneutic and historical studies. What then is the common core of related and recurrent operations that may be discerned both in natural science and in human studies.

In the natural sciences the key event is discovery. Whether we recall Archimedes' Eureka or the legend of Newton associating a falling apple with a falling moon, whether we turn from epoch-making discoveries to the larger field of less surprising but no less essential contributions, we ever find ourselves at the point where natural science has made a quantum leap. Something new has emerged. Again, in hermeneutics the key event is understanding: for the theorist of hermeneutics was Schleiermacher, and he got beyond the various rules-of-thumb of classical scholars and biblical exegetes by expounding a discipline based on the avoidance of misunderstanding and thereby the avoidance of misinterpretation. In history, again, the key operation is understanding, and so it was that Johann Gustav Droysen extended the procedures of hermeneutics to the whole of history by observing that not only individuals but also families, peoples, states, religions express themselves. Nor is understanding alien to common sense. It is the everyday experience of seeing what you mean, getting the point, catching on, seeing how things hang together. Indeed, when we esteem people for their intelligence, it is because of the ease and frequency with which they understand; and when we suspect that they may be a bit retarded, it is because they understand only rarely and then slowly.

However, understanding is only one of the many components that have

to be combined to constitute an instance of human knowledge. It presupposes data, whether given to sense or given in consciousness: for our understanding always is an insight, a grasp of intelligible unity or intelligible relationship and a grasp of unity presupposes the presentation of what needs unification, as a grasp of intelligible relationship presupposes the presentation of what can be related. Again, such insight or grasp presupposes inquiry: that search, hunt, chase for the way to piece together the merely given into an intelligible unity or innerly related whole. Nor is it enough to discover the solution. One also must express it adequately. Otherwise one will have had the mere experience of the occurrence of a bright idea, but one will not have the power to recall it, use it, apply it. There is a further point to such expression whether in word or deed. Insights are a dime a dozen. For the most part they occur, not with respect to data in all their complexity, but with respect to merely schematic images. Dozens of such images are needed to approximate to what actually is given, and so it is that the expression of insight has to be followed by a very cool and detached process of reflection that marshals the relevant evidence and submits it to appropriate tests before laying claim to any discovery or invention.

Such in briefest outline is the normative pattern of recurrent and related operations that yield ongoing and cumulative results in natural science, in hermeneutics, in history, in common sense. It will be noted that the operations involved occur consciously: in dreamless sleep one does not experience or inquire or understand or formulate or reflect or check or pass judgement. Not only are the operations conscious. There also is a dynamism that moves one along from one operation to the next. There is the spontaneity of sense. There is the intelligence with which

we inquire in order to understand and, once we have understood, there is the intelligence with which we formulate what we have grasped. There is the reasonableness with which we reflect on our formulations, check them out, pronounce in the light of the evidence we have brought to light. Such spontaneity, intelligence, reasonableness are themselves conscious. So it is that both the operations and the relations that unite them in a normative pattern are given in consciousness.

But their givenness, of itself, is only infra-structure. It is not yet human knowledge but only one component within an item of knowledge of which the remainder as yet is only potential. To make that remainder actual one has first to attend to one's attending, note how spontaneously it fixes upon what gives delight, promises pleasure, threatens danger, recall the long years at school when teachers labored to sublimate our animal spirits and harness them to different, allegedly higher pursuits, so that now without too much pain one can sit through a whole lecture and even listen to most of it. Secondly, one has to advert to one's own intelligence, its awareness when one is failing to understand, its dissatisfaction with explanations that do not quite explain, its puzzled search for the further question that would clear the matter up, its joy when a solution comes to light, its care to find the exact expression to convey precisely what understanding has grasped. In brief, attending to one's own intelligence brings to light a primitive and basic meaning of the word, normative, for the intelligence in each of us prompts us to seek understanding, to be dissatisfied with a mere glimmer, to keep probing for an ever fuller grasp, to pin down in accurate expression just what we so far have attained. In similar fashion, thirdly, attending to one's own reasonableness reveals an equally primitive and basic but complementary type of normativeness. Ideas are fine, but no matter how bright, they are not enough. The practical man wants to know

whether they will work. The theoretical man will wonder whether they are true: he will test their inner coherence, compare them with what he otherwise considers established, work out their implications, devise experiments to see whether the implications are verifiable, and if no flaw can be found, he will grant, not that they are true, but only that they seem probable.

Our reasonableness demands sufficient evidence, marshals and weighs all it can find, is bound to assent when evidence is sufficient, and may not assent when it is insufficient. Finally, there is the normativeness of our deliberations. Between necessity and impossibility lies the realm of freedom and responsibility. Because we are free, we also are responsible, and in our responsibility we may discern another primitive and basic instance of normativeness. It is, so to speak, the reasonableness of action. Just as we cannot be reasonable and pass judgment beyond or against the evidence, so too we cannot be responsible without adverting to what is right and what is wrong, without enjoying the peace of a good conscience when we choose what is right, without suffering the disquiet of an unhappy conscience when we choose what is wrong.

It is time to conclude. We have been asking whether there is any connection between inner conviction and objective truth. By inner conviction we have meant not passion, not stubbornness, not wilful blindness, but the very opposite; we have meant the fruit of self-transcendence, of being attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible; in brief, of being ruled by the inner norms that constitute the exigences for authenticity in the human person. But for objectivity we have distinguished two interpretations. There is the objectivity of the world of immediacy, of the already-out-there-now, of

the earth that is firm-set only in the sense that at each moment it has happened to resist my treading feet and bear my weight. But there also is the objectivity of the world mediated by meaning; and that objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity, of being attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible.

In my opinion, then, inner conviction is the conviction that the norms of attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility have been satisfied. And satisfying those norms is the highroad to the objectivity to be attained in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by values.

Notes

- 1) Ludwig Binswanger, Le rêve et l'existence. Introduction et notes de Michel Foucault. Desclée 1954.
- 2) Aristotle, Posterior Analytics I, 2 71^b9 ff.
- 3) Ibid., II, 19 100^a9 ff.
- 4) Imre Latakos & Alan Musgrave, Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge, Cambridge University Press 1970.
- 5) Patrick Heelan, Quantum Mechanics and Objectivity. A Study of the Physical Philosophy of Werner Heisenberg. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965, pp. 53 f., 38.
- 6) Bernard Lonergan, Insight, London: Longmans (now Darton, Longman & Todd), and New York: Philosophical Library, 1957, pp. 243 f. and cf. p 72.
- 7) See the first chapter in B. Lonergan, Method in Theology, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, and New York: Herder and Herder (now Seabury Press), 1972.
- 8) Distinguish three meanings of the term, transcendental: the most general and all-pervasive concepts, namely, ens, unum, verum, bonum, of the Scholastics; the Kantian conditions of the possibility of knowing an object a priori; Husserl's intentionality analysis in which noësis and noëma, act and object, are correlative.

① The Ongoing Genesis of Methods

There is no need for me to tell you that today the word, theology, denotes not some well-defined form of thought but rather an aggregate of quite different and often quite nebulous forms. In contrast, religious studies seems to present a more determinate and uniform front, though even there, one may feel, there exist stirrings and strivings that may be all the more significant because they are mainly potential.

If this estimate of the present situation is correct, then manifestly there can be no simple answer to the question before us. One might compare or contrast some particular type of theology with some particular direction in religious studies. But when both terms are left in their full generality, then the issue has to shift from statics to dynamics.

Such a shift is not just a vague dodge. For a quite static view of the nature of the sciences and of their relations to one another can be had from Aristotelian analysis in terms of material and formal objects. In contrast, a quite dynamic view of the same matter is had when sciences are conceived in terms of method and field, and methods are not fixed once for all but keep developing, differentiating, regrouping as the exigences of advance may demand.

It is into the ongoing genesis of methods that we must plunge, for it is precisely this process that explains both the disarray of contemporary theologies and the less apparent though perhaps not less significant stirrings in religious studies.

Accordingly we begin from the origin of this dynamic of methods in the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Next, we shall take issue with the danger or suspicion of relativism by indicating the foundations on which the succession of methods may be

based. Thirdly, we shall argue that increasing specialization entails increasing limitation and that increasing limitation serves to define the possibility and encourage the actuality of additional, distinct, even disparate methods. Fourthly, it will appear that the more human studies turn away from abstract universals and attend to concrete human beings, the more evident it becomes that the scientific age of innocence has come to an end: human authenticity can no longer be taken for granted. Fifthly, we ask whether there is any method that can deal with the unauthentic as well as the authentic, with the irrational as well as the rational; and some such approach we designate by the Greek name, praxis. Finally, in the light of praxis, we attempt to relate religion, theology, and religious studies, where these three are considered not as static abstractions but as the dynamic entities they partly are and partly can be.

Learning: Modern Style

In the introduction to his account of The Origins of Modern Science Herbert Butterfield noted that the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries overturned the authority in science not only of the middle ages but also of the ancient world. He concluded that that revolution "outshines everything since the rise of Christianity and reduces the Renaissance and Reformation to the rank of mere episodes, mere internal displacements, within the system of medieval Christendom."¹

Now I have already had occasion to point out certain elements in that revolution. It aimed at utility, and so it was concerned with everyday materials, their manipulation, their mastery, through a process of trial and error. It demanded autonomy: its basic terms and relations were to be mathematical in their origins and experimental in their justification.

It was concerned not with words but with reality and so it excluded questions that could not be resolved by an appeal to observation or experiment. On all three counts it ran counter to the ideal set forth in Aristotle's Posterior Analytics. Despite an initial concern with understanding things, that work devoted its efforts to the construction of a theory of science out of the terms, relations, inferences constitutive of the demonstrative syllogism. Instead of developing science by combining mathematical notions with their experimental verification, the Posterior Analytics conceived philosophy and science as a single, logically interlocking unity, in which philosophy was to provide the sciences with their basic terms and principles. Instead of directing men's minds to practical results, Aristotle held that science was concerned with necessary truth, that what can be changed is not the necessary but the contingent, and so the fruit of science can be no more than the contemplation of the eternal truths it brought to light.²

Such was modern science at its origins. But it continued to develop and thereby to reveal further differences. Notable among these was its departure from an earlier individualistic view of science. Aristotle's sets of syllogisms were highly compact affairs, and so he had no difficulty in thinking of science as an acquired habit tucked away in the minds of individuals. Cartesian thought took its stand on an initial universal doubt and proceeded as a search for ideas so clear and distinct as to beget certitude. The program of the eighteenth century Enlightenment was to appeal to reason, proclaim science, and purge people's minds of the prejudices inflicted upon them by tradition.

But if such individualism still lives in the assumptions of many in the twentieth century, the carrier of a science today is a social group.

No individual knows the whole of modern mathematics, or the whole of physics, or the whole of chemistry, or the whole of biology. Such knowledge is possessed not by an individual but by the members of a group. They have passed successfully through the initiation ritual of a Ph.D. They are familiar with a technical language which they alone speak and understand. They know the correct procedures to be followed in their investigations and the ideals that should govern their thinking. They are master of the novel conceptual systems introduced by the pioneers and the renovators of their field. They belong to the appropriate associations, attend the congresses, read the journals, consult the libraries, contribute to the publications, and design the tools and equipment they may need. A modern science is a specialization.³ The scientists are specialists. Their function is to keep their tradition alive and flourishing.

Hans-Georg Gadamer startled many when in his great book, Wahrheit und Methode, first published in 1960, he contended that to interpret a literature one had to inherit or find one's way into a literary tradition. But what holds for the humanities, also holds for the sciences. If Butterfield is right in thinking modern science the most striking event since the beginning of Christianity, the eighteenth century was right in rejecting an earlier tradition only because it launched a new tradition.

Initially, of course, the new tradition was not yet a tradition. Nor was it easy for it later on to advert to its traditional character. For there lurked in men's minds the Aristotelian assumption that science was clear and certain knowledge of causal necessity. What could be more clear and certain than the verified deduction of the orbits of the moon and of Mars? What could be more necessary than conclusions that were demonstrated? Only when Euclid and Newton and Maxwell bowed to Riemann and Einstein and

Heisenberg, did it become obvious that earlier mistakes could not be knowledge of necessity and that, like earlier views, the new systems were not deductions from necessary truths but verified conclusions from hypothetical theories.

Aristotle, then, was quite right in holding that a science that consisted in the grasp of necessary truth had to be purely theoretical and could not be practical. But from the start modern science intended to be practical. Today there are many steps along the way from basic research to pure science, from pure science to applied, from applied to technology, from technology to engineering. But the multiplicity does not obscure the underlying unity. For us good theory is practical, and good practise is grounded in sound theory. Where the Aristotelian placed his reliance on first principles he considered necessary, the modern scientist places his reliance ultimately not on his basic laws and principles but on his method. It was the method that brought forth the laws and principles in the first place, and it will be the method that revises them if and when the time for revision comes.

Foundations

So we are brought up against a problem of foundations. If method can revise the principles and laws on which a successful science has been constructed, so too, it would seem, methods themselves are open to correction and revision: If methods too can be revised, then is not the whole of science just a vast structure resting upon sand?

Here, I believe, there is room for a valid distinction. There are the particular methods adapted to the needs and opportunities of particular fields. As such needs and opportunities come to light, methods themselves undergo further adaptation. They become more specialized. They develop

new techniques and refine old ones. They incorporate fresh stratagems, models, mappings, seriations. But all such changes and modifications come under a higher law. As the revisions of existing theories, so too the developments of existing methods are just fresh instances of attending to the data, grasping their intelligibility, formulating the content of the new insights, and checking as thoroughly as possible their validity. In brief, underpinning special methods there is what I have named generalized empirical method. Its operations are the operations we can verify each in his own consciousness. And the normative pattern that relates these operations to one another is the conscious dynamism of sensitive spontaneity, of intelligence raising questions and demanding satisfactory answers, of reasonableness insisting on sufficient evidence before it can assent yet compelled to assent when sufficient evidence is forthcoming, of conscience presiding over all and revealing to the subject his authenticity or his unauthenticity as he observes or violates the immanent norms of his own sensitivity, his own intelligence, his own reasonableness, his own freedom and responsibility.

Now it will be felt that this appeal to generalized empirical method really is an appeal to individual subjectivity and that individual subjectivity, so far from offering a secure foundation, gives rise to serious doubts and grave uneasiness.

But once more a distinction must be drawn. There is the subject correlative to the world of immediacy, and the subject correlative to the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value. The world of immediacy is very much like Hume's world in which there is discerned neither permanence nor causality nor necessity. The subject correlative to the world of immediacy is the subject locked up in his immediate experience of the data of sense and of the data of consciousness. His

knowledge is just infra-structure, and his actions flow directly from appetites. His capacity to communicate is uninformed by intelligence, unguided by reason, uncontrolled by responsibility.

Now if individual subjectivity is understood to mean the subject as correlative to the world of immediacy, then I heartily agree that individual subjectivity, so far from offering a secure foundation, gives rise to serious doubts and well-founded uneasiness.

However, I must point out that generalized empirical method appeals not to the individual subjectivity that is correlative to the world of immediacy but to the individual subjectivity that is correlative to the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value.

I must add that the subject in this sense, so far from being locked up in immediate experience of the data of sense and the data of consciousness, moves in a universe with which he is acquainted—according to the measure of his personal development—by common sense, by science, by human studies, by philosophy, perhaps even by theology.

Further I would urge that while the experience of the subject correlative to the world of immediacy is a purely private affair, privacy in the world mediated by meaning has to be contrived and defended and even then it is limited. In that world one is taught by others and, for the most part, what they know they have learnt from others, in an ongoing process that stretches back over millennia. In that world one not merely experiences but understands and manifests one's understanding in one's words and deeds, thereby to invite the approval or correction of one's betters, the admiration or the ridicule of one's peers. Common sense is not an individual idiosyncrasy. Scientific discoveries that are not published, scrutinized, accepted, remain unknown and without issue.

Exegetes and historians may secure the privacy of their findings by consigning them to the flames, but only if their findings are published, only if they are read, only if they attain the recognition of the community of specialists in their field, only then do they begin to exert some influence on subsequent exegetical or historical investigation or teaching.

However, while I believe that attention, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility take individuals out of the isolation and privacy of the experiential infra-structure, I must not be thought to suggest that this liberation towards truth, reality, objectivity, excellence is automatic or fool-proof. It is not. Man is called to authenticity. But man attains authenticity only by unfailing fidelity to the exigences of his intelligence, his reasonableness, his conscience. What is far more grave, is that the short-comings of individuals can become the accepted practise of the group; the accepted practise of the group can become the tradition accepted in good faith by succeeding generations; the evil can spread to debase and corrupt that is most vulnerable while it prostitutes to unworthy ends what otherwise is sound and sane. Then the authentic, if any have survived, are alienated from their society and their culture. The courageous look about for remedies but find none that even appear equal to the task. The average man, who knows he was not born to be a hero, decides he has no choice but to go along with things as they are. And the more numerous the people who concur with that decision, the less is the hope of recovery from unauthenticity, the greater is the risk of the disintegration and the decay of a civilization.

Since disintegration and decay are not private events, even generalized empirical method is experimental. But the experiment is

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conducted not by any individual, not by any generation, but by the historical process itself.

From Method to Methods

A modern science is characterized more by its method than by its field, for the field tends to expand to include every area in which the method can be applied successfully.

At the same time, the more a method is developed, the more it becomes specialized. In certain areas its success is conspicuous, in others success is modest and even rare. In such cases probably a different development of method is needed, and so where there had been one more general method, now there are two more specialized methods. In this fashion the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a general methodical breakthrough that since has divided and subdivided into all the specialized branches of natural science.

It remains however that not all empirical methods emerge as differentiations within the basic procedures the natural sciences. The clear-cut instance of this leap to another genre is provided by historical studies as they developed in Germany in the nineteenth century. The background that gave this movement its sweep and profundity is to be traced to the French Enlightenment and the the post-Kantian idealists. But if it took over the Enlightenment's dedication to human progress, it abhorred its abstract thinking. If it agreed with Hegel's insistence on concreteness and his concern with world history, it repudiated his a priori methods.

It was this movement that launched the study of the history of religions, and it will not be out of place to indicate its basic ideas as they were unfolded by Friedrich Wolf, Friedrich Schleiermacher,

August Boeckh, Johann Gustav Droysen, and Wilhelm Dilthey.⁴

Friedrich Wolf, when still a student, demanded the creation of a new faculty, philology. He conceived it as a philosophico-historical study of human nature as that nature was exhibited in antiquity. To this end in his own teaching later on at Halle he brought together in his courses a whole series of distinct disciplines: literature, antiquities, geography, art, numismatics; and he informed them with the critical spirit that produced his Prolegomena to Homer.

Friedrich Schleiermacher found the hermeneutics of his day to be little more than two sets of rules-of-thumb: those followed by biblical exegetes and those employed by classical scholars. He reconceived it as a general art of avoiding misunderstanding and misapprehension. By that negative formulation he none the less gave to understanding, Verstehen, its basic role in the theoretical development of historical studies.

August Boeckh was a pupil of both Wolf and Schleiermacher. He developed their ideas in composing an Encyclopedia and Methodology of the Philological Sciences. In it philology was conceived in the grand manner, a manner at once precise, penetrating, and comprehensive. In a definition to which presently we shall recur, philology was to be the interpretative reconstruction of the constructions of the human spirit.

Johann Gustav Droysen generalized the notion of expression. Not only individuals express themselves in their speech and writings. There is a sense in which families, peoples, states, religions may be said to express themselves. Accordingly, history may be conceived as the interpretation of such group expression, and Boeckh's ideas on philology may be applied to the writing of history.

Wilhelm Dilthey brought the matter to its fine point. He contended that Das Leben selbst legt sich aus. Human living is itself its own interpretation. In other words, the expression, which the exegete or the historian interprets, is itself the product of understanding, namely, the understanding people have of themselves, their situation, their role, the human condition.

At once it follows that there is a profound difference between natural science and historical study. Both the scientist and the historian would understand: the scientist would understand nature; the historian would understand man. But when the scientist understands nature, he is not grasping nature's understanding of itself; for though nature is intelligible, it is not intelligent. But when the historian understands man, his understanding is a recapturing of man's understanding of himself. This recapturing is interpretation. It differs from the understanding that it recaptures, for it makes thematic, puts in words, an understanding that was not thematized but lived. Yet in another fashion it corresponds to what it recaptures; for it envisages an earlier situation and recounts how an individual or group understood that situation and revealed themselves by their understanding of it.

In Dilthey we have an echo of Vico's claim that it is human affairs that men best understand, for human affairs are the product of human understanding. Again, in Dilthey we have an anticipation of R. G. Collingwood's view that historical knowledge is a reenactment of the past. Finally, we have only to shift our gaze from the interpreter to the persons under scrutiny, to arrive at a phenomenological ontology. The endless variety exhibited in human living has its root in the endless variety of the ways in which people understand themselves, their situation, and the human

condition. Such understanding commonly is of the type that spontaneously is generated and spontaneously communicated, the type that may be named commonsense. It is constitutive of the basic department of human knowledge, the department expressed in ordinary language. Like ordinary language it varies from place to place and from time to time. It enters into the intelligible form man communicates to the products of his ingenuity and his skill. It is part and parcel of human conduct. It is constitutive of the cognitional and the moral reality that makes man the "symbolic animal" of the historians and the "self-completing animal" of the sociologists.

Let us now revert to August Boeckh's definition of philology as the interpretative reconstruction of the constructions of the human spirit. The constructions of the human spirit are man and his world: for his world is a world mediated by meaning and motivated by value; and it is the human spirit that constructs the meanings and responds to the motivating values. But what man has constructed man can reconstruct. What man has responded to in thought and word and deed, he can respond to once more if only in thought and word and feeling. Such reconstructing and such responding-to-once-more are the interpretations of the scholar and the narratives of the historian.

We may conclude this section by noting that historical studies, so conceived, have all the marks of a distinct specialization. Like natural science history is empirical, but where the sciences seek universal principles, laws, structures, seriations, history would understand particular words, deeds, situations, movements. Where the several sciences each construct their own technical languages, historians as an ongoing group are confronted with the task of deciphering and learning all the languages of mankind whether still living or though long since dead.

Where the sciences come to know parts or aspects of the universe that common sense never would discover, historians enlarge their own common sense to the point where it encapsulates something of the common sense of other places and times. Lastly, as other specializations, so the study of history leads to the formation of a professional group that develops its own proper procedures and traditions, enforces an initiation ritual of doctoral studies, meets in its own annual congresses, and stocks special libraries with its reference works, surveys, journals, and monographs.

Dialectic

As long as human studies copy the methods of the natural sciences, they obtain assured results, but they minimize or omit the human world mediated by meaning and motivated by value. On the other hand, when human studies attempt to deal bravely and boldly with the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value, they find themselves involved in philosophic, ethical, and religious issues. Philosophies oscillate between a world of immediacy and a world mediated by meaning. Individuals and groups esteem values, but they tend to maximize satisfactions, and they are ever tempted to the endless rationalizations that make their satisfactions into necessary incidents in the pursuit of values. Religions are many. They may differ very slightly, and they may diverge to the point of disparateness. And contradicting their multiplicity is the secularist rejection of all religion.

Such differences are radical. Philosophic differences affect the very meaning of meaning. Ethical differences affect all evaluations. Religious differences modify the meaning and value of one's world.

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Such differences become traditional. None of us is an Adam living at the origin of human affairs, becoming all that he is by his own decisions, and learning all that he knows by personal experience, personal insight, personal discernment. We are products of a process that in its several aspects is named socialization, acculturation, education. By that process there is formed our initial mind-set, world view, blik, horizon. On that basis and within its limitations we slowly begin to become our own masters, think for ourselves, make our own decisions, exercise our own freedom and responsibility.

Such radical and traditional differences put their stamp not only on the writings to be interpreted and the events to be narrated but also upon the mind-set, world view, horizon of exegetes and historians. In utopia, no doubt, everyone in all his words and deeds would be operating with the authenticity generated by meeting the exigences of intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility. But our world is not utopia. Even if anyone manages to be perfectly authentic in all his own personal performance, still he cannot but carry within himself the ballast of his tradition. And down the millennia in which that tradition developed, one can hardly exclude the possibility that unauthenticity entered in and remained to ferment the mass through ages to come.

So we come to the end of the age of innocence, the age that assumed that human authenticity could be taken for granted. I do not mean that human wickedness was denied. But it was felt it could be evaded. Truth was supposed to consist in the necessary conclusions deduced from self-evident principles. Or it was thought that reality was already out there now, and that objectivity was the simple matter of taking a good look, seeing all that was there, and not seeing what was not there. Or

there was admitted the real existence of a critical problem, but it was felt that a sound critical philosophy--such as Kant's or Comte's or some other--would solve it once for all.

The end of the age of innocence means that authenticity is never to be taken for granted. Mathematicians had to generalize their notion of number to include irrational and imaginary numbers. Physicists had to develop quantum theory because instruments of observation modified the data they were to observe. In similar fashion human studies have to cope with the complexity that recognizes both (1) that the data may be a mixed product of authenticity and of unauthenticity and (2) that the very investigation of the data may be affected by the personal or inherited unauthenticity of the investigators.

The objective aspect of the problem has come to light in Paul Ricoeur's distinction between a hermeneutic of recovery, that brings to light what is true and good, and a hermeneutic of suspicion, that joins Marx in impugning the rich, or Nietzsche in reviling the humble, or Freud in finding consciousness itself an unreliable witness to our motives. Again, it may be illustrated in my own account of "The Origins of Christian Realism," that distinguished the christological and trinitarian doctrines of Tertullian, Origen, and Athanasius on the basis of a philosophic dialectic. Tertullian under Stoic influence was oriented toward a world of immediacy. Origen under Middle Platonist influence was in a world mediated by meaning, where however meaning was the meaning of ideas. Athanasius finally was in the world mediated by meaning, where the meaning was the truth of the Christian kerygma.⁵

As dialectical analysis can be applied to problems of interpretation, so too it can be applied to historical issues; and the issues may be

either such general issues as progress, decline, recovery, or the very specific issues that arise when historians are in radical disagreement.

On the general issue progress is analyzed as a cyclic and cumulative process. A situation gives rise to an insight. The insight generates policies, projects, plans, courses of action. The courses of action produce a new and improved situation. The new and improved situation gives rise to further insights, and so the cycle recommences.

Similarly, decline is cyclic and cumulative, but now unauthenticity distorts what authenticity would have improved. The policies, projects, plans, courses of action that come from creative insight into the existing situation have the misfortune of running counter not merely to vested interests but to any and every form of human unauthenticity. Doubts are raised, objections formulated, suspicions insinuated, compromises imposed. Policies, projects, plans, courses of action are modified to make the new situation not a progressive product of human authenticity but a mixed product partly of human authenticity and partly of human obtuseness, unreasonableness, irresponsibility. As this process continues, the objective situation will become to an ever greater extent an intractable problem. The only way to understand it correctly will be to acknowledge its source in human waywardness. The only way to deal with it will be to admonish the wayward. But such sophistication may be lacking, and then one can expect not repentance but rationalization. So decline continues unabashed. The intractable problem keeps growing. Rationalizations multiply, accumulate, are linked together into a stately system of thought that is praised by all who forget the adage: Whom the gods would destroy, they first make blind.

Can a people, a civilization, recover from such decline? To my mind the only solution is religious. What will sweep away the rationalizations? More reasoning will hardly do it effectively, for it will be suspected of being

just so much more rationalizing. And when reasoning is ineffective, what is left but faith? What will smash the determinisms—economic, social, cultural, psychological—that egoism has constructed and exploited? What can be offered but the hoping beyond hope that religion inspires? When finally the human situation seethes with alienation, bitterness, resentment, recrimination, hatred, mounting violence, what can retributive justice bring about but a duplication of the evils that already exist? Then what is needed is not retributive justice but self-sacrificing love.⁶

Such is the general, schematic application of dialectic to historical issues. But there also is the specific application that deals with intractable problems in exegesis and in historiography. There problems are tractable when further research, new discoveries, increasing discernment bring solutions. But there are other problems that do not yield to such treatment. Rather they keep recurring in one guise or another no matter how much the context is changed by ongoing research, discovery, discernment. Their source does not lie in the data but in the investigators. The discovery to be made is not a better understanding of the data but a better understanding of the investigators.

Finally, besides the dialectic that is concerned with human subjects as objects, there is the dialectic in which human subjects are concerned with themselves and with one another. In that case dialectic becomes dialogue. It is particularly relevant when persons are authentic and know one another to be authentic yet belong to differing traditions and so find themselves in basic disagreement. It may be illustrated by the ecumenical movement among Christians and by the universalist movement set forth by R. E. Whitson in his The Coming Convergence of World Religions, by Raymond Panikkar's diacritical theology and by William Johnston's Christian monks frequenting Zen monasteries in Japan.⁷

Praxis

Experimental method reveals nature. Historical method reveals man, the self-completing animal, in the manifold variety of his concrete existing. Dialectic confronts us with the problem of the irrational in human life and, as well, provides a technique for distinguishing between authentic and unauthentic evaluations, decisions, actions. Praxis, finally, raises the final issue, What are you to do about it? What use are you to make of your knowledge of nature, of your knowledge of man, of your awareness of the radical conflict between man's aspiration to self-transcendence and, on the other hand, the waywardness that may distort his traditional heritage and even his own personal life.

It is only after the age of innocence that praxis becomes an academic subject. A faculty psychology will give intellect precedence over will and thereby it will liberate the academic world from concern with the irrational in human life. The speculative intellect of the Aristotelians, the pure reason of the rationalists, the automatic progress anticipated by the liberals, all provided shelter for academic serenity. But since the failure of the absolute idealists to encompass human history within the embrace of speculative reason, the issue of praxis has repeatedly come to the fore. Schopenhauer conceived the world in terms of will and representation. Kierkegaard insisted on faith. Newman toasted conscience. Marx was concerned not merely to know but principally to make history. Nietzsche proclaimed the will to power. Blondel strove for a philosophy of action. Paul Ricoeur has not yet completed his many-volumed philosophy of will, and Jürgen Habermas has set forth the involvement of human knowledge in human interests. Along with them have marched in varying ways pragmatists, personalists, existentialists, while phenomenologists have supplanted faculty psychology with an intentionality analysis in which cognitional process is sublated by deliberation, evaluation, decision, action.⁸

If I have referred to so many and so different thinkers, it has not been to agree with all of them but rather to discern despite their differences a common concern with what I have named praxis. On an older view contemplative intellect, or speculative reason, or rigorous science were supreme, and practical issues were secondary. But the older view grounded its hegemony on necessity. That claim no longer is made. If we are not simply to flounder, we have to take our stand on authenticity: on the authenticity with which intelligence takes us beyond the experiential infrastructure to enrich it, extend it, organize it, but never to slight it and much less to violate its primordial role; on the authenticity with which rational reflection goes beyond the constructions of intelligence and draws sharply the lines between astrology and astronomy, alchemy and chemistry, legend and history, magic and science, myth and philosophy; on the authenticity with which moral deliberation takes us beyond cognitional process into the realm of freedom and responsibility, evaluation and decision, not in any way to annul or slight experience or understanding or factual judgment, but to add the further and distinct truth of value judgments and the consequent decisions demanded by a situation in which authenticity cannot be taken for granted.

It follows that, while empirical method moves, so to speak, from below upwards, praxis moves from above downward. Empirical method moves from below upwards, from experience to understanding, and from understanding to factual judgment. It can do so because it can presuppose that the data of experience are intelligible and so objects that straightforward understanding can master. But praxis acknowledges the end of the age of innocence. It starts from the assumption that authenticity cannot be taken for granted. Its understanding, accordingly, will follow a hermeneutic of suspicion as well as a hermeneutic of recovery. Its judgment will discern between products

of human authenticity and products of human unauthenticity. But the basic assumption, the twofold hermeneutic, the discernment between the authentic and the unauthentic set up a distinct method. This method is a compound of theoretical and practical judgments of value. The use of this method follows from a decision, a decision that is comparable to the claim of Blaise Pascal that the heart has reasons which reason does not know.

Religion, Theology, Religious Studies

While praxis is relevant to the whole of human studies, its relevance is particularly manifest in the sphere of religion. For that sphere is the world as mediated by ultimate meaning and motivated by ultimate value. But commonly the religions apprehend ultimate meaning and ultimate value symbolically. The theologies endeavor to discern whether there is any real fire behind the smoke of symbols employed in this or that religion. Religious studies finally envisage the totality of religions down the ages and over the expanse of the globe.

The matter needs to be illustrated, illustration has to be particular, and so I shall speak in terms of Christian experience. There occurs, then, a response to ultimate value in conversion from waywardness or in a call to holiness. The Christian message will give that response a focus and an interpretation: the response will be taken as God's love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us; the focus will be found in the objective expression of the same love by the Father sending the Son to us and revealing his love in the Son's crucifixion, death, and resurrection. From preaching the message and from the gift of the Spirit, the Christian community is born, spreads, passes on from generation to generation. It lives by its discernment between the authenticity of a good conscience and the unauthenticity of an unhappy conscience. It devotes its efforts to

overcoming unauthenticity and promoting authenticity. It is praxis alive and active. But as yet it is not praxis questioned, scrutinized, made explicit and thematic.

Theology comes out of such questioning, and three distinct emergences must be distinguished. In the ancient Christian church questions centered on such specific issues as christology and Pelagianism. In the medieval period there was a sustained effort to move from the symbolic expression of Christian thought to its literal meaning. But this effort's involvement in Aristotelian thought with its concern for proof, necessity, and eternal truth, not only fostered litigiousness and controversy but later led to its all but disruptive renewal under the impact of modern science, modern exegetical and historical methods, and modern philosophies.

Sound renewal is not yet, in my opinion, a common achievement. But the contemporary situation does seem favorable to an eirenic and constructive use of dialectic and dialogue. The former tendency to controversy has greatly diminished, partly because modern science and human studies lay claim not to absolute truth but to no more than fuller understanding, partly because speculative intellect or pure reason have given way to the claims of praxis. There remain differing Christian communions and each may be represented by more than one theology. But acceptance of dialectic, especially in the form of dialogue, is powerfully fostered by the ecumenical movement ^{and by} the promotion of union among the theologians of the same communion.

When I say that the contemporary situation favors an eirenic and constructive use of dialectic, I must not be taken to imply that we can expect great and rapid results. For religious communions are historical realities. Their authenticity is the resultant not only of the authenticity

of their contemporary members but also of the heritage transmitted down the centuries. Whatever the defects of any such heritage, it comes to be accepted in good faith. Good faith is good not evil. It needs to be purified, but the purification will be the slow product of historical research into the screening memories and defense mechanisms and legitimations that betray an original waywardness and a sinister turn.

Besides the Christian communions there are the manifold preliterate religions and the great world religions. Religious studies takes as its field all religions. Its main thrust is the history of religions, that is, the research that assembles and catalogues the relevant data, the interpretation that grasps their morphology, the history that locates them in place and time, studies their genesis, development, distribution, interaction.

But history itself is practised in varying manners. Its ideal can approximate the ideal of natural science, to minimize attention to meaning and values. In contrast, it can embrace the ideal of the German Historical School defined as the interpretative reconstruction of the constructions of the human spirit. Then meaning and values receive explicit attention. The need is felt and the desire expressed that one write of the religions of mankind in a manner that is recognizable by the respective groups that practise the religion. One can go further, as did Friedrich Heiler, and see the mission of the history of religions to lie in a preparation of the cooperation of religions;⁹ and certainly such a purpose satisfies the cardinal point of method as praxis; for it discerns a radically distorted situation; it retreats from spontaneous to critical intelligence; it begins from above on the level of evaluations and decisions; and it moves from concord and cooperation towards the development of mutual understanding

and more effective communication.

Finally, the more that religious studies moves from the style of natural science to that of profounder historical study, the more it endeavors to understand the element of total commitment that characterizes religion, the more it is concerned to promote the cooperation of religions, then the more it finds itself involved in the radical oppositions of cognitional theory, of ethical practise, of religious and secularist man. At that point it too can undertake dialectic, a dialectic that will assemble all the dialectics that relate religions to organized secularism, religions to one another, and the differing theologies that interpret the same religious communion. At that point, again, it can invite to dialogue the representatives of related and ultimately of disparate religions.

Conclusion

I began by pointing out, this evening, that the issue, Religious Studies and/or Theology, if it is not to deal with static abstractions, has to plunge into the ongoing genesis of methods and has to view its terms as dynamic entities, as compounds of the actual and the potential, even as mixed products of human authenticity and unauthenticity.

I have distinguished different methods: experimental, foundational, historical, dialectical, critically practical.

My first conclusion is that the more religious studies and theology put to good use the whole battery of methods, the more they will move asymptotically towards an ideal situation in which they overlap and become easily interchangeable.

As a second conclusion I would say that such overlapping and interchangeability are ideal in the sense that they are desirable. Theology

and so

and religious studies need each other. Without theology religious studies may indeed discern when and where different religious symbols are equivalent;¹⁰ but they are borrowing the techniques of theologians if they attempt to say what the equivalent symbols literally mean and what they literally imply. Conversely, without religious studies theologians are unacquainted with the religions of mankind; they may as theologians have a good grasp of the history of their own religion; but they are borrowing the techniques of the historian of religions, when they attempt to compare and relate other religions with their own.

Thirdly, if any agree that such an ultimate overlapping and interchangeability are desirable, their praxis will include a recognition of the obstacles that stand in its way and an effort to remove them. Now a discovery of the obstacles is not difficult. For we concluded to this end from the assumption that both theologians and students of religions would put to good use the whole battery of methods that have been devised. It follows that there are as many possible obstacles as there are plausible grounds for rejecting or hesitating about any of these methods. It follows, finally, if the methods really are sound, that the obstacles may be removed, at least for authentic subjects, by applying both the hermeneutic of suspicion and the hermeneutic of recovery. The hermeneutic of suspicion that pierces through mere plausibility to its real ground. The hermeneutic of recovery that discovers what is intelligent, true, and good in the obstruction and goes on to employ this discovery to qualify, complement, correct earlier formulations of the method.

Notes

- 1) Herbert Butterfield, The Origins of Modern Science: 1300-1800, Revised Edition, New York: The Free Press, 1965. P. 7.
- 2) For a fuller statement, B. Lonergan, "Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation," Journal of Religion 55 (1975) 169-172.
- 3) Ibid., 166-169.
- 4) For references see my Method in Theology (London and New York 1972) pp. 208 ff.
- 5) This dialectic I developed in "Origins of Christian Realism," Theology Digest 20 (1972) 292-305; reprinted in A Second Collection, London and Philadelphia: Darton, Longman & Todd and Westminster Press, 1974. The fuller version in my De Deo trino is being published in English under the title, The Way to Nicea, and is due from the same firms during this year.
- 6) This dialectic is developed at length in Insight, chapters seven, eighteen, and twenty.
- 7) R.E. Whitson, The Coming Convergence of World Religions, New York: Newman Press, 1971. Raymond Panikkar, "Metatheology or Diacritical Theology as Fundamental Theology," Concilium 46 (1969) 43-53. William Johnston, The Mysticism of the Cloud of Unknowing, Second edition, St. Meinrad, Indiana: Abbey Press, 1975; The Still Point, New York: Fordham University Press 1970; Christian Zen, New York: Harper & Row, 1971; New York: Silent Music, New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
- 8) On sublation, see Method in Theology, pp. 241, 316, 340.
- 9) Friedrich Heiler, "The History of Religions as a Preparation for the Cooperation of Religions," in The History of Religions, Essays in Methodology, edited by M. Eliade and J. Kitagawa, Chicago University Press 1959 and 1962, pp. 142-153.

- 10) Eric Voegelin, "Equivalences of Experience and Symbolization in History," in Eternità e Storia, a cura dell' Istituto Accademico di Roma, Firenze: Vallecchi, 1970, pp. 215-234.