

METHOD

Thought on method is apt to run in some one of three channels. In the first, method will be conceived more as an art than as a science. It is to be learnt not from books or lectures but in the laboratory or in the seminar. What counts is the example of the master, the effort to do likewise, his comments on one's performance. Such, I think, must be the origin of all thought on method, for such thought has to be reflection on previous achievement. Such, also, will always remain the one way in which the refinements and subtleties proper to specialized areas will be communicated.

There are, however, bolder spirits. They select the conspicuously successful science of their time. They study its procedures. They formulate precepts. Finally, they propose an analogy of science. Science properly so called is the successful science they have analysed. Other subjects are scientific in the measure they conform to its procedures and, in the measure they do not, they are something less than scientific. So Sir David Ross remarked of Aristotle: "Throughout the whole of his works we find him taking the view that all other sciences than the mathematical have the name of science only by courtesy, since they are occupied with matters in which contingency plays a part." ¹ So too today the English word, science, means

1) W.D. Ross, Aristotle's Prior and Posterior Analytics,
Oxford, 1949, p. 14. Cf. pp. 51 ff.

3 | natural science. One descends a rung or more in the ladder
when one speaks of behavioral or human sciences. Theologians
finally often have to be content if their subject is included
in a list not of science, but of academic disciplines.

8 | Clearly enough, these approaches to the problem of
method do little to advance the less successful subjects. For
in the less successful subject, precisely because it is less
successful, there is a lack of masters, to be followed and of
models to be imitated. Nor will recourse to the analogy of
science be of any use, for that analogy, so far from extending
a helping hand to the less successful, is content to assign them
a lower rank in the pecking order. Some third way, then, must
be found and, even though it is difficult and laborious, that
price must be paid if the less successful subject is not to
remain a mediocrity or slip into decadence and desuetude.

To work out the basis for such a third way is the
purpose of the present chapter. First, we shall appeal to the
successful sciences to form a preliminary notion of method.
Secondly, we shall go behind the procedures of the natural
sciences to something both more general and more fundamental,
namely, the procedures of the human mind. Thirdly, in the
procedures of the human mind we shall discern a transcendental
method, that is, a basic pattern of operations employed in
every cognitional enterprise. Fourthly, we shall indicate the
relevance of transcendental method in the formulation of other,
more special methods appropriate to particular fields.

1. A Preliminary Notion

35 | A method is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results. There is a method, then, where there are distinct operations, where each operation is related to the others, where the set of relations form a pattern, where the pattern is described as the right way of doing the job, where operations in accord with the pattern may be repeated indefinitely, and where the fruits of such repetition are, not repetitious, but cumulative and progressive.

So in the natural sciences method inculcates a spirit of inquiry and inquiries recur. It insists on accurate observation and description: both observations and descriptions recur. Above all, it praises discovery, and discoveries recur. It demands the formulation of discoveries in hypotheses, and hypotheses recur. It requires the deduction of the implications of hypotheses, and deductions recur. It keeps urging that experiments be devised and performed to check the implications of hypotheses against observable fact, and such processes of experimentation recur.

These distinct and recurrent operations are related. Inquiry transforms mere experiencing into the scrutiny of observation. What is observed, is pinned down by description. Contrasting descriptions give rise to problems, and problems are solved by discoveries. What is discovered is expressed in a hypothesis. From the hypothesis are deduced its implications,

and these suggest experiments to be performed. So the many operations are related; the relations form a pattern; and the pattern defines the right way of going about a scientific investigation.

Finally, the results of investigations are cumulative and progressive. For the process of experimentation yields new data, new observations, new descriptions that may or may not confirm the hypothesis that is being tested. In so far as they are confirmatory, they reveal that the investigation is not altogether on the wrong track. In so far as they are not confirmatory, they lead to a modification of the hypothesis and, in the limit, to new discovery, new hypothesis, new deduction, and new experiments. The wheel of method not only turns but also rolls along. The field of observed data keeps broadening. New discoveries are added to old. New hypotheses and theories express not only the new insights but also all that was valid in the old, to give method its cumulative character and to engender the conviction that, however remote may still be the goal of the complete explanation of all phenomena, at least we now are nearer to it than we were.

Such, very summarily, is method in the natural sciences. The account is far indeed from being sufficiently detailed to guide the natural scientist in his work. At the same time it is too specific to be transposed to other disciplines. But at least it illustrates a preliminary notion of method as a

normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results..

A few observations are in order.

8/ First, method is often conceived as a set of rules that, even when followed blindly by anyone, none the less yield satisfactory results. I should grant that method, so conceived, is possible when the same result is produced over and over, as in the assembly line or "The New Method Laundry". But it will not do, if progressive and cumulative results are expected. Results are progressive only if there is a sustained succession of discoveries; they are cumulative only if there is effected a synthesis of each new insight with all previous, valid insights. But neither discovery nor synthesis is at the beck and call of any set of rules. Their occurrence follows statistical laws; they can be made more probable; they cannot be assured by a set of prescriptions. }

Next, our preliminary notion conceives method not as a set of rules but as a prior, normative pattern of operations from which the rules may be derived. Further, the operations envisaged are not limited to strictly logical operations, that is, to operations on propositions, terms, relations. It includes such operations, of course, for it speaks of describing, of formulating problems and hypotheses, of deducing implications. But it does not hesitate to move outside this group and to speak of inquiry, observation, discovery, experiment, synthesis, verification.

Thirdly, what precisely these non-logical operations are, will concern us in the next section. But at once it may be noted

that modern science derives its distinctive character from this grouping together of logical and non-logical operations. The logical tend to consolidate what has been achieved. The non-logical keep all achievement open to further advance. The conjunction of the two results in an open, ongoing, progressive and cumulative process. This process contrasts sharply not only with the static fixity that resulted from Aristotle's concentration on the necessary and immutable but also with Hegel's dialectic which is a movement enclosed within a complete system.

2. The Basic Pattern of Operations

Operations in the pattern are seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, inquiring, imagining, understanding, conceiving, formulating, reflecting, marshalling and weighing the evidence, judging, deliberating, evaluating, deciding, speaking, writing.

It will be assumed that everyone is familiar with some at least of these operations and that he has some notion of what the other terms mean. Our purpose is to bring to light the pattern within which these operations occur and, it happens, we cannot succeed without an exceptional amount of exertion and activity on the part of the reader. He will have to familiarize himself with our terminology. He will have to evoke the relevant operations in his own consciousness. He will have to discover in his own experience the dynamic relationships leading from one operation to the next. Otherwise he will find

not merely this chapter but the whole book about as illuminating²
as a blind man finds a lecture on color.

First, then, the operations in the list are transitive. They have objects. They are transitive not merely in the grammatical sense that they are denoted by transitive verbs but also in the psychological sense that by the operation one becomes aware of the object. This psychological sense is what is meant by the verb, intend, the adjective, intentional, the noun, intentionality. To say that the operations intend objects is to refer to such facts as that by seeing there becomes present what is seen, by hearing there becomes present what is heard, by imagining there becomes present what is imagined, and so on, where in each case the presence in question is a psychological event.

2) I have presented this pattern of operations at length in the book, Insight (London and New York) 1957, and more compendiously in an article, "Cognitional Structure", Continuum 2 (1964), 530-542, reprinted in Collection, Papers by Bernard Lonergan edited by F.E. Crowe (New York and London) 1967. But the matter is so crucial for the present enterprise that some summary must be included here. Please observe that I am offering only a summary, that the summary can do no more than present a general idea, that the process of self-appropriation occurs only slowly, and, usually, only through a struggle with some such book as Insight.

Secondly, the operations in the list are operations of an operator, and the operator is named the subject. The operator is subject not merely in the grammatical sense that he is denoted by a noun that is subject of the verbs that in the active voice refer to the operations. He also is subject in the psychological sense that he operates consciously. In fact, none of the operations in the list are to be performed in dreamless sleep or in a coma. Again, whenever any of the operations are performed, the subject is aware of himself operating, present to himself operating, experiencing himself operating. Moreover, as will appear presently, the quality of consciousness changes as the subject performs different operations.

The operations then not only intend objects. There is to them a further psychological dimension. They occur consciously and by them the operating subject is conscious. Just as operations by their intentionality make objects present to the subject, so also ^{by} consciousness they make the operating subject present to himself.

I have used the adjective, present, both of the object and of the subject. But I have used it ambiguously, for the presence of the object is quite different from the presence of the subject. The object is present as what is gazed upon, attended to, intended. But the presence of the subject resides in the gazing, the attending, the intending. For this reason the subject can be conscious, as attending, and yet give his whole attention to the object as attended to.

Again, I spoke of the subject experiencing himself operating. But do not suppose that this experiencing is another operation to be added to the list, for this experiencing is not intending but being conscious. It is not another operation over and above the operation that is experienced. It is that very operation which, besides being intrinsically intentional, also is intrinsically conscious.

Thirdly, there is the word, introspection, which is misleading inasmuch as it suggests an inward inspection. Inward inspection is just myth. Its origin lies in the mistaken analogy that all cognitional events are to be conceived on the analogy of ocular vision. Consciousness is some sort of cognitional event. Therefore, consciousness is to be conceived on the analogy of ocular vision; and since it does not inspect outwardly, it must be an inward inspection.

cg/ However, "introspection" may be understood to mean, not consciousness itself but the process of objectifyin^f the contents of consciousness. Just as we move from the data of sense through inquiry, insight, reflection, judgment, to statements about sensible things, so too we move from the data of consciousness through inquiry, understanding, reflection, judgment, to statements about conscious subjects and their operations. That, of course, is just what we are doing and inviting the reader to do at the present time. But the reader will do it, not by looking inwardly, but by recognising in our expressions the objectifica^f of his subjective experience.

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Fourthly, different levels of consciousness and

intentionality have to be distinguished. In our dream states consciousness and intentionality commonly are fragmentary and incoherent. When we awake, they take on a different hue to expand on four successive, related, but qualitatively different levels. There is the empirical level on which we sense, perceive, imagine, feel, speak, move. There is an intellectual level on which we inquire, come to understand, express what we have understood, work out the presuppositions and implications of our expression. There is the rational level on which we reflect, marshal the evidence, pass judgment on the truth or falsity, certainty or probability, of a statement. There is the responsible level on which we are concerned with ourselves, our own operations, our goals, and so deliberate about possible courses of action, evaluate them, decide, and carry out our decisions.

All the operations on these four levels are intentional and conscious. Still, intentionality and consciousness differ from level to level, and within each level the many operations involve further differences. Our consciousness expands in a new dimension when from mere experiencing we turn to the effort to understand what we have experienced. A third dimension of rationality emerges when the content of our acts of understanding is regarded as, of itself, a mere bright idea and we endeavor to settle what really is so. A fourth dimension comes to the fore when judgment on the facts is followed by deliberation on what we are to do about them. On all four levels, we are aware of ourselves but, as we mount from level to level, it is a fuller self of which we are aware and the awareness itself is different.

As empirically conscious, we do not seem to differ from the higher animals. But in us empirical consciousness and intentionality are only a substratum for further activities. The data of sense provoke inquiry, inquiry leads to understanding, understanding expresses itself in language. Without the data there would be nothing for us to inquire about and nothing to be understood. Yet what is sought by inquiry is never just another datum but the idea or form, the intelligible unity or relatedness, that organizes data into intelligible wholes. Again, without the effort to understand and its conflicting results, we would have no occasion to judge. But such occasions are recurrent, and then the intelligent center of experiencing reveals his reflective and critical rationality. Once more there is a fuller self of which we become aware, and once more the awareness itself is different. As intelligent, the subject seeks insight and, as insights accumulate, he reveals them in his behavior, his speech, his grasp of situations, his mastery of theoretic domains. But as reflectively and critically conscious, he incarnates detachment and disinterestedness, gives himself over to criteria of truth and certitude, makes his sole concern the determination of what is or is not so; and now, as the self, so also the awareness of self resides in that incarnation, that self-surrender, that single-minded concern for truth. There is a still further dimension to being human, and there we emerge as persons, meet one another in a common concern for values, seek to abolish the organization of human living on the basis of competing egoisms and to replace it by an organization on the basis of man's perceptiveness and intelligence, his reasonableness, and his responsible exercise of freedom.

Fifthly, as different operations yield qualitatively different modes of being conscious subjects, so too they yield qualitatively different modes of intending. The intending of our senses is an attending; it normally is selective but not creative. The intending of our imaginations may be representative or creative. What is grasped in insight, is neither an actually given datum of sense nor a creation of the imagination but an intelligible organization that may or may not be relevant to data. The intending that is conception puts together both the content of the insight and as much of the image as is essential to the occurrence of the insight; the result is the intending of any concrete being selected by an incompletely determinate (and, in that sense, abstract) content.

However, the most fundamental difference in modes of intending lies between the categorial and the transcendental. Categories are determinations. They have a limited denotation. They vary with cultural variations. They may be illustrated by the type of classification associated with totemism and recently argued to be essentially a classification by homology.³ They may be reflectively known as categories, as were the Aristotelian substance, quantity, quality, relation, action, passion, place, time, posture, habit. They need not be called categories, as were the four causes, end, agent, matter, form, or the logical

3) Claude Levi-Strauss, La pensée sauvage, Paris (Plon) 1962.

E.T. [redacted], The Savage Mind, London (Weidenfeld and Nicolson)

1966.

distinctions of genus, difference, species, property, accident. They may be the fine products of scientific achievement as the concepts of modern physics, the chemist's periodic table, the biologist's evolutionary tree.

In contrast, the transcendentals are comprehensive in connotation, unrestricted in denotation, invariant over cultural change. While categories are needed to put determinate questions and give determinate answers, the transcendentals are contained in questions prior to the answers. They are the radical intending that moves us from ignorance to knowledge. They are a priori because they go beyond what we know to seek what we do not know yet. They are unrestricted because answers are never complete and so only give rise to still further questions. They are comprehensive because they intend the unknown whole or totality of which our answers reveal only part. So intelligence takes us beyond experiencing to ask what and why and how and what for. Reasonableness takes us beyond the answers of intelligence to ask whether the answers are true and whether what they mean really is so. Responsibility goes beyond fact and desire and possibility to discern between what ^{truly} is good and what only apparently is good. So if we objectify the content of intelligent intending, we form the transcendental concept of the intelligible. If we objectify the content of reasonable intending, we form the transcendental concepts of the true and the real. If we objectify the content of responsible intending, we get the transcendental concept of value, of the truly good. But quite distinct from such transcendental concepts, which can be misconceived and often are, there are the prior transcendental notions

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notions that constitute the very dynamism of our conscious intending, promoting us from mere experiencing towards understanding, from mere understanding towards truth and reality, from factual knowledge to responsible action. That dynamism, so far from being a product of cultural advance, is the condition of its possibility; and any ignorance or error, any negligence or malice, that misrepresents or blocks that dynamism is obscurantism in its most radical form.

Sixthly, we began by speaking of operations intending objects. Now we must distinguish between elementary and compound objects, elementary and compound knowing. By elementary knowing is meant any cognitional operation, such as seeing, hearing, understanding, and so on. By the elementary object is meant what is intended in elementary knowing. By compound knowing is meant the conjunction of several instances of elementary knowing into a single knowing. By the compound object is meant the object constructed by uniting several elementary objects.

Now the process of compounding is the work of the transcendental notions which, from the beginning, intend the unknown that, gradually, becomes better known. In virtue of this intending, what is experienced can be the same as what is understood; what is experienced and understood can be the same as what is conceived, what is experienced and understood and conceived, can be the same as what is affirmed to be real; what is experienced, understood, conceived, affirmed, can be the same as what is approved as truly good. So the many elementary objects

are constructed into a single compound object, and in turn the many compound objects will be ordered in a single universe.

Seventhly, we have distinguished many conscious and intentional operations and arranged them in a succession of different levels of consciousness. But as the many elementary objects are constructed into larger wholes, as the many operations are conjoined in a single compound knowing, so too the many levels of consciousness are just successive stages in the unfolding of a single thrust, the eros of the human spirit. To know the good, it must know the real; to know the real, it must know the true; to know the true, it must know the intelligible; to know the intelligible, it must attend the data. So from slumber, we awake to attend. Observing lets intelligence be puzzled, and we inquire. Inquiry leads to the delight of insight, but insights are a dime a dozen, so critical reasonableness doubts, checks, makes sure. Alternative courses of action present themselves and we wonder whether the more attractive is truly good. Indeed, so intimate is the relation between the successive transcendental notions, that it is only by a specialized differentiation of consciousness that we withdraw from more ordinary ways of living to devote ourselves to a moral pursuit of goodness, a philosophic pursuit of truth, a scientific pursuit of understanding, an artistic pursuit of beauty.

Finally, to conclude this section, we note that the basic pattern of conscious and intentional operations is dynamic. It is dynamic materially inasmuch as it is a pattern of operations,

l/ just as a dance is a pattern of bodily movements, or a melody is a pattern of sounds. But it also is dynamic formally, inasmuch as it calls forth and assembles the appropriate operations at each stage of the process, just as a growing organism puts forth its own organs and lives by their functioning. Finally, this doubly dynamic pattern is not blind but open-eyed; it is attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible; it is a conscious intending, ever going beyond what happens to be given or known, ever striving for a fuller and richer apprehension of the yet unknown or incompletely known totality, whole, universe.

3. Transcendental Method⁴

What we have been describing as the basic pattern of operations is transcendental method. It is a method, for it is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding

4) In his book, The Transcendental Method, New York (Herder and Herder) 1968, Otto Muck works out a generalized notion of transcendental method by determining the common features in the work of those that employ the method. While I have no objection to this procedure, I do not consider it very pertinent to an understanding of my own intentions. I conceive method concretely. I conceive it, not in terms of principles and rules, but as a normative pattern of operations with cumulative and progressive results. I distinguish the methods appropriate to particular fields and, on the other hand, their common core and

cumulative and progressive results. It is a transcendental method, for the results envisaged are not confined categorically to some particular field or subject, but regard any result that could be intended by the completely open transcendental notions. Where other methods aim at meeting the exigences and exploiting the opportunities proper to particular fields, transcendental method is concerned with meeting the exigences and exploiting the opportunities presented by the human mind itself. It is a concern that is both foundational and universally significant and relevant.

Now in a sense everyone knows and observes transcendental method. Everyone does so, precisely in the measure that he is attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible. But in another sense it is quite difficult to be at home in transcendental method, for that is not to be achieved by reading

ground, which I name transcendental method. Here, the word, transcendental, is employed in a sense analogous to Scholastic usage, for it is opposed to the categorial (or predicamental). But my actual procedure also is transcendental in the Kantian sense, inasmuch as it brings to light the conditions of the possibility of knowing an object in so far as that knowledge is a priori.

books or listening to lectures or analysing language. It is a matter of heightening one's consciousness by objectifying it, and that is something that each one, ultimately, has to do in himself and for himself.

In what does this objectification consist? It is a matter of applying the operations as intentional to the operations as conscious. Thus, if for brevity's sake we denote the various operations on the four levels by the principal occurrence on that level, we may speak of the operations as experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. These operations are both conscious and intentional. But what is conscious, can be intended. To apply the operations as intentional to the operations as conscious is a fourfold matter of (1) experiencing one's experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding, (2) understanding the unity and relations of one's experienced experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding, (3) affirming the reality of one's experienced and understood experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding and (4) deciding to operate in accord with the norms immanent in the spontaneous relatedness of one's experienced, understood, affirmed experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding.

First, then, there are to be experienced one's experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding. But this fourfold experience is just consciousness. We have it every time we experience, or understand, or judge, or decide. But our attention is apt to be focussed on the object, while our conscious

operating remains peripheral. We must, then, enlarge our interest, recall that one and the same operation not only intends an object but also reveals an intending subject, discover in our own experience the concrete truth of that general statement. That discovery, of course, is not a matter of looking, inspecting, gazing upon. It is an awareness, not of what is intended, but of the intending. It is finding in oneself the conscious occurrence, seeing, whenever an object is seen, the conscious occurrence, hearing, whenever an object is heard, and so forth.

Since sensations can be produced or removed at will, it is a fairly simple matter to advert to them and become familiar with them. On the other hand, not a little forethought and ingenuity are needed when one is out to heighten one's consciousness of inquiry, insight, formulation, critical reflection, weighing the evidence, judging, deliberating, deciding. One has to know the precise meaning of each of these words. One has to produce in oneself the corresponding operation. One has to keep producing it until one gets beyond the object intended to the consciously operating subject. One has to do all this within the appropriate context, which is a matter not of inward inspection but of inquiry, enlarged interest, discernment, comparison, distinction, identification, naming.

The operations are to be experienced not only singly but in their relations, for there are not merely conscious operations but also conscious processes. Where sensitive perception does not reveal intelligible relations so that, as Hume contended, we perceive not causality but succession, our own consciousness

is a different matter. On the empirical level, it is true, process is spontaneous sensitivity; it is intelligible only in the sense that it is understood. But with inquiry the intelligent subject emerges, and process becomes intelligent; it is not merely an intelligible that can be understood, but the active correlative of intelligibility, the intelligence that intelligently seeks understanding, comes to understand, and operates in the light of having understood. When inquiry comes to ^a term, or an impasse, intelligence intelligently yields place to critical reflection; as critically reflective, the subject stands in conscious relation to an absolute -- the absolute that makes us regard the positive content of the sciences not as true and certain but only as probable. Finally, the rational subject, having achieved knowledge of what is and could be, rationally gives way to conscious freedom and conscientious responsibility.

The operations, then, stand within a process that is formally dynamic, that calls forth and assembles its own components, that does so intelligently, rationally, responsibly. Such, then, is the unity and relatedness of the several operations. It is a unity and relatedness that exists and functions before we manage to advert to it explicitly, understand it, objectify it. It is a unity and relatedness quite different from the intelligible unities and relations by which we organize the data of sense, for they are merely intelligible, while the unity and relatedness of conscious process is intelligent, reasonable, responsible.

We have considered, first, experiencing the operations and, secondly, understanding their unity and relatedness. There arises the question for reflection. Do these operations occur? Do they occur in the described pattern? Is not that pattern just hypothetical, sooner or later due for revision and, when revised, sooner or later due for still further revision?

First, the operations exist and occur. Despite the doubts and denials of positivists and behaviorists, no one, unless some of his organs are deficient, is going to say that never in his life did he have the experience of seeing or of hearing, of touching or smelling or tasting, of imagining or perceiving, of feeling or moving; or that if he appeared to have such experience, still it was mere appearance, since all his life long he has gone about like a somnambulist without any awareness of his own activities. Again, how rare is the man that will preface his lectures by repeating his conviction that never did he have even a fleeting experience of intellectual curiosity, of inquiry, of striving and coming to understand, of expressing what he has grasped by understanding. Rare too is the man that begins his contributions to periodical literature by reminding his potential readers that never in his life did he experience anything that might be called critical reflection, that he never paused about the truth or falsity of any statement, that if ever he seemed to exercise his rationality by passing judgment strictly in accord with the available evidence, then that must be counted mere appearance for he is totally unaware of any such event or even any such tendency. Few finally are those that place at the beginning of

their books the warning that they have no notion of what might be meant by responsibility, that never in their lives did they have the experience of acting responsibly, and that least of all in composing the books they are offering the public. In brief, conscious and intentional operations exist and anyone that cares to deny their existence is merely disqualifying himself as a non-responsible, non-reasonable, non-intelligent somnambulist.

Next, do the operations occur in the pattern that has been sketched here and presented more fully in the book, Insight? The answer to this, of course, is that we do not experience the operations in isolation and then, by a process of inquiry and discovery, arrive at the pattern of relations that link them together. On the contrary, the unity of consciousness is itself given; the pattern of the operations is part of the experience of the operations; and inquiry and discovery are needed, not to effect the synthesis of a manifold that, as given, is unrelated, but to analyse a functional and functioning unity. Without analysis, it is true, we cannot discern and distinguish the several operations; and until the operations have been distinguished, we cannot formulate the relations that link them together. But the point to the statement that the pattern itself is conscious is that, once the relations are formulated, they are not found to express surprising novelties but simply prove to be objectifications of the routines of our conscious living and doing. Before inquiry brings the pattern to light, before the methodologist issues his precepts, the pattern is already conscious and operative. Spontaneously we move from experiencing

to the effort to understand; and the spontaneity is not unconscious or blind; on the contrary, it is constitutive of our conscious intelligence, just as the absence of the effort to understand is constitutive of stupidity. Spontaneously we move from understanding with its manifold and conflicting expressions to critical reflection; again, the spontaneity is not unconscious or blind; it is constitutive of our critical rationality, of the demand within us for sufficient reason, a demand that operates prior to any formulation of a principle of sufficient reason; and it is the neglect or absence of this demand that constitutes silliness. Spontaneously we move from judgments of fact or possibility to judgments of value and to the deliberateness of decision and commitment; and that spontaneity is not unconscious or blind; it constitutes us as conscientious, as responsible persons, and its absence would leave us psychopaths. In various detailed manners, method will bid us be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible. The details of its prescriptions will be derived from the work in hand and will vary with it. But the normative force of its imperatives will reside, not just in its claims to authority, not just in the probability that what succeeded in the past will succeed in the future, but at root in the native spontaneities and inevitabilities of our consciousness which assembles its own constituent parts and unites them in a rounded whole in a manner we cannot set aside without, as it were, amputating our own moral personality, our own reasonableness, our own intelligence, our own sensitivity.

But is this pattern not just a hypothesis that can be expected to undergo revision after revision as man's self-knowledge keeps developing?

A distinction must be drawn between the normative pattern immanent in our conscious and intentional operations and, on the other hand, objectifications of that pattern in concepts, propositions, words. Obviously, revision can affect nothing but objectifications. It cannot change the dynamic structure of human consciousness. All it can do is bring about a more adequate account of that structure.

Moreover, for it to be possible for a revision to take place certain conditions must be fulfilled. For, in the first place, any possible revision will appeal to data which the opinion under review either overlooked or misapprehended, and so any possible revision must presuppose at least an empirical level of operations. Secondly, any possible revision will offer a better explanation of the data, and so any possible revision must presuppose an intellectual level of operations. Thirdly, any possible revision will claim that the better explanation is more probable, and so any possible revision must presuppose a rational level of operations. Fourthly, a revision is not a mere possibility but an accomplished fact only as the result of a judgment of value and a decision. One undertakes the labor with all its risks of failure and frustration only because one holds, not only in theory but also in practice, that it is worthwhile to get things straight, to know with exactitude, to contribute to the advancement of science. So at the root of all method there has to be presupposed a level of operations on

which we evaluate and choose responsibly at least the method of our operations.

It follows that there is a sense in which the objectification of the normative pattern of our conscious and intentional operations does not admit revision. The sense in question is that the activity of revising consists in such operations in accord with such a pattern, so that a revision rejecting the pattern would be rejecting itself.

There is then a rock on which one can build. But let me repeat the precise character of the rock.⁵ Any theory, description, account of our conscious and intentional operations is bound to be incomplete and to admit further clarifications and extensions. But all such clarifications and extensions are to be derived from the conscious and intentional operations themselves. They as given in consciousness are the rock; they confirm every exact account; they refute every inexact or incomplete account. The rock, then, is the subject in his conscious, unobjectified attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility. The point to the labor of objectifying the subject and his conscious operations is that thereby one begins to learn what these are and that they are.

4. The Functions of Transcendental Method.

We have been inviting the reader to discover in himself

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- 5) It will become evident in Chapter Four that the more important part of the rock has not yet been uncovered.

the original normative pattern of recurrent and related operations that yield cumulative and progressive results. We have now to consider what uses or functions are served by that basic method.

First, then, there is the normative function. All special methods consist in making specific the transcendental precepts, Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible. But before they are ever formulated in concepts and expressed in words, those precepts have a prior existence and reality in the spontaneous, structured dynamism of human consciousness. Moreover, just as the transcendental precepts rest simply on a study of the operations themselves, so specific categorial precepts rest on a study of the mind operating in a given field. The ultimate basis of both transcendental and categorial precepts will be advertence to the difference between attention and inattention, intelligence and stupidity, reasonableness and unreasonableness, responsibility and irresponsibility.

Secondly, there is the critical function. The scandal still continues that men, while they tend to agree on scientific questions, tend to disagree in the most outrageous fashion on basic philosophic issues. So they disagree about the activities named knowing, about the relation of those activities to reality, and about reality itself. However, differences on the third, reality, can be reduced to differences about the first and second, knowledge and objectivity. Differences on the second, objectivity, can be reduced to differences on the first, cognitional theory. Finally, differences in cognitional theory can be resolved by bringing to light the contradiction

between a mistaken cognitional theory and the actual performance of the mistaken theorist.⁶ To take the simplest instance, Hume thought the human mind to be a matter of impressions linked together by custom. But Hume's own mind was quite original. Therefore, Hume's own mind was not what Hume considered the human mind to be.

Thirdly, there is the dialectical function. For the critical use of transcendental method can be applied to every mistaken cognitional theory, whether expressed with philosophic generality or presupposed by a method of hermeneutics, of historical investigation, of theology, or demythologization. Moreover, these applications can be extended to concomitant views on epistemology and metaphysics. In this fashion one can determine the dialectical series of basic positions, which criticism confirms, and of basic counter-positions, which criticism confounds.

Fourthly, there is the systematic function. For in the measure that transcendental method is objectified, there are determined a set of basic terms and relations, namely, the terms that refer to the operations of cognitional process, and the relations that link these operations to one another. Such terms and relations are the substance of cognitional theory. They reveal the ground for epistemology. They are found to be isomorphic⁷ with the terms and relations denoting the

6) In greater detail, Insight, pp.387 ff. Collection, pp. 203 ff.

7) This isomorphism rests on the fact that one and the same process constructs both elementary acts of knowing into a

ontological structure of any reality proportionate to human cognitive process.

Fifthly, the foregoing systematic function assures continuity without imposing rigidity. Continuity is assured by the source of the basic terms and relations, for that source is human cognitive process in its concrete reality. Rigidity is not imposed, for a fuller and more exact knowledge of human cognitive process is by no means excluded and, in the measure it is attained, there will follow a fuller and more exact determination of basic terms and relations. Finally, the exclusion of rigidity is not a menace to continuity for, as we have seen, the conditions of the possibility of revision set limits to the possibility of revising cognitive theory, and the more elaborate the revision, the stricter and more detailed these limits will be.

Sixthly, there is the heuristic function. Every inquiry aims at transforming some unknown into a known. Inquiry itself, then, is something between ignorance and knowledge. It is less than knowledge, else there would be no need to inquire. It is more than sheer ignorance, for it makes ignorance manifest and strives to replace it with knowledge. This intermediary between ignorance and knowing is an intending, and what is intended is an unknown that is to be known.

Now fundamentally all method is the exploitation of

compound knowing and elementary objects of knowing into the compound object.

such intending, for it outlines the steps to be taken if one is to proceed from the initial intending of the question to the eventual knowing of what has been intended all along. Moreover, within method the use of heuristic devices is fundamental. They consist in designating and naming the intended unknown, in setting down at once all that can be affirmed about it, and in using this explicit knowledge as a guide, a criterion, and/or a premise in the effort to arrive at a fuller knowledge. Such is the function in algebra of the unknown, x , in the solution of problems. Such is the function in physics of indeterminate or generic functions and of the classes of functions specified by differential equations.

Now transcendental method fulfils a heuristic function. It reveals the very nature of that function by bringing to light the activity of intending and its correlative, the intended that, though unknown, at least is intended. Moreover, inasmuch as the systematic function has provided sets of basic terms and relations, there are to hand basic determinations that may be set down at once whenever the unknown is a human subject or an object proportionate to human cognitional process, i.e., an object to be known by experiencing, understanding, and judging.

Seventhly, there is the foundational function. Special methods derive their proper norms from the accumulated experience of investigators in their several fields. But besides the proper norms there are also common norms. Besides the tasks in each field there are interdisciplinary problems. Underneath the consent of men as scientists, there is their dissent on matters

of ultimate significance and concern. It is in the measure that special methods acknowledge their common core in transcendental method, that norms common to all the sciences will be acknowledged, that a secure basis will be attained for attacking interdisciplinary problems, and that the sciences will be mobilized within a higher unity of vocabulary, thought, and orientation, in which they will be able to make their quite significant contribution to the solution of fundamental problems.

Eighthly, transcendental method is relevant to theology. This relevance, of course, is mediated by the special method proper to theology and developed through the reflection of theologians on the successes and failures of their efforts past and present. But this special method, while it has its own special classes and combinations of operations, none the less is the work of human minds performing the same basic operations in the same basic relations as are found in other special methods. In other words, transcendental method is a constituent part of the special method proper to theology, just as it is a constituent part in the special methods proper to the natural and to the human sciences. However true it is that one attends, understands, judges, decides differently in the natural sciences, in the human sciences, and in theology, still these differences in no way imply or suggest a transition from attention to inattention, from intelligence to stupidity, from reasonableness to silliness, from responsibility to irresponsibility.

Ninthly, the objects of theology do not lie outside the transcendental field. For that field is unrestricted, and so

outside it there is nothing at all. Moreover, it is not unrestricted in the sense that the transcendental notions are abstract, least in connotation and greatest in denotation; for the transcendental notions are not abstract but comprehensive; they intend everything about everything. So far from being abstract, it is by them that we intend the concrete, i.e., all that is to be known about a thing. Finally, while it is, of course, true that human knowing is limited, still the transcendental notions are not a matter of knowing but of intending; they intended all that each of us has managed to learn, and they now intend all that as yet remains unknown. In other words, the transcendental field is defined not by what man knows, not by what he can know, but by what he can ask about; and it is only because we can ask more questions than we can answer that we know about the limitations of our knowledge.

Tenthly, to assign to transcendental method a role in theology adds no new resource to theology but simply draws attention to a resource that has always been used. For transcendental method is the concrete and dynamic unfolding of human attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility. That unfolding occurs whenever anyone uses his mind in an appropriate fashion. Hence, to introduce transcendental method introduces no new resource into theology, for theologians always have had minds and always have used them. However, while transcendental method will introduce no new resource, it does add considerable light and precision to the performance of theological tasks, and this, I trust, will become manifest in due course.

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In the eleventh place, transcendental method offers a key to unified science. The immobility of the Aristotelian ideal conflicts with the developing natural science, developing human science, developing dogma, and developing theology. In harmony with all development is the human mind itself which effects the developments. In unity with all fields, however disparate, is again the human mind that operates in all fields and in radically the same fashion in each. Through the self-knowledge, the self-appropriation, the self-possession that result from making explicit the basic normative pattern of the recurrent and related operations of human cognitional process, it becomes possible to envisage a future in which all workers in all fields can find in transcendental method common norms, foundations, systematics, and common critical, dialectical, and heuristic procedures.

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In the twelfth place, the introduction of transcendental method abrogates the old metaphor that describes philosophy as the handmaid of theology and replaces it by a very precise fact. Transcendental method is not the intrusion into theology of alien matter from an alien source. Its function is to advert to the fact that theologies are produced by theologians, that theologians have minds and use them, that their doing so should not be ignored or passed over but explicitly acknowledged in itself and in its implications. Again, transcendental method is coincident with a notable part of what has been considered philosophy, but it is not any philosophy or all philosophy. Very precisely, it is a heightening of consciousness that brings to light our conscious and intentional operations and thereby

leads to the answers to three basic questions. What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it? The first answer is a cognitional theory. The second is an epistemology. The third is a metaphysics, where however, the metaphysics is transcendental, an integration of heuristic structures, and not some categorial speculation that reveals that all is water, or matter, or spirit, or process, of what have you.

It remains, however, that transcendental method is only a part of theological method. It supplies the basic anthropological component. It does not supply the specifically religious component. Accordingly, to advance from transcendental to theological method, it is necessary to add a consideration of religion. And before we can speak of religion, we first must say something about the human good and about human meaning.