

4. From Philosophy as Handmaid to Transcendental Method

If thirteenth-century Christians were to keep pace with the development of Western culture, quite probably they had to come to terms with Aristotle, to write commentaries on his works that took over his knowledge of nature and of man, and to develop a doctrine of the supernatural that made possible an Aristotelian presentation of the faith that Aristotle himself neither knew nor even conceived.

In any case the ~~for~~ metaphor that graced this domestication of Aristotle ~~had~~ spoke of philosophy as the handmaid of theology. It meant, I suppose, four things. First, many philosophic assertions are true, and truth is not to be feared. Secondly, philosophy is subordinate, for philosophy expresses man's knowledge, but theology is concerned to order what God knows and has revealed. Thirdly, philosophy is useful: it supplies a set of basic terms which theology may adapt to its own purposes; it makes explicit basic assumptions and demands their coherence. Finally, of course, the metaphor of the handmaid reveals that the relations between philosophy and theology had not been thought out in any adequate fashion. After all, how would one go about that? A standpoint internal to philosophy would not do. A standpoint internal to theology would have its somewhat similar limitations. ^{relevant} A standpoint external to both philosophy and theology is not ~~easy~~ easy to find.

Today many arguments are advanced for ending ^{the} mediaeval arrangement. The history of philosophy is now some seven centuries longer. The field has become vastly enlarged and enormously complicated. While any part of it may be relevant to the history of particular theological issues, the whole

and the subject but they have tended even to do less than justice to Aristotle himself whose account of human intelligence is well grounded in psychological fact.

can hardly be said to be a necessary propaedeutic to theology.

Further, modern philosophy acknowledges the existence of a critical problem. But quite obviously, despite Aristotle, theology has had its critical problem and has not solved it. Quite apart from such celebrated disputes as the De auxiliis and the earlier ~~protracted~~ and enduring conflict between Aristotelians and Augustinians, Thomists and Scotists, there is ~~what~~ the fact that speculative theology ~~has~~ become just a morass of disputed questions. When ^{all} Catholic theologians agree, normally it is on dogmatic and not on theoretical grounds.

Again, the great methodological achievement of the mediaeval period was the technique of the quaestio. Opposing authorities and reasons were lined up under the rubrics, Videtur quod ~~propter~~ non, and Sed contra est. A higher systematic ground was sought that reconciled the opposition. Finally, the principle of solution was applied to each of the authorities and reasons that had been alleged. The procedure was eminently logical. ^{However,} ~~But~~ it ~~overlooked~~ ^{regularly} ~~systematically~~ overlooked the possibility that the true solution was not some speculative distinction^s but the account of some historical development; and this recurrent oversight left systematic theology quite unprepared to make room for historical studies and to acknowledge ~~essential~~ the development of doctrines.

Moreover, there is a great demand today that theology be pastoral, practical, prayerful, in brief, that it cease being an Aristotelian theoria and, like a modern science, become continuous with practice.

Finally, it is quite true that Aristotelianism provided theology with a highly useful ^{clarification} ~~set~~ of basic terms and basic assumptions. But a contemporary theology needs to borrow terms and theorems from the human sciences; it has to assimilate

and those ~~qualitative~~ relations are normative. Experience ~~is~~ leads to inquiry. To experience what one in no way understands and in no way tries to understand is to be ~~completely~~ stupid. Further, to experience and inquire is to strive to understand; ~~and~~ the more intelligent that striving is, the more frequently it results in understanding; and spontaneously every act of understanding manifests itself in one's behaviour and, in the articulate, also in one's speech. However, ~~an~~ experience, ~~understanding~~ inquiry, understanding, expression demand reflection and judgement. Without the pause of reflection and judgement there is no discrimination between ideas that are well-founded and ideas that are not, and so there vanishes all distinction between fact and fiction, logic and sophistry, philosophy and myth, history and legend, astronomy and astrology, chemistry and alchemy. Finally, without a completely honest pursuit of truth, people that claim to be scientists turn out to be members of a party or vulgar self-seekers.

~~There is, then, a set of recurrent operations, linked~~
~~by normative relations in a pattern, and common to all the~~
~~special methods. In other words, since a method is a normative~~
~~pattern of recurrent and related operations, there is a method~~
~~that is common to all the special methods. This common~~
~~method, I believe,~~
~~not only, it can be shown that this method not only is~~
~~common to the special methods but also is the normal procedure~~
~~of the developed human mind in all instances of its coming to~~
~~know the realities of this world. In other terms, there is,~~
~~a sense in which the word, know, is generic and denotes~~
~~indeed, a sense in which the word, know, is generic and denotes~~
~~what is common to all cognitional operations, so that seeing~~
~~may be named knowing, and similarly hearing, understanding,~~

There is, then, a set ~~of~~ of recurrent operations. They are linked ~~to one another by~~ ^{to one another by} normative relations. These normative relations together form a ~~part~~ normative pattern. But a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations is a method. So there is a method that is common to the special methods.

The step from common to transcendental method involves a single change or clarification. There remain unchanged (1) inquiry, (2) understanding, (3) expression, (4) reflection, (5) weighing the evidence, (6) passing judgement, (7) deliberate pursuit of the scientific goal. However, the experience, ~~upon which the foregoing operations~~ with respect to which the foregoing operations occur, is not the outer experience of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, but the inner experience or consciousness ~~of~~ both of outer experiencing and of each of the ~~unrelated~~ seven listed above.

Hence, transcendental method, as we happen to be conceiving it, is the discovery of common method. The first step is to provide oneself with the relevant data, and this each must do for himself, and no one can have it done for him by someone else. For the relevant data are data of consciousness. They are awareness in oneself of oneself seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, inquiring, understanding, thinking, reflecting on one's thoughts, weighing the evidence for their claims, passing judgement, deliberating on the value of knowledge, deciding it merits unconditional allegiance in scientific endeavour, choosing to be loyal to that allegiance in one's own scientific work.

The second step inquires about the data. I have listed a number of operations. One has to associate names with ~~exper~~ experiences. This means that dissimilar experiences have to be distinguished and their differences explicitly noted, that similar experiences have to be grouped together and given a common name, that scientific consciousness has to be scrutinized to determine whether the classification that has been offered is complete.

A third step moves from the foregoing^o descriptive activity to explanation. At a first stage such explanation is cognitional theory. It sets forth the normative relations linking the several operations to one another. It discovers this linkage to be the dynamic structure of human cognitional consciousness. In brief, it answers the questions what happens when you know, why does that happen, how does it happen. A second stage moves from cognitional theory to epistemology. Cognitional theory treats cognitional operations as operations; epistemology^o treats them as cognitional. Cognitional theory asks what happens when you know. Epistemology asks why doing that is knowing. It works out the various meanings of the term, objectivity, and on the basis of cognitional theory settles the sense in which human knowing is objective. At a third stage ~~metaphysics~~ metaphysics replaces epistemology. If ^{a knower} ~~one~~ knows what he is doing when he is knowing and, as well, the precise sense in which his knowing is objective, then he can say not a little about the objects that by his knowing he can know. So as cognitional theory asks what you are doing when you are knowing, as epistemology asks why doing that is knowing, metaphysics asks what is known when you do it.

A fourth step is concomitant or regularly injected into the second and third. It is never enough to think up answers to descriptive and explanatory questions. One must also question the answers. Are they accurately phrased? What is the evidence for them? What could ^{be} said against them? What would be the answers to such objections? How good are the answers? In brief, there is a whole process of reflection, marshalling and weighing the evidence, coming to judgements that are probable or certain and known to be such.

A fifth step is the exercise of one's scientific ~~conscience~~ conscience. ~~It is a natural state~~ It presupposes a habitual state engendered by the seriousness and authenticity of one's dedication to science. It is cultivated and sharpened by one's scientific training that makes plain what is and what is not to be done. It is exercised spontaneously as a sensitivity when occasion arises and, at times, deliberately when one scrutinizes one's aims, one's efforts, one's procedures, one's difficulties.

~~Transcendental method, then, is common method achieving self-knowledge. But it also is reflexive: it is transcendental method achieving self-knowledge. Moreover since common and transcendental method have the same structure, there is, as it were, not only the image in the mirror but also the reflexion from another mirror of the image in the mirror.~~

Transcendental method, then, is a matter of finding out for oneself what one's own cognitional procedures are, why they work, what they attain. Moreover, since human knowing is not some single operation but a pattern of several related operations, transcendental method is a matter of applying the pattern of operations to the operations in the pattern. ^{While excluding alien motives and ends, one} ~~One~~ has to experience, investigate, understand, formulate, reflect, ~~weigh~~ weigh the evidence, judge, with respect to experiencing, investigating, understanding, formulating, reflecting, ~~and~~ weighing the evidence, ^{and} judging, ^{and} excluding alien motives and ends.

Further, transcendental method not only brings to light the nature of our cognitional operations but also reveals the personal subject to himself. For the pattern of operations common to all methods also is the pattern of common sense, of developed though non-scientific human knowing. Moreover, the pattern itself does not change, though emphases do, when one shifts from the pursuit of knowledge to the pursuit of other values.

Moreover, this revelation of the subject to himself reveals the subject as active, as actively attending to his experience, actively inquiring and striving to understand, actively reflecting and forming a judgement, actively deliberating and ~~chosen courses~~ choosing appropriate courses of action. So transcendental method may be described as the subject effecting an objectification of himself on the basis of his consciousness of himself and his operations. From this viewpoint transcendental method is a self-appropriation, a heightening not only of self-awareness but also of self-possession.

Transcendental method, then, is a matter of finding out for oneself what one's own cognitional procedures are, why they work, and what they can attain. But one finds this out in one's own consciousness. Hence transcendental method not only adds to the objects one knows explicitly and exactly but also involves a self-appropriation of the subject. Besides the experience, experiencing, inquiry, understanding, reflection, judgement, deliberation, decision that are investigated, there is the consciously experiencing, inquiring, understanding, reflecting, judging, deliberating, deciding subject that investigates. It is from the consciously investigating subject that knowledge of the subject as investigated object proceeds, and the fact that it has proceeded bestows on the subject a self-awareness and a self-possession that otherwise he would lack.

Now it is this self-appropriation that is the crucial matter. What counts ultimately is the subject as subject, the subject as actively directing attention, as actively striving to understand, as actively forming a judgement, as actively devoting himself to the value named knowledge. All accounts, descriptions, explanations of the subject are of the subject as object. But it is the subject as subject that describes and explains. Accounts, descriptions, explanations are more or less adequate, more or less open to change and development. But it is the subject as subject that will effect the changes and developments and, unless one supposes that man will be replaced by some other species, he will do so by attending to the relevant data, inquiring to understand them, reflecting to pass judgement on his understanding and, in the whole process, responsibly excluding the intrusion of alien motives and ends.

A reader may remark that, we if we spoke of a transition from human nature to human history, we now are back at human nature. This, of course, is true in the sense that we are discerning an invariant structure in the flow of change. But this structure pertains to the concrete nature of history rather than the abstract nature of man. It is operative in the fully conscious and not the sleeping subject. It is discovered by the fully conscious subject in himself. Moreover, as there is no structural difference between the pursuit of the value, knowledge, and the pursuit of other values, one can say that the invariant revealed by transcendental method is the active structure by which each individual makes his contribution to hisot history, performs his own meaningful acts, apprehends and responds to the meaningful acts of others.

The reader will observe that, if we spoke of a transition from human nature to human history, we now are back at human nature. This, of course, is true in the sense that we are discerning an invariant structure in the flow of change. It remains, however, that the structure in question is constitutive of the concrete subject and is discovered in himself for himself by the subject. Moreover, as it is not abstract but concrete, so too it cannot be set over ~~against history, for it is the structure of the activity~~ against history, for it is the active structure by which each individual makes his contribution to history, performs his own meaningful acts and apprehends ^{and responds to} the meaningful performance of others.

doing that is common to all special methods and, as well, to normal developed human knowing. If that changes, at least the practitioners of transcendental method will be the first to be aware of the fact.

By such self-appropriation the subject adverts to the coincidence in himself and also the divergence of the factual and the normative. For constitutive of the reality of the conscious subject is the capacity and need to slip out of the stupor of sleep and the passivity of dreams and to wake up, i. e., to begin to attend. Similarly constitutive is the capacity and need to go on beyond the splendours of colours and shapes, sounds and feelings, and to ask what? why? how? Similarly constitutive is the capacity and need to go beyond descriptions and explanations by asking whether they are true. Similarly constitutive is the capacity and need to go beyond truth and error, certitude and probability, and to deliberate about what is to be done. When I say these things are constitutive, I mean that we cannot put them off. We might pretend to do so, but the pretence would be transparent. If I chose to play the fool, still I would watch what I was doing, I would do it intelligently, I would want good reasons for doing it, I would take care that no untoward results followed. Still, if attention, inquiry, reflection, deliberation make us what we are, if they constitute us as personal subjects, none the less they do so when we are at our best. They are matters of fact but they also are norms, and the norms need not be observed. We can fail to attend, to inquire, to reflect, to deliberate. We can do so but insufficiently and inadequately. To be a man is perpetually to be becoming one.

The constitutive and normative structure of the personal subject is essentially open. If he is called upon to attend, to inquire, to reflect, to deliberate, if his opportunities to do so are limited by his own body and by his social, cultural, and historical position, still there are no intrinsic limitations on attending, inquiring, reflecting, deliberating

The constitutive and normative structure of the personal subject is essentially open. He is called upon to attend, to inquire, to reflect, to deliberate. But this summons of itself does not limit the field of his attention, inquiry, reflection, deliberation. No doubt, the exercise of these activities will be restricted by his own body and by his social, cultural, and historical situation. Yet even this restriction is not absolute, for there is always the possibility of the pioneer leading the way beyond settled frontiers.

The constitutive, normative, open structure is universal. No one will claim that he never had the experience of attending ^{of} to anything, trying to understand anything, endeavouring to judge fairly and reasonably, ^{of} of intending to decide in a responsible fashion. If anyone were to preface his lectures with such a claim, who would care to listen to him? If anyone were to put such a claim at the front of his books, who would buy them or read them?

The constitutive, normative, open, universal structure ~~humanity~~ grounds critical reflection. For it exists and functions whether or not subjects advert to it, whether they acknowledge it explicitly or make mistakes about its nature, grounds critical reflection. For whatever subjects may think their minds are or are not, none the less they use the minds they happen to have. When their views on their minds are correct, there is no contradiction between their performance and their doctrine. But when their views are mistaken, there is a contradiction between performance and doctrine; this contradiction can be pointed out; and all but a doctrinaire obscurantist would be ready to acknowledge the mistake. Thus, a follower of ~~Hume~~ Hume might claim that the human mind consisted solely of

impressions linked together by custom. But it would be urged that this view was in contradiction with the originality of Hume's mind, with the perspicacity of his intelligence, and the astuteness of his reasoning. It might further be urged that it was not solely out of custom that the disciple followed Hume, that he had not always followed him, that at times he seemed to be offering reasons for agreeing with him, that possibly this was not mere pretence, that he should consider the hypothesis that at times like other men he was a reasonable being.

To take another instance, someone might repeat the cardinal assertion of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason to the effect that our only cognitional operation immediately related to objects is ~~Wahrheit~~ Anschauung. Now this is true enough in a metaphysical perspective that assumes the reality of objects, the reality of our senses and their intuitions, and the priority of sensation to intellectual operations. This truth, however, is irrelevant, for a critical ~~epistemology~~ epistemology grounds a metaphysics and is not founded on one. On the other hand, from a critical viewpoint, one must distinguish between the content of particular cognitional acts and the object of a patterned set of acts. No doubt, the content of an Anschauung is immediate to the Anschauung. But the immediate relation to objects in human knowing resides in questioning, in intending an as yet unknown object and using the appropriate operations on the level of experience, of understanding, and of judging to arrive at knowledge of the intended unknown.

The constitutive, normative, open, universal, critical structure of the personal subject grounds dialectical analysis. For the critical demand for conformity between ~~ones~~ one's ~~total~~ cognitional performance and one's cognitional doctrine grounds a distinction between positions, in which conformity obtains, and counter-positions, in which it does not. Moreover, as philosophy develops, conformity may become ever more subtle and complete, and difformity ever more astutely hidden or disguised. By dialectical analysis is meant the exploration of the various degrees of conformity between performance and doctrine and, as well, the various kinds of difformity and the stratagems successively employed to cover it up. Primarily, such analysis is applied to professional philosophers but, the field is to be extended, secondarily, [^] since essentially the same questions recur in a more complicated form in accounts of symbol and myth, of hermeneutics and history, and of special scientific methods generally.

The constitutive, normative, open, universal, critical, dialectical structure of the personal subject is concrete. ~~We are~~ When we speak of a structure, we are not speaking of an abstraction, thereby reversing the transition from human nature to human history. By the structure of the personal subject we mean what the subject finds when he achieves self-appropriation. We mean the conscious, operative ground that has come to know itself, and knows itself as the originating source and the responding agent to a summons to attend, then to inquire, then to reflect, then to deliberate. We do not mean accounts of that originating source and responding agent, for all such accounts are more or less adequate, more or less subject to improvement or revision. We mean the concrete reality that originates and responds, that finds the accounts of himself inadequate, that continually

that
revises and improves them, and ~~yet~~ thereby heightens his self-
awareness and increases his self-knowledge, that always was
the concrete subject that he now knows better.