

LONERGAN ON INTERDISCIPLINARITY IN THEOLOGY

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Bernard Lonergan was preeminently an interdisciplinary thinker. *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*¹ seeks to clear an interdisciplinary common ground “where men [sic] of intelligence might meet.”² *Method in Theology*³ specifies a special method for interdisciplinarity in theology which he called the “method of integrated studies.”⁴ This paper will present Lonergan’s views on interdisciplinarity in response to the *Call for Papers*’ alternative topic: “a presentation and analysis of a method/theory for an interdisciplinary way of doing theology.” We discuss first, the mutual need for interdisciplinarity in theology; second, the special role of philosophy; third, methods (transcendental method, functional specialties, generalized empirical method); and, finally, the method of integrated studies.

MUTUAL NEED FOR INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Interdisciplinarity in theology means that in the course of theological discourse, theologians utilize the insights of other disciplines or take those other disciplines as partners in dialogue. Interdisciplinarity then is a given fact in theological discourse; and it is so because theology and the other disciplines mutually need each

1. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., and New York: Philosophical Library, 1957); henceforth *Insight*.

2. *Insight*, xiii.

3. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton. Longmans, Green and Co., and New York: Herder and Herder, 1972); henceforth *Method*.

4. *Method*, 365.

other to complete their respective contributions to human knowledge and human action. Thus, the empirical human sciences, which study the human person in the totality of his/her concrete performance, need theology for human living which includes not only God's love but also human sinfulness – two elements beyond the competence of these sciences.⁵ Theology, on the other hand, is a thematization of Christian religious living which sublates human living. Yet, theology is a special discipline that can thematize the Christian dimension of life but not the whole of human living. For it to thematize the whole of Christian and human living, theology must “broaden its horizon by uniting itself with philosophy as the basic and total science of man.”⁶

In the natural sciences, value seems to be a valueless term. Yet “not even the natural sciences can prescind from the question of value, for the very pursuit of science is the pursuit of a value.”⁷ The natural sciences, then, need a “successful method of theology” [that will provide] “a technique for dealing competently, respectfully, and honestly with this issue.”⁸

Lonergan justifies this mutual need by referring to Newman's basic theorem expressed in his *Idea of a University* that human knowledge is an integral whole; that if a significant part of knowledge, e.g., theology, were omitted, three consequences would follow: first, people will be ignorant of that part; second, the rounded whole of human knowing will be mutilated; and third, the remaining parts that attempt to integrate those parts into a whole without the missing parts will result in a distorted integration.⁹ Hence the need for an integral interdisciplinarity.

THE SPECIAL ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY

There was a time when Aristotelian philosophy exercised dominion over the whole of human knowledge; even the natural

5. Bernard Lonergan, “Questionnaire on Philosophy,” in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, Vol. 17 (Toronto: Lonergan Research Institute, 2004), 359; henceforth “Questionnaire on Philosophy”.

6. Ibid.

7. Bernard Lonergan, “Theology and Man's Future,” in *A Second Collection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 143.

8. Ibid., 144.

9. Ibid., 141-142.

sciences derived their basic terms and relations from philosophy, specifically from metaphysics. But this domination broke down with the new notion of science in the seventeenth century and the equally novel notion of history in the nineteenth century.

Aristotelian science was “certain knowledge of things through their causes, *certa rerum per causas cognitio*.”¹⁰ It asserted an element of necessity, truth, and certainty and an element of causality, understanding and explanation; it stressed material, formal, efficient and final causes. These elements were proven through demonstrative syllogisms. On this view, the basic and total science had to be a metaphysics that sets forth the necessary principles and conclusions about being as being.¹¹ Modern science, however, considers necessity a marginal notion as it is now replaced by verifiable possibility; scientific findings are no longer certain but merely probable as the best opinion of the day. The four causes have given way to empirically validated laws; and finally, modern science has developed its own methods and procedures.

To illustrate the point that modern science has marginalized necessity and certainty in favor of verifiable possibility, let us trace the odyssey of cholesterol. Initially, cholesterol was considered good for it was food for the brain; then cholesterol was considered bad for it clogged the arteries; next, cholesterol is of two kinds, the good and bad, and one should take only the good and avoid the bad; currently, and we don’t know for how long, the best opinion of the day is that it is bad to take only the good cholesterol; one must balance the good and the bad.

Faced with this ever changing scientific conclusions, laws, and principles, scientists could no longer found their science on scientific principles and laws but rather on method. It was method that brought forth the laws and principles, and it will be method that will revise them if and when the time for revision comes.¹²

10. “Questionnaire on Philosophy,” 355.

11. Ibid.

12. Bernard Lonergan, “The Ongoing Genesis of Methods,” in *A Third Collection* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press), 149; henceforth “The Ongoing Genesis of Methods”.

The historical revolution of the nineteenth century opposed Aristotelian thought only insofar as it could not conceive history as a science since history did not derive its basic terms and relations from metaphysics. It introduced the new notions of historicity, historical consciousness, and the concomitant plurality of cultures that were unknown to static Aristotelian philosophy which studied only human nature but not human historicity. Aristotelian thinking was not aware that meaning is constitutive of human living; that meanings are subject to change; and that cultures develop and decline. It did not realize that today the tasks and problems in the field of theology would “call for method, verified possibility, full awareness of the subject, and a thorough grasp of human historicity.”¹³

Lonergan also echoes theology’s need for method. “A theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix.”¹⁴ But how is one to conceive of culture? There are two notions of culture, the classicist and the empiricist. The classicist maintains that there is but one universal culture; while the empiricist affirms a plurality of cultures.

When the classicist notion of culture prevails, theology is conceived as a permanent achievement, and then one discourses on its nature. When culture is conceived empirically, theology is known to be an ongoing process, and then one writes on its method.¹⁵

The radically new notions of science and history have led to the centrality of method. It happens that in the new context, philosophy and method are closely intertwined with each other; and so we discuss now the special role of philosophy and method in interdisciplinarity in theology.

An earlier era crowned theology as the “queen of the sciences”; philosophy, as lady in waiting, was bestowed the title “handmaid of theology.” But times have changed with the assaults wrought by the new notions of science and history. Philosophy as the basic and total science has to be reformulated.

13. *Ibid.*, 52.

14. *Method*, xi.

15. *Ibid.*, xi.

... [So] now that the particular sciences offer no more than the best available opinion, now that they are ruled in the last resort not by their basic principles and laws but by the methods by which their current principles and laws may be revised, it becomes necessary for the basic and total science to be the basic and total method.¹⁶

In the extant era, philosophy has been transformed from the basic and total science into the basic and total method. Its mediatory role in theology will no longer be based on content but on method. What is this basic and total method that is philosophy?

... it is a method reached only through performing the operations of such particular disciplines as mathematics, natural science, common sense, human studies, adverting to the operations so performed and thematizing them, adverting further to the dynamism linking related operations and thematizing that dynamism, thereby arriving at a normative pattern for each of the particular methods and, through them, to the common core of all methods, namely, the dynamic structure of human coming to know and coming to decide.¹⁷

On theology as the “queen of the sciences” and philosophy the “handmaid of theology” we can now offer a very precise formulation. Theology, as thematizing religious living that sublates human living, also sublates philosophy. Since philosophy is now the basic and total method, its mediatory function in theology will now be methodological; consequently, theology’s contribution to the human sciences will also be methodological.

If theology is to be the queen of the sciences ... then theologians have to take a professional interest in the human sciences and make a positive contribution to their methodology.¹⁸

Theology is “queen of the sciences” because it sublates philosophy. Since philosophy’s mediation is now methodological, theology’s positive contribution will also be methodological.

16. “Questionnaire on Philosophy,” 375.

17. *Ibid.*, 376.

18. *Insight*, 743.

Philosophy, on the other hand, is “handmaid of theology” because she serves her queen only in a mediatory role. As to philosophy’s new role in interdisciplinarity in theology, philosophy is “the ultimate ground of all interdisciplinary work”;¹⁹ and its office is to understand “both in their similarities and differences the several methods of the particular sciences and, as well, the procedures of common sense.”²⁰ In virtue of such philosophic understanding, the theologian will be able to adequately thematize Christian religions “both in itself and in its effects upon the whole of human living.”²¹ With the centrality of method in the contemporary context, let us now move on to Lonergan’s view on method.

METHOD

Uncharacteristically, Lonergan begins his exposition of a preliminary notion of method with a definition and, not much later, an enumeration of methodical operations.

A method is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results.²²

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.²³

Of this definition and enumeration, we observe:

First, the pattern of operations in the list is performed by conscious subjects; they are conscious operations. Further, the listed operations are transitive verbs that intend direct objects; they are intentional operations. Thus, the pattern of operations is both conscious and intentional.

Second, these conscious and intentional operations occur in four generic levels of consciousness. The first level, *experience*, includes

19. “Questionnaire on Philosophy,” 359.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Method*, 4.

23. *Ibid.*, 6.

the operations of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, feeling. The second level, *understanding*, embraces inquiring, imagining, understanding, conceiving, formulating. The third level, *judgment*, covers reflecting, marshalling and weighing the evidence, judging. The fourth level, *decision*, involves deliberating, evaluating, deciding, acting. Further, each of the four generic levels of consciousness intends a specific generic object. Experience intends *data*; understanding intends *intelligibility*; judgment intends *truth*; decision intends *value*.

Third, the four levels are related ascensionally. From the data of experience, understanding rises to comprehend the data. From the understanding of the data, judgment rises to verify the correctness of the understanding of the data. From the verified correctness of the understanding of the data, decision rises to act in accord with the correct understanding of the data. This ascending movement of intentional consciousness constitutes the normative pattern of our conscious and intentional operations.

Fourth, this ascending movement may be viewed as a series of sublations with understanding sublating experience, judgment sublating understanding, and decision sublating judgment. Lonergan uses the term, sublation, not in Hegel's but in Karl Rahner's use of the term to mean that

... what sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis, yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it; on the contrary, needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context.²⁴

Fifth, the four ascending levels of intentional consciousness or conscious intentionality are both dynamic and self-transcendent. They are dynamic since they are but the "successive stages in the unfolding of a single thrust, the eros of the human spirit."²⁵ They are self-transcending insofar as one mounts from the lower level of one's empirical experience to the higher level of one's intellectual experience, then to the still higher level of one's rational experience,

24. *Method*, 241.

25. *Ibid.*, 13.

and finally to the highest level of one's experience of moral consciousness. It is on the highest level of this series of self-transcendent experiences that human being constitutes himself/herself as an authentic being since "man [sic] achieves authenticity in self-transcendence."²⁶

TRANSCENDENTAL METHOD

The very same definition of the preliminary notion of method as "a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results" is also Lonergan's very same definition of transcendental method. This method is "transcendental" because the envisaged results are "not confined categorically to some particular field or subject but regard any result that could be intended"²⁷ by our conscious and intentional operations.

What is exceptionally unique about Lonergan's conception of transcendental method is the fact that transcendental method is actually the dynamic structure of our "own cognitional and moral being."²⁸ In other words, transcendental method is constitutive of us as human beings. *We are transcendental method!* We clarify this paradoxical view of transcendental method by distinguishing its latent and thematized dimensions. "As latent, it is the basic pattern of operations that is operative in every human being. As thematized through self-appropriation, it provides a basis for all other methods."²⁹

GENERALIZED EMPIRICAL METHOD

Generalized empirical method is a term Lonergan retrieves from *Insight* where it is described as the method that applies to the data of consciousness in contrast with empirical method that applies only to the data of sense.³⁰ Further, generalized empirical method

26. Ibid., 104.

27. Ibid., 14.

28. Ibid., 12.

29. Ivo Coelho, *Hermeneutics and Method: The 'Universal Viewpoint' in Lonergan* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 155.

30. *Insight*, 268.

has to be able to deal “not only with data within a single consciousness, but also with relations between different conscious subjects, between conscious subjects and their milieu or environment, and between consciousness and its neural basis.”³¹ Dormant in *Method in Theology*, “generalized empirical method” resurfaces in Lonergan’s post-*Method* writings where he had been increasingly referring to his work not as “transcendental method” but as “generalized empirical method.”

Lonergan’s retrieval and refinement of generalized empirical method was motivated by the need for “ongoing dialectically operative methods grounded in decisions and actions aimed at promoting good and overcoming alienation.”³² He realized that the end of the age of innocence in which authenticity in the empirical human sciences was taken for granted had come to an end. Today, empirical human sciences must face the fact that the data they are working on may be a mixed product of authenticity and unauthenticity and that the very investigation of data may be affected by the personal or inherited unauthenticity of investigators.³³

The dialectically operative methods are what Lonergan calls “method as praxis.”³⁴ Some of these dialectically operative methods are taken from *Insight* and *Method in Theology*.³⁵ Contrasting “method as praxis” with the empirical methods, Lonergan notes that while the empirical methods move in an upward direction “from empirical research through exegetical interpretations to historical reconstruction,” method as praxis tends to move in a downward direction. The investigator starts by considering the values that underlie particular human decisions; then he makes a judgment of value or disvalue embodied in those decisions; next, he resorts to a hermeneutics of recovery and a hermeneutics of suspicion, regarding values and disvalues in traditions in order to advance human actions

31. Ibid.

32. Matthew L. Lamb, “Praxis and Generalized Empirical Method” in idem, *Creativity and Method: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1981), 62.

33. Ibid., 61-62.

34. Ibid., 62.

35. *Infra*.

that foster the basic values decided upon which reveal the underlying values motivating the decision.³⁶

Explaining further this new dialectical element in generalized empirical method, Ysaac elucidates that what Lonergan really did was to apply dialectic, the fourth functional specialty, “to all eight specialties, but especially to the last four.”³⁷ I also submit that the generalization of the notion of dialectic had already commenced in *Method in Theology* where dialectic “may play a further role. It can be an instrument for the analysis of social process and the social situation.”³⁸

Such is the new element in generalized empirical method – the generalization of the notion of dialectic with Lonergan introducing method as praxis and retrieving and sharpening the dialectical elements already found in *Insight* and *Method in Theology*. With generalized empirical method seen as a widening of method in theology,³⁹ one can claim that generalized empirical method is a sublation of transcendental method with all the richness that sublation implies.

THE FUNCTIONAL SPECIALTIES

Method *in* theology is transcendental method as operative in theologians doing theological work. The method *of* theology, however, is the special or particular method proper to theology itself that includes transcendental method and the functional specialties. The integration of transcendental method and the functional specialties into the “method of theology” has been investigated by Ysaac who explained that transcendental method had to be widened to include not only individual subjectivities but also communities, and transcendent reality as well. To apply method to this wider context, Lonergan had to include in his formulation of transcendental method

36. Ibid., 72.

37. Walter Y. Ysaac, “Inculturation as Praxis and Method of Radical Solidarity with the People,” in *The Third World and Bernard Lonergan* (Manila: Lonergan Centre, 1986), 42.

38. *Method*, 365.

39. W. Ysaac, “Inculturation as Praxis and Method of Radical Solidarity with the People,” 42.

The human good and human meaning, and consequently, its character of being not altogether private but necessarily somehow “*public*” being operative not only in individual communities but also in the ongoing historical process of self-constitution of authentic communities within the world of human society.⁴⁰

Lonergan effected this integration by a “public prolongation” of transcendental method “from four to eight steps or functional specialties and its sublation by the religious experience of conversion.”⁴¹ What then are the functional specialties and how did Lonergan ground the division into eight specialties? Lonergan cites two bases for the division.

First, Lonergan avers that theological investigations occur in two phases: “a mediating phase that encounters the past, and a mediated phase that confronts the future.”⁴²

If one is to harken to the word, one must also bear witness to it. If one engages in *lectio divina*, there come to mind *quaestiones*. If one assimilates tradition, one learns that one should pass it on. If one encounters the past, one also has to take one’s stand toward the future. In brief, there is a theology *in oratione obliqua* that tells what Paul and John, Augustine and Aquinas, and anyone else had to say about God and the economy of salvation. But there is also a theology *in oratione recta* in which the theologian, enlightened by the past, confronts the problems of his own day.⁴³

Second, Lonergan turns transcendental method, so to speak, “on itself.” Our conscious and intentional operations occur on four distinct levels with each level having its own proper end. Functional specialization arises “inasmuch as one operates on all four levels to achieve the end proper to some particular level.”⁴⁴ Thus one may operate on the levels of experience, understanding, judgment, and decision to achieve the end proper to the first level of experience

40. Ibid., 41.

41. Ibid.

42. *Method*, 144.

43. Ibid., 133.

44. Ibid., 134.

which is the apprehension of data. This mode of operation gives rise to the functional specialty research. Similarly one may operate on all four levels to achieve the end proper to the second level of understanding which is meaning; this mode of operation gives rise to the functional specialty interpretation, and so on.⁴⁵

Since theological operations involve two distinct phases, and since in every phase there are four levels of conscious and intentional operations, there will arise four functional specialties in the first upward phase of theological investigation and another four specialties in the second downward phase. Graphically,

Mediating Upward Phase	Levels of Consciousness	Mediated Downward Phase
4. Dialectic	<i>Decision</i>	5. Foundations
3. History	<i>Judgment</i>	6. Doctrines
2. Interpretation	<i>Understanding</i>	7. Systematics
1. Research	<i>Experience</i>	8. Communication

The first upward phase of theological activity consists of *research*, which assembles the data relevant to a theological investigation; *interpretation*, which ascertains their meaning; *history*, which finds meanings incarnate in deeds and movements; and *dialectic*, which investigates the conflicting conclusions of historians, interpreters, researchers.⁴⁶ These first four specialties reveal the religious situation and mediate an encounter with persons witnessing to Christ. They also raise the questions whether one will continue with the tradition or risk the initiative of change. These are existential questions and, as such, they occur on the fourth level of intentional consciousness, the level of decision, action and self-constitution. The decision that the theological investigator is called upon to make, however, is not a theological event but a religious one. With that decision one effects the transition from the first to the second phase, a transition from the fourth functional specialty (dialectic) to the fifth functional specialty (foundations), both of which occur on the fourth level of consciousness.

45. Ibid., 133.

46. Ibid., 35.

The second phase of theological operations, consists of *foundations*, which objectifies the horizon effected by intellectual, moral, and religious conversion; *doctrines*, which uses foundations as a guide in selecting from the alternatives presented by dialectic; *systematics*, which seeks an ultimate clarification of the meaning of doctrine; and *communications*, which conveys to and constitutes the Christian message in the world.⁴⁷ The second, downward, committed phase of theological investigation, then, starts with *foundations* objectifying and thematizing authentic conversion; then employs this objectified foundations as the horizon within which *doctrines* are to be apprehended; then to a systematic understanding of those doctrines (*systematics*) within the foundational horizon; and finally, within the foundational horizon, to a creative exploration of *communications* differentiated according to media, classes of peoples, and common cultural interest.⁴⁸

A few observations may be in order.

First, because functional specialties result from the widening of transcendental method to include communities like the community of theologians, the functional specialties had to be constituted as “a framework for collaborative creativity, which outlines the various clusters of recurrent and related operations to be performed by theologians when they go about their various tasks.”⁴⁹

Second, it is within this single collaborative framework of the eight specialties that “all theological operations occur”⁵⁰ and so field and subject specializations in theology, the varieties of theologies and theological specializations, will turn out to be subdivisions of the eight specializations. Because in contemporary theology there are many theologies and theological specializations, this collaborative framework must be seen “not as a single set of related operations, but as a series of interdependent sets”⁵¹ of related operations.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid., 136.

49. Ibid., xi.

50. Ibid., 140.

51. Ibid., 125.

Third, these eight specialties are interdependent on one another and constitute “the dynamic unity of theology...the unity of interdependent parts, each adjusting to changes in the others, and the whole developing as a result of such changes.”⁵² It is within the realm of this normative dynamic unity in theology that we find the common ground for *intradisciplinarity in theology*. For theology is a dynamic unity “advancing towards an ideal goal.”⁵³

Fourth, the first four theological functional specialties, research – interpretation, history and dialectics (i.e., the empirical phase) can be done by unconverted theologians. However, the second phase of theology – foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications (i.e., the committed phase) can be done only by a converted theologian.

Finally, despite its novelty, the functional specialties can fit within its ambit the older specializations. So, foundations, doctrines, systematics and communications correspond roughly to fundamental, dogmatic, speculative, and pastoral or practical theology. Research, interpretation, history, and dialectic are also found in the older classifications. Textual criticism corresponds roughly with research; commentaries and interpretative monographs with interpretation; church history, the history of dogmas, salvation history with history; the ecumenical variant of apologetics with dialectic.⁵⁴

INTEGRATED STUDIES AND ITS METHOD

Concretizing his concern for interdisciplinarity in theology, Lonergan recognizes “integrated studies” as an independent discipline within theology and prescribes for it a special method “parallel to the method of theology.”⁵⁵ As a discipline within theology, integrated studies participate and assist in the church’s redemptive and constructive functions of undoing evil and promoting the good, not only among Christians but also in human society in general.

52. Ibid., 144.

53. *Method*, 125.

54. Ibid., 136.

55. Ibid., 366.

Thus, integrated studies must occur in many levels – local, regional, national, international. Local levels define problems and work out their solutions. Higher levels, on the other hand, provide information exchange centers, work on problems that cannot be solved on lower levels, organize the lower levels, coordinate and identify the problems that are best studied on what levels and pave the way for collaborative effort.⁵⁶ Interdisciplinary theologians will therefore come into close contact with experts in different fields, with policy makers, planners, with clerical and lay workers to find ways of meeting the needs both of Christians and of all humankind.⁵⁷ To most effectively do this, interdisciplinary theologians must be able “to apply the best available knowledge and the most efficient techniques to coordinated group action.”⁵⁸

Such, in Lonergan’s view, is the taxing and trying task of interdisciplinary theologians. It is a task, I submit, that is specifically theological and does not stand halfway between the outer boundaries of theology and of the other disciplines. It is an integral part of theology itself because it is an essential component of the Christian message and mission on which it must also reflect.

INTEGRATED STUDIES AND THE FUNCTIONAL SPECIALTIES

Just as in theology there are eight functional specialties, so also there are eight functional specialties in interdisciplinary theology. Just as the first four specialties in theology mediate an encounter with the past and the second four specialties mediate a confrontation with the present and the future, so also the eight functional specialties in interdisciplinary theology will perform similar functions. Just as the theologian in the second phase of theological operations can perform his functions only when he is religiously, morally, and intellectually converted, so also the theologian in theological interdisciplinarity must be similarly converted.

In effect, the first five functional specialties (research, interpretation, history, dialectic, and foundations) are shared in

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Ibid.*, 367.

58. *Ibid.*

common by theologians in both theology and interdisciplinary theology. They differ only in the sixth to the eighth functional specialties for integrated studies is practical in orientation inasmuch as it participates in the church's redemptive and constructive functions, the functions of undoing evil and promoting the good in human society. Consequently, instead of doctrines, systematics, and communications, integrated studies will have policy making, planning, and implementation. It must be emphasized that although theology and integrated studies share basically the fundamental structure of the functional specialties, they do not share the same contents for they are different specializations.

Further, *mutatis mutandis*, the affirmations made above about the functional specialties in theology will also hold true with the functional specialties in interdisciplinary theology (i.e., integrated studies).

INTEGRATED STUDIES AND TRANSCENDENTAL/GENERALIZED EMPIRICAL METHOD

Integrated studies aim to integrate theology with other scholarly and scientific sciences. This unification will not be done by one "super theologian" but by the relevant theological interdisciplinary community. Transcendental method, however, provides "a key to unified science;"⁵⁹ for it will be through the self-appropriation of transcendental method that "all workers in all fields can find in transcendental method common norms, foundations, systematics, and common critical, dialectical, and heuristic procedures."⁶⁰

COMMON NORMS

All special methods spring from transcendental method for they are the products of the normative pattern of human attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility. In a post-*Method* work, Lonergan excellently founds these norms in

59. Ibid., 24.

60. Ibid.

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 unauthenticity as he observes or violates the immanent norms of his own sensitivity, his own intelligence, his own reasonableness, his own responsibility.⁶¹

COMMON FOUNDATIONS

Because all disciplines originate from a common source in the dynamic structure of our cognitive and moral being, their foundations will have to be found in transcendental method itself. It is to the extent that all investigators acknowledge the common foundations of their disciplines in transcendental method

that a secure basis will be attained for attacking interdisciplinary problems, that the sciences will be mobilized within a higher unity of vocabulary, thought, and orientation, in which they will make their quite significant contribution to the solution of fundamental problems.⁶²

COMMON SYSTEMATICS

For different disciplines to utilize each other's insights and/or to engage in dialogue, they must share some common basic terms and relations. Transcendental method, as objectified, provides all disciplines with basic terms and relations that refer to the operations of cognitional process and the relations that link them together. Also, to further expand that common systematic base, cognitional terms and relations may be expanded to ground an epistemology and a metaphysics of proportionate being.⁶³

61. "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," 150.

62. *Method*, 22-23.

63. *Ibid.*, 21.

COMMON CRITICAL PROCEDURES

Lonergan laments the fact that most human beings disagree in a most outrageous fashion on the basic philosophic issues on the nature of knowing (cognitional theory), objectivity (epistemology), and reality (metaphysics). Without some basic agreement on these three issues, interdisciplinary interchange will be extremely difficult if not impossible. Transcendental method, however, provides critical tools to resolve these basic issues. For

differences on the third level, 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.⁶⁴

Lonergan illustrates: “Hume thought the human mind to be a matter of impressions linked together by custom. But Hume’s mind was quite original. Therefore, Hume’s own mind was not what Hume considered the human mind to be.”⁶⁵

COMMON DIALECTICAL PROCEDURES

The critical procedures of transcendental method will help resolve basic differences on philosophic views concerning knowing, objectivity, and reality. The interdisciplinary issues will not center on these three philosophic issues but rather on the works of scholars and scientists that may result from mistaken views on cognitional theory, epistemology, and reality. Transcendental method provides a dialectical tool that critiques these tainted works in order to discern in them the presence or absence of positions and counter-positions. Positions are conclusions consistent with the correct views on the three basic philosophic issues; while counter-positions are conclusions that conflict with either or all of the correct views on the basic issues. “In this fashion one can determine the dialectical series of basic

64. *Ibid.*, 20-21.

65. *Ibid.*, 21.

positions, which criticism confirms, and of basic counter-positions which criticism confounds.”⁶⁶

As early as *Insight*, where transcendental method went by the name of “rational self-consciousness,” Lonergan had already pointed out that the dialectical tool in generalized empirical method

constitutes a principle of integration for specialized studies that concentrate on this or that aspect of human living, and it can integrate not only theoretical work but also factual reports; finally, by its distinction between insight and bias, progress and decline, it contains in a general form the combination of the empirical and critical attitudes essential to human science.⁶⁷

COMMON HEURISTIC PROCEDURES

Human knowing is anticipatory in character for it anticipates the act of understanding and the content of the act of understanding that will be involved in answers to questions. Transcendental method will reveal the nature of this heuristic nature of human knowing by bringing to light the heuristic structure of human inquiry that consists in (1) naming the unknown, (2) working out its properties, and (3) using these properties to guide discovery. This heuristic procedure will reveal the activity of conscious intending and its correlative the intended, which – although still unknown – is at least already intended.⁶⁸ Now, coupled with a basic set of terms and relations established in a common systematics, one may at once make basic determinations of the intended unknown even if it is but the minimal assertion that the intended object is “an object to be known by experiencing, understanding, and judging.”⁶⁹

CONCLUSION

Our discussion of the method of interdisciplinarity has centered on the operations of the subject since all the different methods we have discussed are the normative operations of the

66. *Ibid.*, 21.

67. *Insight*, 244.

68. *Method*, 22.

69. *Ibid.*

subject. But we have not really integrated theology and the other disciplines on the object side. *Insight* integrates reality from the viewpoint of a metaphysics of proportionate being which is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structures of proportionate being.⁷⁰ That integration was metaphysical. Can we not make a similar integration on the side of the object that is not metaphysical but theological? Can there be a theological integration of the heuristic structures and methods of human living and transcendent reality? Does transcendent reality abrogate emergent probability? Is the “omega point” the full integration of religious living and ultimate reality?

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70. *Insight*, 391.