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**REASONING IN PRACTICE:  
FOUNDATION FOR UNDERSTANDING  
IN A MULTI-CULTURAL CONTEXT**

by

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**submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
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**in the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities at the  
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus.**

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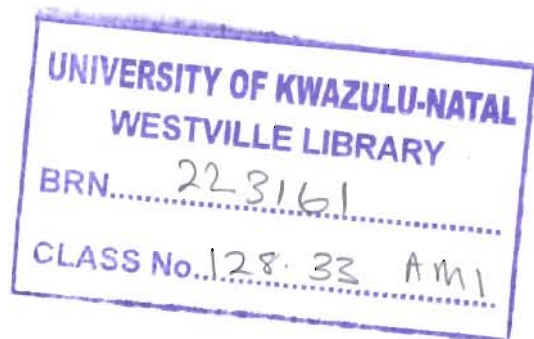
## DECLARATION

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“Reasoning in Practice: Foundation for Understanding in a Multi-Cultural Context”

is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree to any other university.

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Date: 12.07.2004

## ABSTRACT

The thesis is based on the assumption that reasoning functions in its context. The locus of this context is the subject-in-act. The subject-in-act observes, wonders, asks questions, judges and makes justifications. In the functioning of reasoning, she uses the basic set of these cognitional operations rather than pure logical form or the empirical content alone to reach conclusions. Our contention is that logic cannot function on its own without the subject-in-act. Hitherto, efforts have been made to show that any knowledge system is based on either purely axiomatic and mathematical formulations or deductive tautologies and inductive reasoning or empirical convictions based on probability. The thesis attempts to argue that reasoning is not possible without the interventions of the set of cognitional operations. In the thesis we take as an example the early Wittgenstein's attempt to give a foundation for our knowing or the identity of what can be known, using atomic or elementary propositions. Wittgenstein's own later repudiation of this introduces the idea that logic, and language are relative to social context. In Wittgenstein's second phase, we focus on the analysis of understanding in terms of "following a rule." This idea is later taken up by Winch in relation to his point of inter-cultural learning but he does not give us the method of how to achieve that learning. Lonergan introduces the idea of "self-appropriation" which we interpret by the idea of the "subject-in-act." It is this subject-in-act that forms a foundation for all possible understanding, explaining and knowing. Barden picks up from Winch and addresses precisely the issue of traditions and cultural differences. We want to argue that traditions and context are important in a sense that they serve as a starting point in our search for knowledge but in themselves, are not ultimately foundational. What is ultimately foundational is not a set of propositions, or rules to be followed, or social practice, but the subject-in-act.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my wife Arinaitwe Placcy Sango, my children and all the generations to come.

To all of them the treasured package is, in whatever you say and do, always be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable and be responsible



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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

This thesis presents an argument that formal logic or any other system of knowledge is not ultimately foundational for understanding or knowing reality in all aspects. Instead, it is the subject-in-act who is ultimately foundational. Our argument is conducted in six chapters. The first one is the general introduction in which we give the major problem of the thesis that provoked and motivated us to carry out this research. In this chapter, we also give the major assumption, which underlies the entire thesis. It is this assumption that we set out to investigate and which reflects the objective of our investigation. This major assumption, we hope, contains the solution or the answer to our major problem. It is in this chapter still that we shall give the scope of our investigations, reflecting the main references consulted during the study. This is done, unlike in the bibliography where all the references are given irrespective of the chapters concerned, to provide an on-the-spot check for the main references used for each specific chapter. In order to provide proper focus to the whole thesis, we shall provide a chapter-by-chapter résumé.

### **1.1 Major Problem**

The problem that this thesis sets out to investigate begins with Wittgenstein's attempt to develop a perfect formal system of logic that would reflect reality in all departments of knowing. But, as we know, formal logic has the problem of being suppositional or hypothetical and excessively structural. Logical structures tend to reflect symbolic form but no content. These structures or forms operate on rules and laws of logic. Propositions are expressed in symbols, which are variables and constants. The whole enterprise is taken as being self-sufficient. This situation becomes problematic because formal logic tends to disregard the architect – subject-in-act – who is the agent behind the symbols, the structures, the rules and the laws of logic.

Formal logic fails to show clearly the link between the formal operations of logic and epistemology. Because of this shortcoming, the purity of logic can no longer be taken for granted. In the context of thinking systematically, arguing rationally and

reasoning correctly, there should be a clear link between logic and epistemology and this link should be the agent – subject-in-act – who operates in both logic and epistemology. This link should take into account the social contexts and their underlying values. This endeavour requires the active involvement of the subject-in-act that needs first to appreciate her capacity to observe, theorise and judge the accuracy of her understanding. We need to point out that formal logical techniques are simply a help in this process but not ultimately foundational in themselves. So the problem, which we are investigating, is the neglect or total lack of the architect of logic or systems or contexts or traditions – the subject-in-act – in the functioning of logic and epistemology within the scope of a multi-cultural context.

Concretely the problem that this thesis is set to investigate is lack of a foundation for knowing that is ultimately basic. That is a foundation which can lead us to knowledge in all its departments. These departments include logic in all its entirety, science in all its entirety, non-science in all its entirety and all traditions irrespective of whether they are African, European, Oriental or any other.

## **1.2 Major Assumption**

After identifying our problem as being lack of an ultimate foundation to knowing reality in all its departments, we proceed to identify a solution in our major assumption. The assumption, which is serving as our guide to the entire thesis, is that we cannot find a foundation that is ultimately basic to knowing in all respects in the existing schools of thought, as we shall illustrate in the chapter résumé. That is we cannot find the solution, for example, in naïve realism *per se*. The same can be said for rationalism and empiricism. The main reason being that they are not comprehensive enough, as the thesis shall illustrate, to encompass all knowing in its entirety. Our guiding assumption, therefore, is that the foundation that is ultimately basic can be found in the architect of all these schools of thought and that architect is the subject-in-act.

As an example we take formal logic in which form and content have been regarded as two separate entities. On top of that formal logic has been regarded as ultimately basic or foundational for the understanding, explaining and knowing reality in all its aspects. Our view is that formal logic on its own is not ultimately basic or

foundational. If that were the case, it would presuppose a set of propositions as ultimately basic to reasoning. This presupposition, however, would be difficult to justify, because cultures might differ as to what would be taken as ultimately basic propositions. This difference might inevitably lead to cultural relativism. However, we notice the prevalence of multi-cultural wisdom where one culture benefits from the precepts of another culture and vice versa. This fact proves that cultural relativism does not always apply.

For the purposes of this thesis, our stand therefore, is that formal logic – like any other mode of reasoning or any other field of learning that would lead to the understanding, explaining and knowing reality in all its aspects in any system, or tradition – has to be placed in its context, that is the subject-in-act. It is the subject-in-act who is ultimately basic or foundational for understanding, explaining and knowing reality in all senses; but not the set of propositions as it is presupposed in formal logic. Neither is it any method or system or tradition but the set of operations performed by the subject-in-act, who is wondering, asking questions and critical of suggested interpretations. It is the subject-in-act, therefore, engaged in the practical act of reasoning, who underlies all logic, all systems and all traditions in their respective set-ups.

### **1.3 Literature Overview**

#### ***1.3.1 Atomic Propositions and Language-games: Wittgenstein***

In this chapter we would like to examine – in relation to Wittgenstein – the argument that the place of logic – formal logic – in the expression of the basic structures of reality should be replaced by the necessary operations of the subject by which we uncover the truth of things and facts. We contend that the subject, in the sense which we will explain more fully in Chapter Three, should be ultimately basic or foundational in leading to the understanding and explanation of reality around us in all its forms. However we do not imply that the subject-in-act can decisively acquire all knowing or all understanding or can explain “all reality” in one’s lifetime. This may turn out to be an impossible epistemological mission to pursue. But definitely the subject-in-act, and this is the sense in which, at times, we are using the expressions “all knowing”, “all understanding” and “all explaining”, can *lead* us to all knowing



and all understanding. It can also *lead* us to the explaining of reality in all its manifestations.

In our analysis we shall begin with Wittgenstein's ideas to help us discuss this. In doing so we shall examine some of his early thoughts in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1974) and some of his later thoughts in the *Philosophical Investigations* (1997).

Our choice of these two books does not in any way show that the ideas reflected in them are conclusive about Wittgenstein's thinking. We select them because they adequately reflect our thinking about Wittgenstein's mistaken view about the subject as a knower. This fact will be explained in our discussions in Chapter Two.

We shall show that the subject-less approach in the picture theory, as it is put in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* does not work and the same is the case in following a rule in the language-game approach as it is put in the *Philosophical Investigations*.

Below is an overview of the main references for the chapters as they appear in the thesis. Together with the other references, they are to be elaborated on and their relevance justified later, in the respective chapters.

Stroll and Popkin in their book, *Introduction to Philosophy* (1979), introduce Wittgenstein as one of the thinkers in the contemporary period. They present the views of the early Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*, and the later Wittgenstein, in the *Philosophical Investigations*. They help us to show that in his early thought Wittgenstein attempted to solve the problems of philosophy through an ideal language, formal logic. This language would help to picture reality in all cases, as he understood it. When this endeavour failed, he switched to following a rule in the language-games. Stroll and Popkin provide the background for us to show that Wittgenstein, in his early thought was not right to assign the subject a metaphysical position with no functional role to play in the knowable world. They also help us to show that even in his later thought in the *Philosophical Investigations*, the role of the subject does not come out clearly.

While Stroll and Popkin give us the picture of Wittgenstein's thoughts in the contemporary period, Hudson in his book, *Ludwig Wittgenstein* (1968), gives us a

general overview of what Wittgenstein meant both in his early and later thoughts. Hudson helps us with the clarification and explanation of Wittgenstein's ideas. He gives us Wittgenstein's objectives in constructing both the picture theory and the language-game theory. By understanding his thoughts, we are put in position to appreciate Wittgenstein's thinking and therefore point out the consequences of omitting a functional subject in his ideas.

Fogelin, on the other hand, in his book, *Wittgenstein* (1976), concentrates on criticising Wittgenstein. He does not agree with Wittgenstein's atomic theory. He is of the view that reality, in Wittgenstein's sense, could not be pictured through elementary propositions. When it comes to the notion of following a rule, Fogelin interprets Wittgenstein's idea of following the rule blindly as actual blind following. For us we argue that Wittgenstein's early and later thoughts do make specific contributions to knowing. The aspect of formal logic and that of following a rule in the language-game, each has its place in the process of knowing. Wittgenstein deserves credit in that respect. However, our problem with him is the neglecting of the subject who would otherwise play a comprehensive role both in formal logic and the language-games.

Van Peursen, in *Ludwig Wittgenstein* (1969), makes a comprehensive analysis of Wittgenstein's early and later thoughts. His analysis of Wittgenstein is thematic. For instance he categorises the themes into the "logic of speech", the "metaphysics of silence", and "showing and saying". Thereafter, he analysis these themes, showing the weaknesses in them. We are in consonance with this approach because it helps to show that unless the subject is given an active role in the process of knowing, knowing cannot be comprehensive. Our view is that the process of knowing cannot begin and end in formal logic, or the language-games or any other method. The subject-based set of operations should be actively involved in all these approaches. In order to bring out this point clearly, we are assisted by Meynell in his article "Transcendental Psychology" (1980). He argues that objective reality can be reached through particular subjective realities. This is achieved through the set of operations. That is our point precisely. Through the set of operations, we can endeavour to reach all reality.

Taylor, in the *Philosophical Arguments* (1997), introduces another scenario of following a rule. He helps us to bring out the disagreement between Wittgenstein's

notion of following a rule in social use and the intellectualist notion of knowing through explanation. Wittgenstein feels that explanations can be endless. Knowing, according to Wittgenstein, is a consequence of following what everyone else is following. While we agree that this is possible, in certain instances explanations are necessary. We propose the means through which this endeavour can be achieved, and that is engaging the active set of operations, or the subject-in-act. It is the subject-in-act to judge when to use explanations in order to attain knowledge, or to follow the rule in common use.

Wittgenstein, both in the *Tractatus* and in the *Philosophical Investigations*, leaves us with the problem of the lack of a foundation that would lead us to knowing reality in all its manifestations. We find this foundation in Lonergan's idea of self-appropriation. Below is an overview of the references that help us to argue out this case.

### ***1.3.2 The Subject as Foundational to Knowing Reality in all its manifestations: Lonergan***

The justification for Lonergan's views in this thesis is that he is concerned with providing a foundation for philosophy. This foundation is to be found in the idea of the subject. In his book, *Insight* (1957), he introduces us to the idea of self-appropriation. This idea stipulates that an attempt towards knowing reality in its final analysis should begin with conscious self-knowing.

Cronin, in his book, *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan's Cognitional Theory and Epistemology* (1999), helps to focus Lonergan's ideas sharply. He emphasises the concern of the lack of a foundation in philosophy. He makes a comprehensive exposition of the different attempts made at different times in the history of philosophy in order to establish a foundation in philosophy, to the extent that none of them turned out to be comprehensive enough to provide a foundation. He explains and elaborates on Lonergan's idea of self-appropriation, through his own idea of interiority in a manner that helps to put across our views about a foundation.

We express and argue out this case of a foundation through the idea of the basic pattern of operations. Lonergan helps us to put across our argument through his

book, *Method in theology* (1975). In this book we concentrate on Chapter One, in which he gives us a complete breakdown of this set of operations.

We apply also Shutte's ideas in his article, "Aristotle and the Aristotelian Tradition" [n.d]. Shutte is of the view that Lonergan goes a long way to fill the gap that was left by Aristotle concerning the knowing subject. He exposes the complexities involved in the process of knowing and points out that Lonergan's approach of self-appropriation takes care of all these complexities. This is a position which we entirely agree with.

We draw from the assistance of Giddy, in his article "The African University and the Social Sciences: the Contribution of Lonergan's Epistemological Theory" (1996). He exposes Lonergan's approach as integrative and comprehensive. He is against the idea of the dualism of the self. He rather argues for the approach of heightening the presence to self. This position rhymes well with Lonergan's idea of self-appropriation. This is the method which projects the subject in a comprehensive manner, who approaches the process of knowing more comprehensively.

Lonergan helps us to establish a method which is ultimately foundational for knowing in all respects. Winch, on the other hand, comes up with the idea of inter-cultural learning. By discussing Winch's views we come to realise that without a comprehensive method, the idea of inter-cultural learning is next to impossible. Below we present an overview of the main references for Chapter Four.

### ***1.3.3 Inter-Cultural Approach: Winch***

In Chapter Four, we shall use Winch's book *Ethics and Society* (1972), relying heavily on his Chapter Two, "Understanding a Primitive Society." We are using this chapter because it suggests a multicultural approach in the understanding of behaviour in different societies. It presents two societies, one of the "primitive" Azande and the other of the scientific Europeans. These two societies, because of their different modes of life, seem to be incompatible. Winch suggests that one group or society can understand what is taking place in the other group or society. But Winch does not give us a method of how this can be done, something which Barden succeeds in doing in Chapter Five, in the idea of the basic pattern of operations. To help us argue our case

in this chapter we use some of the ideas in the references below. Justification for using these references appears later in Chapter Four.

We get introduced to Winch's idea of the multicultural context through Barden's book, *After Principles* (1990). He presents two contexts, namely the Azande who attempt to answer questions through witchcraft and the European context which attempts to answer questions through science.

MacIntyre, in his article, "The Idea of a Social Science" (1974), finds problems with Winch's thinking. MacIntyre finds it difficult to learn from the Azande outside his own norms of rationality. MacIntyre seems to emphasise our point that in order for inter-cultural learning to take place there must be a method that is comprehensive enough to cater for the two seemingly different contexts.

Horton, in his article, "Professor Winch on Safari" (1994), also finds problems with Winch's idea of a member from the European culture learning from the Azande using the Azande's means of knowing. He does not see how a member of the scientific culture with the background of the scientific approach can learn from another culture which uses the witchcraft approach. Someone who helps us to get out of this quagmire is Barden. Barden following Lonergan introduces the idea of the basic set of operations. It is through this set that inter-cultural learning can be made possible.

#### ***1.3.4 Foundation for Knowing: Barden***

In Chapter Five our basic text is Barden's book *After Principles* (1990). We must say that he mainly focuses on ethics. But as we know, ethics is a context like any other, such as formal logic, mathematics, and science, to mention a few. In Chapter Three, we do argue that our method, the transcendental method – idea of subject-in-act – does fit all contexts. In Chapter Five we use Barden's ideas, because he helps us to actualise the transcendental method. Though he is mainly addressing ethical issues, for us we are taking ethics as a case in point or as mentioned, a context like any other. He presents the case for the operations of the subject in a manner that solves the problem of the foundation to knowing, which is our concern in this thesis.



### ***1.3.5 Further Application of Barden***

In Chapter Six, which is the general conclusion, we extend the application of Barden to inter-cultural learning to other contexts including the African contexts. To help us argue out these cases, our main references include Cronin (1999). He helps us to set out frameworks for inter-cultural learning. These are the common sense, the theory and the interiority frameworks. For the common sense framework we draw heavily on Cisternino's book, *The Proverbs of Kigezi and Ankole* (1987). He presents the pedagogical power in the genre of Bantu proverbs. However he lacks a method that can draw people from different contexts to learn from this genre. The wisdom in this genre remains concealed due to lack of a method to help in exposing it to people from different contexts.

Mbiti, in his book, *African Religions and Philosophy* (1969), helps us to emphasise Cronin's point concerning compactness, lack of differentiation and definition, a notion that characterises the common sense framework. This is seen in Mbiti's notion of the religious consciousness and the concept of time in the common sense framework.

We draw heavily also from Masolo in his book, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* (1994). Masolo presents views from different African philosophers. These include, Hountondji, Wiredu, and Odera Oruka, among others. In Chapter Six, views from these references will help us to show how the subject-in-act is ultimately foundational to all other approaches and how this approach can facilitate inter-cultural learning.

## **1.4 Foundation for a Multicultural Context: Chapter Résumé**

### ***1.4.1 From Formal Logic to Language-Games: Wittgenstein***

Chapter Two presents a résumé of some of Wittgenstein's thoughts in the *Tractatus*. These thoughts are presented in atomic or elementary propositions. We present a brief summary of what we shall find in this résumé. Wittgenstein, in his early thought, is preoccupied with the idea of finding a pure language. He identifies this language in the atomic or elementary propositions. He constructs these propositions in logical form and uses logical symbols and connectives to express them. In his thinking, that forms the language that would lead to all knowing. Atomic propositions picture the

world. This world is made of states of affairs that express facts. These facts in the end are captured in pictorial form which is a structure of symbols and propositional signs. This forms a logical space into which objects are assimilated. In the logical space the picture and what is pictured form a determinate relationship making a correlation between the picture and what is pictured in the pictorial or propositional form. That is how reality is depicted by the picture whose form it has. Reality is not haphazard. A picture agrees or disagrees with reality. It is because of this that truth or falsity, correctness or incorrectness is determined. A logical picture is a thought. Here logic, picture and thought are combined. A fact or state of affairs becomes thinkable. In a valid argument the truth of a conclusion follows from the truth of the premises. Logic is capable of looking after itself. Therefore in a certain sense we cannot make a mistake in logic. However there is no such thing as a subject that thinks or entertains ideas. It is only the atomic propositions that reflect all reality about the world. So logic is not a doctrine but a mirror image of the world. It transcends the world (2.1.3).

In this exposition a complete scenario is presented by moving from objects to things to states of affairs or facts to pictorial form to thought and finally to deductive reasoning. Though the idea of thought is introduced the functional role of the subject is not clear. He presents his ideas in a numbered style, hence our quoting from him extensively (2.2.1-2.2.2).

Hudson picks up from here and helps us to clarify Wittgenstein's early thoughts. He interprets Wittgenstein as working out the logic of the view that the meaning of language is its referent. Or that language is truth functional. In this case "referent" means the object to which language refers. An object can be identified either verbally by definition or by pointing. Wittgenstein is trying to establish how the world or all reality in his sense can be known through pure logical language. So he talks of the logical simples that he matches with objects. From this initial stage he moves to language and reality. Knowing involves meaning. Meaning must satisfy two criteria. That is, there must be an object or referent to which meaning refers. Secondly meaning must be determinate. A proposition must have only one meaning. From meaning, inferences concerning both language and the world can be drawn. Hudson clarifies the composition of an atomic proposition. It consists of a nexus of names that are simple signs. Names do not describe but denote or designate referents. In that case it is the names that carry meaning. So an atomic proposition which is a composition of

these names must be meaningful. In that case it is the atomic proposition which is ultimately basic. It, therefore, projects a logical world. That is how logic relates to language and that is how an atomic proposition projects the world.

Another aspect which Hudson helps to clarify is how Wittgenstein interprets the world, and how we get to know of it. The world comprises simple objects and in knowing them there are no descriptions involved but simple naming. Descriptions are indeterminate but names are precise and determinate. Language reduces to names; names form atomic propositions; atomic propositions form facts and facts form the logical world. This logical world is pictured in the atomic propositions, hence the picture theory. Atomic propositions have sense while words have referents and the two are linked together by meaning.

How do variables and constants relate in the logical world? Names and referents constitute the variables while logical connectives constitute the constants. Names name objects or referents while logical connectives do not (2.2.3).

In Chapter Two we shall develop an elaborate discussion of how we get to know, in Wittgenstein's sense, by moving from simples to atomic propositions giving us the logical picture of reality. Hudson's clarification is necessary at this juncture because, before we introduce our own approach to knowing, it is necessary to understand Wittgenstein's thinking about a pure logical language representing the world. That is what Hudson helps to show.

In what is to follow we shall show how a logical language, on its own, without the cognitional operations would not necessarily picture all reality. We shall show that the cognitional operations of the subject or the subject-in-act are a necessary factor not only in Wittgenstein's logical world but also in all possible worlds. Wittgenstein does not tell us the architect of the states of affairs. So we find it a problem to understand how the states of affairs can be organised and configured into facts. This process is not possible using the rules of logic alone. Or can reality be explained through cause and effect, as social and natural science require? But how would they be interpreted without the cognitional operations of the subject? We argue that Wittgenstein's picture theory only succeeds in starting us on the philosophical method. But by failing to give the subject a functional role to play in the logical world he does not complete this process (2.2.4).



We proceed to examine what went wrong in Wittgenstein's early thoughts. All misunderstandings in philosophy could be wiped out if facts were expressed in atomic propositions. Atomic propositions would eliminate the problems of ambiguity. This is because atomic facts have one and only one possible meaning. While this may be true, we argue that there is need for criterion to determine the presence or absence of ambiguity. Secondly, there is a problem of circumstances and conditions. An atomic proposition could mean one thing under certain conditions and circumstances and mean completely a different thing when these circumstances and conditions change. Again there is need for criteria to determine truth in these changes. We argue that these criteria are the cognitional operations of the subject (2.2.5).

We point out that Wittgenstein, in his attempt to create a pure universal language, takes logical empiricism to its logical conclusion. That is logic having no subject matter. He is of the view that objective truth could be reached through logical calculus. Logical calculus could describe the world fully. While this may be the case, we argue that it would not be correct to try and separate logic from semantics in order to create one ideal language, formal logic. We argue that this is not possible because pure logic or formal logic tends to lead to generalised knowledge while semantics lead us to particularities. In our case knowing involves both general and particular truths. These truths are established by the cognitional operations of the subject (2.2.5.2).

Wittgenstein creates a problem when he attempts to isolate the set of cognitional operations from their context. At one time he talks of clarity of thought and at another time he talks of there being no such thing as a thinking subject. Here the operation of thinking is being removed from its context, the subject. This is a contradiction because it is impossible to have clarity of thought in a vacuum. We argue that thinking takes place in the subject. Therefore the subject is not only metaphysical but also functional in the activity of knowing (2.2.5.3).

We discuss the relevance of Wittgenstein's ideas on the operations of the subject. Wittgenstein's idea of the picture theory or the subject-less formal logic actually fails. Logical symbolism and language do not necessarily agree. Therefore logical symbols separated from content continue to express generality at the expense of particularity. This does not necessarily reflect all reality. Logic is not capable of looking after itself without the cognitional operations of the subject. Picturing reality

alone is not enough, there is need to involve more than one sense in the activity of knowing. We do not agree with Wittgenstein that there is no such thing as the subject that thinks. Thinking is an operation that is necessary in the activity of knowing. So in the early Wittgenstein, we say that it was a serious mistake for Wittgenstein to regard the subject as a metaphysical being with no functional role in the knowable world (2.2.6).

Wittgenstein, in his later thought, abandons the idea of formal logic as a pure language that would serve as foundation for knowing and instead places language in a social context. In this respect, we discuss the idea of knowing through following a rule in the language-game. Even here it is Hudson who helps us to clarify Wittgenstein's thoughts. Wittgenstein begins by exposing the defects in his early thoughts. Now, referring a word to a referent is to confound the meaning of a name and the bearer of a name. He rejects this position. He also rejects his idea of a one-one representation between the simples of a language and reality. Analysing a proposition into atomic propositions does not make the meaning clearer. He also rejects the idea of the picture theory that in order for a proposition to have sense it must have an absolute determinate sense. His new stand now is that a proposition finds meaning in the use to which it is put (2.3.1).

We proceed with Hudson's help to the clarification of what "language-game," means. Knowing involves learning. In order for one to know, three things must be taken into consideration. Namely: what meaning is, the object being named and the action that is required in the process of naming. All the three require training. Training makes the language-game a game of language and action to which language is put. This makes language part of an activity or a form of life (2.3.2).

How does language relate to reality? Through Hudson, we discuss Wittgenstein's view of how language relates with reality. Reality is made up of facts things and events. It is one world expressed in three languages. Each of these elements has its own language-game. In order to play that game one must follow the rules governing it. These rules must be followed without explanations because explanations tend to generate more explanations and the task of explaining can turn out to be endless. Following a rule is nothing more than a social practice. We should try to understand rules as they are applied in their social contexts. In our case we say that there should be a difference between accepting the beliefs and practices as laid

down by society and understanding. Understanding should involve the conscious set of cognitional operations. All understanding in whatever language-game being played should be defined by these operations (2.3.3 – 2.3.5).

What is the relevance of the subject-in-act in the language-games? Although Wittgenstein discredits formal logic, still in his later thoughts the role of the subject remains unclear. We affirm that language in its social roles requires the cognitional operations of the subject. Language is a labyrinth of paths. To get out of these paths and find our direction we need these operations. Just as in the context of logic the cognitional operations become paramount in formal logic, so do they even in the language-games. Rules of language need these operations first of all to formulate them, and because they change every now and then due to social demands, still they need the subject-in-act to constantly evaluate their relevance in the given conditions and circumstances. In this chapter we argue that formal logic without its context which is the subject-in-act and following rules in the language-games without the conscious cognitional operations – to be explained in Chapter Three – cannot lead us to all knowing (2.3.6).

#### ***1.4.2 The Subject as Foundational to Knowing: Lonergan***

In Chapter Three we posit our foundation in the subject. In our discussion we shall refer to the subject as “the subject-in-act,” “the basic pattern of operations,” “patterned set of operations,” “the basic set of operations,” “self-appropriation,” “set of cognitional operations,” the idea of “interiority,” “cognitional set of operations,” and the idea of “transcendental method.” Cronin starts us off by setting the problem of the lack of a trans-cultural philosophy. This problem is there as a consequence of factionalising philosophy. He helps us to show that there is no way in which a foundation can be established in this factionalised scenario. In the past, because of societies being small and unsophisticated, societies provided foundations. But societies and communities have enlarged and tended to be sophisticated to the extent that it is difficult to establish a foundation in them. Science has solved many empirical problems but it has done little in the area of human or moral values. Besides that, it is incapable of accounting for its own success. So we cannot establish a foundation in science either. The only locus of a foundation is the subject. Cronin, following

Lonergan, invites us to join in the task of self-discovery. Self-discovery will lead us to self-understanding and self-knowing. It is after self-knowing that we can proceed to know everything else (3.1.1).

We pursue the problem of lack of a foundation by looking at what Lonergan says in *Insight*. He characterises this problem as a crisis of knowledge. In his view this problem can be overcome by having insight into insight or insight into oversight. That is, understanding what is to understand or understanding why people run away from understanding. In other words, Lonergan in *Insight* is inviting us to join in, in the task of self-appropriation for that is where a foundation can truly be found. *Insight* is not an argument with premises and a conclusion but a programme which presumes readers. It invites us to focus on our inner intelligence and reasonableness. That is, focussing not only on knowing but knowing what is to know. We are invited not only to focus on the aspects of knowledge, such as science, mathematics, the humanities and the like but to penetrate our inner dynamism of intelligent enquiry and critical reflection. We cannot find a foundation in the aspects of knowledge such as mathematics, science and the like but in our own cognitional operations. The practical good of *Insight* is in the fact that it looks at both the existence and nature of knowledge. The aspects of knowledge should provide a scheme for the cognitional operations. Understanding of this scheme comes as a consequence of the application of the cognitional operations. We are looking for a method that will assist in integrating the content of knowledge and the knower. This is the foundation which is to know both the aspects of knowledge and the knowing subject. *Insight* offers a programme that will assist, through self-appropriation, in the formation of a foundation that will help in solving the mentioned crisis of knowledge (3.1.2).

The reason why we do not have a foundation for knowing is that the subject has hitherto been neglected. Self-knowing precedes any kind of knowing. This is not what has happened so far. There has been a preoccupation with the search of objective truth. This is evident in the fields of rationalism and empiricism. Over concentration on these areas has led to the overlooking, if not totally neglecting, of the exploration of the endowments of the subject. What has not been taken into consideration is the fact that in order to reach truth the cognitional operations of the subject are needed. Philosophers in their philosophies have tended to overlook this fact. Another problem which is responsible for the lack of a foundation is the focusing on the dualism of the



body and the soul. Philosophers have tended to focus on the paramount nature of the soul above the body. So efforts have been concentrated on the nature and characteristics of the soul. This has been done almost to the exclusion of the subject. The subject has not had the opportunity to appropriate herself. That has led to self-ignorance and therefore, in some cases to the conclusion that there is no such thing as the subject. Through self-appropriation, efforts should be made to establish the nature and existence of the cognitional operations of the subject. It is this knowledge that will lead to knowledge of all other aspects of knowledge (3.2.1).

We present the foundational nature of the subject in the knowing activity. Human knowing is not a single uniform property but a complexity of different operations. The subject is not only immanent or partly hidden. The activity of knowing involves self-transcendence. That is knowing and being aware that one is knowing. Therefore being a subject means being an integrated whole. The subject is not just immanent, or the soul, or the body. She is a conscious being present to herself both in the data of the senses and the data of consciousness. In our discussion we differentiate between the subject of our thesis, who is objective in all cultures, and the mistaken fragmented subject or the neglected and truncated subject. We show that there is no way a foundation can be established in the latter subject. The subject of our thesis is characterised by a movement from the data of the senses to the data of intelligence to the judgement and to responsibility. It is a complete process that ensures knowing in objective terms (3.2.2).

We proceed to show the composition and description of the basic pattern of operations. These include the operations of the senses and operations of the mind. It is this edifice which constitutes the subject-based method. We discuss also the relationship between the subject and the object. That is the perceiving subject-in-act and object being perceived. The subject is the operator who voluntarily operates consciously. The perceiving subject is basic to the perceived object because the perceiving subject intends the perceived object. Therefore their relationship is psychological rather than mechanical. A mechanical operator functions on mechanical rules while the subject functions on conscious operations. The subject functions consciously and intentionally. We discuss fully the four levels of cognitional operations. These are the empirical, the intellectual, the rational, and the responsible. These levels work in close collaboration. There is a conscious dynamism running



across them. All of them are both conscious and intentional. At all these levels the subject is conscious of herself. The operation is such that from data we move to inquiry – inquiry, however, does not seek another datum as will be shown – questions emerging from enquiry help to organise data into intelligible wholes. The level of inquiry is more challenging than the empirical one. It is this level that helps to sort out conflicting alternatives, hence leading to appropriate judgement.

Before committing ourselves at the level of judgement we must be sure that the selected alternative is truly true. So in this sub-section we shall be discussing the fact that the cognitional set of operations moves progressively and in an interlinked manner from the simpler level which is usually the empirical level to the intellectual level where alternative and competing data are sorted out to a closely related but still challenging level of positing a judgement that will finally lead to the responsible choice (3.3.1).

In the following subsection we argue that the subject-based set of operations is indeed a method and not only that but it is also transcendental. In what sense is it a method? It is a method because, as we shall show, it is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations, which yield cumulative and progressive results. In what sense is it transcendental? It is transcendental because its results are not limited categorically to some particular field or subject. It is a method that yields any results. It is because of its applicability to any field or any study that it is elevated above any other method to the level of being transcendental. Again it is transcendental because the precepts of transcendental method, which are, being attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible, are present in all of us irrespective of anything else. We argue that the transcendental method is foundational to everyone because there is no way any one can act, no matter from what field, without employing the precepts of transcendental method of being attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible. Because of this potentiality for being applicable to all fields and subjects the transcendental method becomes a rock to build on (3.3.2).

After this, we reiterate the fact that the subject is a rock to build on. In what sense? Transcendental method presupposes intellectual curiosity, a striving to understand, and to know. It presupposes critical reflection, it presupposes truth or falsity in the propositions and conclusions drawn, it presupposes responsibility in one's actions. This method is a rock to build on because the patterns that link

operations are not arrived at in isolation and there is unity of consciousness at any level of cognitional operation. These operations are clearly distinguishable as we move from sense to judgement and responsibility. This enables the conscious subject to isolate any anomaly at any level of operation. The pattern of the set of operations is not hypothetical or susceptible to change. It is only data that changes and not the operations. In fact operations participate in the changing of data. Any attempt to reject the patterned set of operations is tantamount to self-rejection. This is because it will be rejecting the very precepts of the transcendental method (3.3.3).

Finally we discuss the functional usefulness of the foundational method. We affirm that the foundational method is functionally useful to all other methods because each and every method follows the precepts of the transcendental method. All methods, no matter from what field, are in the final analysis at one stage or another constitutive of the transcendental method. The transcendental method sets a standard for all other methods. That makes it normative to all of them. We also argue that the transcendental method executes a critical function. This is because differences at the lower levels can be resolved at higher levels. That is, differences at sense level can be resolved at the intellect level. Differences at the intellect level can be resolved at the reasonable level. Differences at the reasonable level can be resolved at the responsible level. That makes the transcendental method all-inclusive because of the functioning of these levels. Any problem from any field can be resolved at any of these levels or at all the levels. The transcendental method reflects systematicity in its approach. That is, it constructs the elementary acts of knowing into compound knowing and also constructs the elementary objects of knowing into compound objects of knowing, the whole process ensuring continuity. This is also desirable for all methods. The transcendental method brings into interplay concrete reality and the cognitional process of the subject who consciously comprehends the concrete reality. This is the case for all methods.

The transcendental method also executes a heuristic function. Here the ignorant subject intends the unknown. This leads to inquiry. The discovered data is subjected to the intellect and the process progresses according to the stipulated norms of the transcendental method. Examples of methods from different fields reflect that they are not comprehensive to the extent of the transcendental method. Therefore it brings harmony to all the other methods. This is because none of them is exempt from

the stipulated precepts of being attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible (3.3.4).

To help us argue our case we use various ideas from commentators. These include Cronin (1999). He points out the shortcomings across the history of philosophy of attempting to locate a foundation to knowing in wrong places. The problem stretches from ancient philosophy right through modern philosophy to the contemporary period. He exposes the fact that time and resources have been misallocated in these endeavours because they could not yield a method that is comprehensive enough to lead us to all knowing. Following Lonergan, Cronin locates this method in interiority. In his exposition, he leads us through all the stages of interiority or self-appropriation. He helps us to argue for the subject-in-act as foundational for all knowing. Another commentator whose views are relevant to our thesis is Shutte [n.d]. He regards Lonergan as an integrating philosopher in the sense that his method touches all areas of knowing. He presents the aspect of knowing as being dynamic in the sense that it is self-assembling **and** self-constituting. Knowing does not occur with the blindness of natural process. The knower is conscious, intelligent and rational. Shutte helps us to bring out the very crux of the matter of our thesis in the sense that he projects the subject-in-act as self-assembling who takes into account all fields of knowing. The subject-in-act is self-corrective. This is the sort of integrative and comprehensive method that our thesis is attempting to establish. We are looking for a method which does not only cover all areas but which can also ensure truth in its procedure and which can effect a correction where an anomaly occurs. He is of the view that there is no other method that is comprehensive enough to serve as foundation for all knowing. This includes the scientific method. Science puts forward experiments and measurements as the only way of achieving objectivity, hence presenting it as a model for all other methods. He is of the view that the scientific method can only cover certain aspects of the real but it is not comprehensive enough to cover all reality. He supports fully Lonergan's precepts of the transcendental method. His views help us to consolidate our position as regards the subject-in-act as being ultimately basic to all knowing. Giddy (1996), is another commentator whose views are of direct relevance to our thesis.

He also projects Lonergan as an integrative philosopher. He points out that Lonergan's views do entail a heightening of the presence to self. That is, they do not



presuppose the dualism of the subject and object. He brings this idea in opposition to the “standard empiricist” position that knowing is through scientific objectivity which is achieved by eliminating subjective elements. He points out that the empiricist and rationalist stands are lopsided. He, instead, exalts Lonergan’s approach of self-appropriation. After discussing the precepts of self-appropriation convincingly, he introduces another idea of the indeterminism of the subject. He argues that one is entirely responsible for one’s actions. This is because one is fully capable of interrogating one’s ideas. Therefore one has the option of restraining or going ahead with one’s actions. The choice is one’s own. Therefore one should always be in a position to account for one’s actions. This idea is particularly relevant to our thesis because it calls forth the application of the precepts of self-appropriation, particularly at the level of intelligence, reasonableness and responsibility.

Giddy goes ahead to say that a human being is understood through various sciences. These include chemical, biological psychological and other related sciences. From these sciences knowledge of the self can be discerned and therefore self-determination established. Giddy is contributing to the idea of self-understanding and knowing which leads to the knowing of everything else. This is in consonance with Lonergan’s point of understanding the self through self-appropriation being a prerequisite for understanding and knowing everything else. In our discussion we use Giddy’s ideas to emphasise the fact of self-knowing or self-appropriation as being foundational to knowing everything else. We show that before knowing other sciences and humanities one has to know oneself as a knower, and to be aware of oneself or present to oneself in the activity of knowing. If one knows what one is capable of knowing, then one will proceed to know whatever piece of knowledge that confronts one and one’s knowing in this respect will be thorough. This is because the endowments of knowing allow the knower to check and crosscheck one’s understanding and knowing. So the fact that one knows that one is a knower through the precepts of self-appropriation, there should be no excuse for determinism in an individual. This knowing is obtained through being attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible (3.4).

In the following sub-section we look at the role of belief in transcendental method. We argue that there is an existing fund of knowledge out there that has been contributed by science and humanities. This fund of knowledge is generated by

distinguished and respected specialists. The accumulation of this knowledge dates back some centuries. Some of this knowledge is technical knowledge in the form of specialised, specific, electronic equipment needed for scientific enterprises. There are all sorts of knowledge in archives, textbooks, journals, photographs, graphs, maps, oral literature, museums and many other sources. Cronin implores us to believe this knowledge. It would be next to impossible to try and verify all this stock of knowledge before accepting it as true. We have to believe in expertise and distinguished scholarship. It would be a futile and expensive endeavour to try and verify for ourselves the already available high-tech instruments in order to accept them as accurate. We have to believe in their accuracy. We also argue that there is no conflict between belief and judgement in the Lonergan sense. Judgement in the Lonergan sense is based on the precepts of the transcendental method. Belief on the other hand is based on trust of distinguished scholarship and expertise. In this respect truth should not be based on judgement alone. There are situations that justify belief as source of knowledge. However since there is a possibility of being mistaken both in judgement and in belief, where there is doubt we should always resort to the precepts of the transcendental method (3.5.1).

In order to consolidate the position of the transcendental method as ultimately basic we look at the scientific method and see how it compares with the transcendental method. The scientific method is based on scientific theory, hypotheses, and experimentation. It yields new knowledge which is cumulative in nature. It functions on a set of rules. It functions on logic and precision. This ensures accuracy and excellence. The problem here is that a system which functions on a set of rules tends to produce routine results. The old but similar is added to the new and the process continues. This is the role of logic in science. It consolidates the old, which of course keeps on recurring. Science also applies the non-logical procedures which ensure advancement. Though this is a positive development, the scientific approach does not lead us to all departments of reality. We argue that although it seems to cover the stage of sense knowing and the stage of the intellect, when it comes to the third and fourth stages of human knowing it falls short of the transcendental method. These are the stages of judgement and responsibility in the Lonergan sense. Science succeeds in starting us off on the road of the transcendental method but it does not complete it. The transcendental method remains more

comprehensive and all encompassing. The scientific method suffers from the shortcomings of empiricism, as we shall argue later in the thesis (3.5.2-3.5.3).

#### ***1.4.3 Inter-Cultural Learning: Scientific and non-Scientific Cultures***

In Chapter Four we address a specific problem of two cultures that appear to be incompatible. One culture which we have called the European, mainly follows the scientific approach for purposes of knowing. The other culture, the Azande, mainly follows the mystical or oracular approach. In our argument we are mainly addressing two problems. The first one is whether there is anything in common between the two cultures that would lead to all knowledge, irrespective of cultural differences. The second question is whether either of the two cultures can learn something from the other. Here we are looking at the issue of cultural relativism. How can we go around the problem of cultural relativism? We are looking for a method that would facilitate the notion of inter-cultural learning. In Chapter Two we posit this method in the form of the subject-in-act. In this chapter we are handling similarities and differences among cultures and trying to see how we can overcome them. In this discussion we are assisted by Winch who presents the scientific culture as being followed mainly by Europeans and the non-scientific culture as being followed mainly by the Azande of Southern Sudan (4.1).

We discuss the aspect whether rationality is relative to culture. We see Winch emphasising the aspect of cultural relativism. To help us see his point, he points out the belief among the Azande, who do not only believe in oracular revelations but also believe that some of their kind are capable of exercising a malignant occult influence on the lives of their fellow members. This notion valued as it does among the Azande it is likely to be incomprehensible among the European mainly science-based culture (4.2.1).

We look at Winch's view of the likely attitude of the European social anthropologist studying a "primitive" culture like that of the Azande. The first task he would face would be to understand them and secondly to make members of his own cultures also comprehend them. Such an endeavour would inevitably be challenged in the face of the scientific norms. Such an anthropologist because of the ties resulting from her own cultural norms is likely to suffer from an attitudinal problem (4.2.2).



The attitudinal problem notwithstanding, and as a consequence of his study, he helps us to see that there is logic in both the European's and the Azande approaches. Evans-Pritchard's point of departure with Winch is his view that it is the scientific approach that is in accord with reality. He also proceeds to point out that it is the scientific approach that conforms to objective truth. This position is unacceptable to Winch. Can Winch and Evans-Pritchard come to a compromise? Is there a meeting point? If so, which one? Yes, we say that the two can come to a round table and strike a balance of understanding through the subject-based cognitional operations (4.2.3).

We look at the notion of independent reality. Winch is of the view that the check for the independent reality is not peculiar to science. Accepting such a position is a reflection of bias connected to the fascination of science. Reality is contextual. For instance, the reality of God can largely be understood in the context of religion or the religious tradition. Winch adds also that, in order to distinguish the real from the unreal, one has first of all to understand how this distinction operates in language. The understanding of a concept depends on examining the use it has in a particular language. So there is no way Evans-Pritchard can work out the concept of reality without first taking it to its use in language, no matter what discourse is being used, scientific or any other (4.2.4).

The oracular system forms the very foundation of the Azande social life. The Azande are entangled in a web of beliefs and practices and these form the very fabric of their social life. The oracular approach reveals both the presence and absence of witches and on top of that it explains why certain events are harmful to man. That is a reality that is intelligible to the Azande. The oracular system is part and parcel of the Azande beliefs and practices. To the European trying to enter this system, the practice of the oracle is something detached from him. He looks at the practice of the oracle as an entity and the Azande as an entity and their beliefs also as an entity. In her study the European will not look at the Azande and their practices as an integrated whole. This means that his intelligibility of the Azande and their systems will not be comprehensive. Moreover, the European enters the Azande oracular system as an alien. Therefore his intelligibility of the Azande system is likely to be tainted by his own cultural influence (4.2.5).

We discuss whether the oracular approach makes sense and to whom. Winch is of the view that if something contradicts itself then it does not make sense. The

oracular experiences tend to show contradiction in their function. To an outsider, like the European, the experience that is contradictory cannot make sense. Winch points out that over the years the Azande have built a mechanism in their oracular practices that explain away the contradiction. And since the function of the oracle is to reveal mystical forces, it cannot be placed in the scientific category, where knowledge is revealed in terms of confirming hypotheses after carrying out experiments. Though knowledge revealed by the oracle may not make sense to the European the Azande sees differently (4.2.6).

In our discussion we show that the scientific system cannot be compared to the oracular system. We show that the oracular system can lead to the revelation of a witch but there is a more direct way of revealing the presence of a witch and that is through the post-mortem method. This method can show that certain members of a tribe or a clan do possess elements of witchcraft while others do not. In the eyes of the European such an experience is a good case of a contradiction. But instead of looking at such an experience as a contradiction, it could be looked at in terms of the different levels of operation. The Azande are operating at a different level and the Europeans are also operating at a different level. So what the European is regarding as a contradiction at his level, the Azande sees it differently. Once again the scientific standards cannot be used to interpret the Azande standards simply because the levels of operation are different (4.2.7).

We look at the point in following a rule through Winch's comparison of Wittgenstein's and Evans-Pritchard's approaches. In the exercise of knowing, Winch supports the idea of following a rule in a particular context. In comparing Evans-Pritchard and Wittgenstein he rejects the early Wittgenstein's idea of attempting to make formal logic the ideal language to be applied in all respects. Similarly he rejects Evans-Pritchard's attitude of regarding the scientific approach to knowing as the correct one and the Azande approach as mistaken. To Winch, the Azande are playing their own language-game following its rules and the Europeans are also playing their own language-game following its rules (4.2.8).

To help us in our discussion we also use ideas from commentators. What we mainly see in the ideas of these commentators are presentations, attacks and counter-attacks, accusations and counter-accusations, defence, and counter-defence. It is an intellectual battle between Winch and the commentators on his works. These



commentators include Barden. He brings out the issue of whether there is meaning behind accidents, as the Azande purport, or whether accidents, in the strict sense of the word, that is, where negligence or carelessness are not involved, are mere coincidence, as the Europeans purport.

He brings out also the issue that what seems rational to the Azande may seem irrational to the Europeans. This comes as a consequence of contextual differences. The situation is that the Azande are playing their own language-game and Europeans are also playing their own language-game. The rules of these games are different. This brings in the problem of cultural relativism. The oracular approach to meaning and the scientific approach appear to be incompatible. Our interest in Barden here is that while Winch suggests the possibility of inter-cultural knowing, he does not give us the method with which to carryout this enterprise. Barden does. And it is Barden's method which helps us to go around the problem of cultural relativism. This method is the basic set of operations (4.3.1).

MacIntyre (1974) wonders whether Winch's view of the difficulty of expressing the Azande beliefs about witchcraft from the point of view of the scientific culture is a genuine one. There is an impasse between MacIntyre and Winch. MacIntyre maintains the view that it is difficult to explain the Azande beliefs about witchcraft outside the scientific norms of rationality. To Winch, maintaining such a position would be generalising. Winch's position is that the Azande are playing their own language-game and the Europeans are also playing their own language-game. MacIntyre finds it difficult to appreciate the fact that the European can use the norms of the Azande, with which she is not familiar, to interpret the beliefs in witchcraft. MacIntyre disagrees with Winch's view that one society cannot go beyond another society's own self-description without first grasping the criteria embedded in that self-description. Between Winch and MacIntyre we see the view that each culture plays its own language-game following the rules understandable to them and another view that it is not easy to try to understand what takes place in another culture outside one's norms of rationality. The question of our concern is: can Winch and MacIntyre reach some form agreement? If so, by what means? This is what Barden (1990), helps us to solve in Chapter Five. The solution is found in the idea of the subject-in-act (4.3.2).

Horton (1994) comes in defence of Evans-Pritchard and MacIntyre against Winch as regards Winch's ideas of translational understanding and mystical thinking.

Winch in his presentation of the idea of “translational understanding” stipulates that in order to understand utterances made in an alien culture, we first find the point or significance that these utterances have for them. In order to discover this point, one should first place these utterances in the context of social life within which they arise. Thereafter, one will be in a position to say which utterances associated with one’s conceptual systems are appropriate translational instruments. Horton seems to have a problem with this position, as we shall discuss later.

Another problem that is disturbing to Horton is Winch’s insistence of not imposing one’s norms of rationality on an alien culture. Winch is of the view that what may appear of paramount importance to one culture, the scientific culture of the Europeans for example, may be of peripheral importance or no importance at all to the Azande culture of the oracle.

From Winch’s standpoint Horton raises the problems regarding disparities of points in utterances as regards different goals being pursued by different cultures. Horton’s problem is that Winch’s view is restricted. This problem is heightened by his stand on what he calls the locus of universal human strivings as being birth, sexual relations and death. To Horton this view is also restricted. He is of the view that Winch in his locus should include other forms of life such as the religious, the artistic, and the scientific. In defence of his own stand, that of Evans-Pritchard, and that of MacIntyre, Horton feels that it is Winch himself who is the target of methodological caveats. Another issue that disturbs Horton is Winch’s stand on the aspect of witchcraft. Winch is of the view that Evans-Pritchard’s method imposes the approach of the scientific culture on to the Azande. Horton interprets mystical thinking as involving spiritualistic elements such as gods and witchcraft and oracles. Winch presents his approach to the understanding of an alien culture as a model to emulate. These different positions reflect the problem of cultural relativism. We argue that they can be effectively handled by the cognitional operations of the subject-in-act (4.3.3).

Winch’s stand inevitably introduces the problem of cultural relativism. If one is to follow a rule, then how does one learn from the other if rules are contextually different? Winch attempts to show how this can be achieved through a criticism of MacIntyre’s views. He criticises MacIntyre’s approach of knowing through a stock of descriptions. To Winch the alternative to the use of descriptions is how these

descriptions are expressed in the language of the people affected. So we learn from others by comprehending their daily use of language (4.4.1).

MacIntyre presents the view that, in order for one culture to learn from another culture, one has to evoke one's norms of rationality. In order to declare that one culture is rational one has to declare it in terms one's norms of rationality. However there is a possibility of coincidence. A particular case may be common to the two cultures affected. If that turns out to be the case, then it can be referred to under the same conception of the two cultures in question. Winch however argues that standards of rationality do not always coincide. In that case knowing which comes as a result of discovery will not necessarily take place because another culture has discovered it. Winch's conviction links up with his stand on context **and** language-games. Each culture plays its own language-game and follows its own rule. As far as inter-cultural learning and knowing is concerned, Winch creates a problem of cultural relativism which we shall address more precisely in Chapter Five (4.4.2).

In his criticism of MacIntyre, Winch is of the opinion that the European norms of rationality are not a finite set. We learn through training to adhere to particular cultural norms. However we are not limited or uniquely determined by these norms. For instance, the way the European learns how to think, speak and act rationally is also applicable to alien cultures. Norms of rationality are principles that can be employed for purposes of learning as many variables as possible, both in one's culture and in the alien cultures (4.4.3).

Using the Azande system of magic, Winch once again emphasises, the problem of taking the scientific approach or norms as a paradigm or standard through which to comprehend other systems or cultures. He continues to emphasise the fact that it is wrong to look at the Azande ways of life in terms of the European ways of life. It is difficult for someone coming from a sophisticated society to grasp the ways of life of a simple and unsophisticated society like that of the Azande using her own norms. Instead, one has to jettison one's sophistication and bring oneself to the level of the simple and the unsophisticated ways of the simple society. That is when the comprehension of the beliefs, practices, and ways of life will effectively take place. Learning will not be effective when one uses one's norms as standard in order to comprehend what takes place in an alien culture. Norms, beliefs and practices either in one's culture or in an alien culture are contingent. There is nothing fixed about



these notions. In that respect none of the two should be taken as ideal or a paradigm to comprehend other cultures (4.4.4-4.4.5).

We present Evans-Pritchard's notion of the exclusivity of the scientific conception of objective facts, reality, and truth together with Winch's objection to this notion. We note that the science-based methods are mainly empirical, hence based on theory, hypothesis, and experiments. Evans-Pritchard happens to fall in this background. This inevitably affects his attitude towards the Azande oracular approach. In his approach he falls in the same trap as Wittgenstein of attempting to reach all reality through the subject-less formal logic. Evans-Pritchard attempts to reach objective facts, truth, and reality through scientific means. Winch once again does not accept this attitude. According to Winch there is no one-way which can lead to objective facts, reality or truth. Any attempt at that would only succeed in reflecting bias and prejudice. What is objective, real, and true using the scientific language-game may not necessarily be the case when the oracular language-game is used. For us we argue that the scientific language-game may be a step in the right direction also the oracular language-game may be a step in the right direction, but neither of the two is, on its own, comprehensive enough to enable us reach objective facts, truth, and reality. The case holds even if it were possible to combine the two approaches. Both approaches need to be subjected to the cognitional set of operations (4.5.1).

Evans-Pritchard brings in the notion of objective facts, truth and reality. The question still remains: whose facts, truth and reality? Objectivity of the scientist operating at the level of scientific theory would be different from objectivity of the mystical thinker operating at the level of the oracle. Evans-Pritchard should attempt to see sense in the oracular method instead of prescribing the scientific method. The Azande do move from the question "how" to "why". In this endeavour they are going beyond mere coincidence or accident to the meaning behind accidents and coincidences. Europeans have reached a level at which objectivity can be explained through scientific theory. The Azande are still at common sense level. The difference between the two cultures is the level at which they are functioning. That in itself does not qualify one level to be superior to the other and the other inferior. It is only a matter of time. Members of the two cultures both possess the cognitional set of operations. This is what matters. This set of operations can enable either of the two to see a point in approaches other than their own (4.5.2).

We look at intercultural learning and knowing through MacIntyre's eyes. One way of gaining intelligibility in alien culture is to look at the stock of descriptions in that culture. It is difficult to achieve this objective outside one's norms of rationality. Winch challenges MacIntyre on this matter. It is better to look at the sense that the alien language gives this stock of description. MacIntyre is of the view that what is explained as rational by the European in an alien society has to be rational in the European sense. The case holds for intelligibility. What is intelligible to the European in an alien culture has to be intelligible in the European sense. Winch again disagrees with MacIntyre on this aspect. Intelligibility is categorial. The scientific laboratory based intelligibility of theory and hypothesis is far removed from the intelligibility of the oracle. Applying the criteria of the laboratory to that of the oracle is next to impossible. What the European will get will not be what is the case on the ground but what the European wants to know. In our case we emphasise rationality itself rather than the norms of rationality as a means to gain intelligibility in alien culture. This is because norms of rationality may be cultural and contextual (4.5.3).

#### ***1.4.4 Foundation for Knowing, a Cross-Cultural Concept: Barden's Idea of the Set of Operations***

Chapter Five ties up the loose ends of our thesis. We move from the problem of a foundation in Chapter Two to the solution of a foundation to knowing in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four we are introduced to the possibility of inter-cultural learning. But the question is, where do we begin? We cannot begin in a vacuum and it would be difficult and confusing to begin in all cultures, some of which may be alien to us. We would immediately be faced with the problem of acute relativism something that would make it difficult to begin at all. Chapter Five helps us put into practice our foundation to knowing established in Chapter Three, but also introduces the idea of commencing the task to all knowing in our own tradition. This is a tradition with which we are familiar (5.1).

In Chapter Five we discuss two broad ideas, largely with the help of Barden (1990), that is the idea of traditions, systems and cultures and how they cohere. We also discuss how we arrive at truth in inter-cultural debates. The overall message that emerges is that knowing is always knowing against a tradition. This tradition is



expandable and hence the idea of inter-cultural learning and knowing. This is achievable through the cognitional set of operations or the subject-in-act. Below is the compendium of Barden's ideas, as they will help us in our discussion in subsequent sections (5.1.1).

Where one is born is neither by choice nor design. However, one's place of birth does not become ultimate for one. It serves only as a starting point from which to actualise one's endowments that include the cognitional set of operations. One can influence the propositions that serve as norms in a particular tradition. Therefore one is born with the potential to shape one's destiny. Propositions are neither ultimately basic nor natural but it is what is contained in a proposition that may be natural. Contexts also are not ultimately basic. They can serve as a starting point for further learning (5.1.1.1).

Moving from context to context, searching for answers, requires criteria with which to judge whether what is being learnt is true or not. The theory of naïve correspondence helps in our discussion. It helps the subject-in-act to link propositions to reality. The theory itself is not ultimately basic (5.1.1.2).

We move from purely cognitive to the realm of behaviour, where two judicial systems, namely that of the Azande and that of the Europeans, run parallel to each other. This discussion shows that the two systems are addressing different contents but they both have a judicial structure and a method of approach. They may not concur on the outcome of their judicial practices and that is the point of our cognitional operations which we proceed to elucidate (5.1.1.3).

We shall analyse ideas concerning traditions and operations. This includes the aspect of the subject-in-act as operational in traditions. The subject-in-act begins in a tradition, her tradition, which is not only where she is, but also more profoundly *what* she is. The problem, however, is that traditions are not necessarily systematic. Wisdom in a tradition is accumulated over a long period of time. This wisdom is translated into ordinary propositions, postulates or axioms. These later turn into general guidelines in that tradition. In our case, however, whatever form this scenario may take, it remains at the level of data for the subject-in-act to systematize. It is the subject-in-act who systematises this data and therefore who is ultimately foundational to this data (5.2.1).

We show that traditions and systems are different in different cultures or systems. This means that the propositions, postulates or axioms are also different. This difference leads to incompatibility within traditions and systems. This, in turn, leads to radical relativism of traditions. Given this scenario, is there a meeting point between traditions and systems? If so, how is it possible? We argue that radical relativism is only apparent in the practical day-to-day activities in a tradition or a system, if radical relativism is looked at in terms of principle that will be so by choice of the actor or actors. Given the cognitional set of operations, that is a situation that can be debated with a possibility of changing it (5.2.2).

We look at the way out from the confines of the contexts, traditions, horizons and logical systems. This comes as a consequence of radical revision. As a case in point, we discuss Einstein's shift to relative mechanics because of the inconsistencies between the propositions of electromagnetic forces and those of mechanics. His aim was to dispel the conflict between mechanics and the electromagnetic theory of Maxwell. There is a possibility of incoherence among the propositions of science that may lead to the possibility of lack of understanding of the logical system or the tradition or the horizon in which they are functioning. The consequence of this is unreliability in knowledge. We argue that propositions, or postulates or axioms, on their own, cannot lead us to reliable knowing. They must be directed by the cognitional set of operations. We also look at the perspectives of common sense and theory. This involves our appreciation of knowing, as stipulated by provable scientific hypotheses, and knowing as perceived in common sense. We argue that perception at common sense level can be explained using the cognitional set of operations (5.2.3 – 5.2.5).

From traditions and systems we discuss the principle of non-contradiction. Barden expands that it is not a proposition that is the principle of non-contradiction. It is not something that one acquires from out there and then puts into practice. The principle of non-contradiction is inherent in the subject. It flows from the subject. The proposition merely expresses the concept of the principle of contradiction; that is, the principle of contradiction is not revealed by a proposition but by an operation. It is operations that are ultimately basic and not propositions. Because the principle of non-contradiction is an operation and not a proposition it leads to coherence. Coherence is vital in the activity of knowing (5.2.6).

In the next sub-section we apply our ideas to inter-cultural contexts. We look at how we arrive at truth, first by focussing on the proposition and then on the criteria for truth. The question which we are addressing is how to get to the truth of a proposition. We show that propositions can be both true and false, or a proposition can be true whether anyone knows of it or not. Or a proposition can be known to be true. But still, how do we get to the truth of a proposition? This can be done in three ways: through the naïve correspondence theory, that is an attempt to compare the proposition with reality, or when the state of affairs it asserts do obtain, or through the subject-in-act (5.2.7 – 5.2.7.1).

We follow up the idea of the subject-in-act in inter-cultural contexts. We revisit Winch's idea of inter-cultural learning. We recall MacIntyre's position that one cannot explain social behaviour independently of one's norms of rationality; and Evans-Pritchard's position that it is only the scientific approach that can lead to objective facts, truth and reality. We recall this without forgetting Wittgenstein's position of the language-games. All these positions do lead to confinement in relativism. Winch's own position is that before one makes a judgement about the correctness or incorrectness of a method within a tradition or a system it is better first to understand the definitions, the propositions, the postulates and the axioms which define, explain and project the true identity of that tradition or system.

For us this is a very important development by Winch, but the shortcoming remains that he does not tell us *how*. How do we effectively undertake this enterprise of inter-cultural learning in the middle of our relativist backgrounds? It is Barden who takes us out of this quagmire by suggesting the basic pattern of operations, in our case the subject-in-act. He demonstrates that the subject-in-act does not only understand her tradition and system but transcends her own cultural tradition and systems and extends her own horizon into other horizons in search of answers which may not be existing in her own set-up (5.2.7.2).

We turn to criteria for arriving at the truth. Here we expand the idea of a horizon and then proceed to see how the subject-in-act functions in the horizon. We look at truth within the ambit of the naïve version of correspondence theory. The reaching of truth through this version is prevalent mainly at common sense level, as in the case of the Azande. Truth is simply reached by "taking a good look" at the tendency which is linked to empiricism and Wittgenstein's positivism in the picture



theory of knowledge. In the picture theory the role of the subject is hidden. It is the atomic proposition that is known to be true. Then truth becomes contextual, due to many language-games following different rules and uses. We remain with the question whether there are criteria for truth that apply to all cases and contexts. Barden takes us through different examples in order to help us establish criteria for truth. In the first example, a criterion for truth is established in the grasping of the sufficiency of the evidence and this happens to be the subject-in-act. In the second example it is again the subject-in-act that turns out to be the criterion for truth (5.3.1).

As we search for truth in different horizons, we note that horizons can be provisional. We move from one horizon to another in search of answers that are absent in our own horizon. We realise that sooner or later further questions do arise in our new horizon, necessitating a shift to yet another horizon. This goes on and on. Along this journey we encounter a question whether or not there is a limit to this move. The answer is “yes”, because a situation is reached when there are no further relevant questions to ask. Then we say that this is a perfect horizon. In our endeavours for inter-cultural learning we discover that inter-cultural learning is two-way traffic. We do not only seek for answers in a less restricted area but also in a *more* restricted area (5.3.2).

We proceed with the discussion of the foundation for all knowing. We finally come to this foundation by recapturing the Azande and the European contexts. We establish this foundation in the fact that both the Azande and the Europeans are endowed with a capacity to ask questions. This endowment is neither an exclusive possession of the Azande nor of the Europeans. It is an endowment that is common to all of us. We discuss the fact that both the questions and the answers that are asked by both the Europeans and the Azande are contingent. It is only this capacity that is actualised into an operation for asking questions that is a constant to all human beings. Because it is constant it is therefore the only ultimate facilitator for inter-cultural learning. It is the solution to Winch’s problem of inter-cultural learning or knowing (5.3.3).

The idea of inter-cultural learning or knowing involves mutual respectability in the contextual methods that lead to inter-cultural knowing. The European context has a structure of approach that involves the court system. The Azande context has a structure of approach that involves the oracle. In both cases a tort is committed. In

both cases investigations are carried out. In both cases the guilty party is established. In both cases there is redress or compensation. In short, except for some differences here and there, what the Europeans do in their courts of law is what the Azande do with their oracle. The important thing to note is that the Azande are emphasising the human element. To the Azande what is important is forgiveness rather than compensation. Genuine forgiveness strengthens or cements human relations among the Azande. With or without material compensation, social relations are restored through forgiveness. Compensation on its own does not remove the injury from the afflicted. Sending the culprit to jail is not enough for the Azande. To them, physical or psychological injury must be removed through forgiveness. This comes as another human element characteristic in the Azande approach. In addition to looking for meaning behind what appears to be accidental, the Azande approach contributes the notion of cementing human relationships through genuine forgiveness. This is placed over and above material compensation. Perhaps this is what Europeans could look into and consider adopting (5.3.4).

#### ***1.4.5 Frameworks for Inter-Cultural Learning: Further Application***

In Chapter Six, the concluding chapter, we finalise our discussion on the method for inter-cultural knowing with an application of this method to the frameworks of inter-cultural learning.

We would like to make it clear that in our discussion of the frameworks for inter-cultural learning, we do not present these frameworks in order of superiority or inferiority. We present them as precepts for inter-cultural understanding, each framework with its own characteristic. In fact we are critical of scholars who attempt to grade them as superior or inferior to one another. Here we give an example of a six-year old compared to a twenty-year old. Actions of a twenty-year old may appear superior to that of a six-year old. But this does not mean that the mind of a twenty-year old is superior and that of a six-year old is inferior. The fact is, the two are at different levels of development and exposure. In fact the six-year old may be potentially superior to the twenty-year old. Our frameworks are not meant to reflect chronological superiority or inferiority



Here we turn first to Mbiti's and Cisternino's accounts of traditional African wisdom. How are we to understand proverbs? We turn again to the cognitive theory of Lonergan, in particular as developed in his later book, *Method in Theology* (1975), and in particular, the idea of "interiority". But it is Cronin who, again, develops this idea in a way that suits our own problem. These frameworks include the common sense framework. We expose the characteristic of this framework. This framework is compact in a sense that all activities such as political, social, religious, moral and economic tend to intermingle and overlap. That means there is a general lack of definition and differentiation in almost everything. There is little difference between the symbol and the symbolised. Interests of society are placed above the interests of the individual. Society is run on accumulated wisdom, with little initiative from individuals. Because of lack of definition and differentiation ambiguities are prevalent (6.1.1.1).

We look at specific cases that reflect characteristics of the commonsense framework, beginning with Bantu proverbs. Proverbs are a reservoir of a culture's wisdom. Proverbs, if properly exploited, are a pedagogical means that can teach a large section of people. Within the common sense framework there is no area that they do not cover. They focus on the good and bad elements of human life. They inform about phenomena and noumena. They relate the human being to supernatural forces and to nature in general. A list of the pedagogical potentiality of proverbs is too large to present here, but what is lacking is a comprehensive method with which to extract the richness of meaning in them (6.1.1.2).

We look briefly at Mbiti's (1969), idea of the concept of religion and time in the common sense framework. In these categories we experience acute cases of compactness and lack of definition. Almost all phenomena and noumena are perceived in terms of religion. This is where names of people carry religious meanings; rocks and boulders are religious objects, the eclipse of the moon and the sun carry catastrophic messages. The notion of time has no academic significance in the common sense framework. Time is looked upon in terms of events past and present. Events that have not taken place fall into the category of "non-time." Mbiti's examples prove the aspect of compactness in this framework (6.1.1.3).

We look at the dichotomy of this framework in Africa, before and after colonialism, and the subsequent vagueness that ensues. Some philosophers describe

traditional reasoning as inexact and characterised by confusion. Others look at some pedagogical aspects such as folklore and the genres therein as full of wisdom. Others look at ethno-philosophies as characteristic of pre-industrial and pre-scientific, with no relevance to a modern philosopher. This scenario calls for clarification (6.1.1.4).

We search for this clarification in the framework of theory. Theory makes a move to attend to the problems of common sense. Compactness, the lack of differentiation and definition, has a tendency to breed vagueness, ambiguity and therefore confusion. In a state of lack of clarity there is no distinction and no control. In order to show that the problems of common sense framework are not unique to some African communities such as the Azande, we stretch our horizon to the Greek myths. We do this to show that if the Greeks could make an attempt to overcome the problems of common sense so can all communities that are still operating largely within this framework (6.1.2.1).

In their move towards the framework of theory, the Greeks started by criticising their own rich mythology. It no longer seemed correct for the gods to have human weaknesses such as getting drunk and engaging in sexual activities. This endeavour generated a crop of thinkers who attempted to seek explanations as to why in the universe things happen the way they do. This was a positive transition towards definition and differentiation. The emergence of geometry, for instance, marks a move from common sense to theory. With this development a new control of meaning emerges, followed by the formulation of arguments. Systems begin to take shape, logic and grammar are differentiated, and distinction between politics and ethics becomes clearer. This is a stage at which much of the confusion in the common sense framework is cleared up (6.1.2.3).

The struggle against confusion is particularly marked during the period of modern philosophy. This is when efforts towards freedom of thought against, for instance, the authority of the church, become succinct. The principle thinkers in this movement were Descartes, Hume and Kant. They founded systems that were theoretical and critical and that needed no religious beliefs but sensation and reason (6.1.2.3).

The realm of theory slowly takes shape and direction that gradually leads to the explosion of the “theory in the scientific revolution.” This is when scientists begin

to appeal to sensation and experimentation instead of the authority of the church. It is when remarkable expansion in mathematics is realised. Problems begin to get solved through measurement and counting. Technology leads to discovery. Problems of the common sense framework slowly begin to appear to be getting solved. However, theory does not adequately solve the problems of the common sense framework (6.1.2.4).

Sooner or later, theory gets caught up with its own shortcomings. These include failure to account for itself, failure to deal with contrary theories and the problem of being subjected to constant revisions and change. We try to show that it is clear that the common sense framework, and the theory framework, useful as they are in their own capacities, are not comprehensive enough to lead us to all knowing. This shortcoming calls for the third framework, which is interiority. Interiority is not a theory *among* theories. It is a theory *about* theories. It goes beyond common sense and theory frameworks. It is characterised by awareness of the actual process of human intellectual knowing. It is a framework that leads to complete understanding. It demonstrates that there are norms which are immanent in intelligence which make us know that we have understood correctly or incorrectly. Though it is human to make mistakes, we can discover these mistakes and effect corrections. In fact, the framework of interiority is comprehensive enough to solve the problems in the frameworks of common sense and theory. After establishing the three frameworks, that is the framework of common sense particularly evident in the pre-modern period and whose centre of meaning is in common sense, the framework of theory particularly evident in the modern period and whose centre of meaning is in theory, and finally the framework of interiority, particularly evident in the present-day, whose centre of meaning is in the subject-in-act, we proceed to show how the subject-in-act leads to inter-cultural dialogue that finally leads to learning from one another inter-culturally (6.1.3).

We deal with the question of how dialogue can be conducted effectively through inter-cultural debate that would lead to inter-cultural knowing, that would, in turn, lead to inter-cultural fertilisation and pedagogical enrichment. This endeavour is made possible by following the slogan “Be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable and be responsible.” We show that following this slogan works in all traditions and contexts. By being attentive we are alert to the data of our senses and imagination.



This, in itself, may prove to be satisfactory or not. In case we are not satisfied we move to the second level and that is of intelligence. Here we use our intellect to spot the cause of our dissatisfaction at the first level and effect a correction. The truth in our data is established at the third level of reasonableness. Finally, we take responsibility; we take a stand and commit ourselves to it. What is admirable in this commitment is that it creates room for open-mindedness and does not allow bias and prejudice to creep through. What is gratifying also is that it works in the frameworks of common sense, theory and interiority itself. It is comprehensive and all-engrossing, that is knowing or understanding at any level presupposes data to be understood. This data is available within experience. It comes through the data of the senses, through memory or through imagination. This level caters for many of the problems envisaged within the common sense framework. This is where the subject-in-act engages in the operations of defining, classifying, relating, correlating, conceiving, supposing, classifying, explaining, identifying, measuring, counting and calculating, to mention a few. The compactness is broken, differentiation is effected and control is made possible. Through these operations, contestants, no matter from what culture or tradition, can be accommodated at one round table.

We note that theory, understood in the scientific sense, is characterised by coherence, systematisation, precision, principles and methods. We argue that this is not a treasure to be enjoyed by Europeans only. Through the set of cognitional operations, members, who are still largely operating at the common sense level, like the Azande, can gradually function within the framework of theory, as the pre-modern or pre-industrial revolution communities did. At this level it is the criterion of intelligence that is predominantly functioning. We note that this is a function for all human beings, irrespective of framework. Using the cognitional set of operations, or the subject-in-act, we can overcome the problems of compactness, definition and differentiation in proverbs. Mbiti's problems of religion can be associated with everything and also the problems associated with time. Using the same approach, we can overcome the problems associated with ambiguities evident in the pre-and post-colonial philosophies. Our method possesses the ability to bring African philosophers with opposed views to a round table. It can bring Winch, MacIntyre and Evans-Pritchard to a round table and help to harmonise their thinking. The same can be said for any philosophers from any walk of life (6.1.3.1).

We expose how to pursue the journey to interiority. It begins with an assumption that when we pursue knowledge we pursue the unknown. This pursuance, however, is conscious, intelligent, rational, deliberate and methodical. Within a human being there is an ideal that moves someone towards knowledge. This ideal is innate. It is an ideal that brings together other ideals such as empiricism, rationalism and all the others, in their multiplicity. In order to attain this ideal one has first to undergo the process of self-appropriation, that is self-appropriation involves the perfection of the ideal of knowledge. This ideal of knowledge is the subject-in-act, or the self as intelligent, as asking questions, as requiring intelligent answers. The journey to self-appropriation begins by “moving in there.” This is the same as looking in there, but not in Wittgenstein’s ocular sense. It involves being present to the self. The subject must first of all be present to herself before anything else can be present to her. The knowing of all reality begins with self-knowing. This is a prerequisite for knowing everything else. It is absolutely vital that we first undertake the journey to self-knowledge as conscious, intelligent, reasonable and responsible knowers. It is this move which will make us ultimately basic for all knowing. Thereafter we move to inter-cultural knowing. Through the cognitional set of operations, or the subject-in-act, we can move towards knowing all reality in all traditions, cultures and systems. It is that mission which this thesis sets out to accomplish (6.1.4).

#### ***1.4.6 Chapter Linkage***

Before we proceed with the discussion of the problem of the lack of an ultimate foundation to knowing in all spheres, let us recapture the trend of our ideas in the entire thesis. In Chapter One, we give the major problem and assumption as guiding principles to our thesis. As a starting point to our problem, in Chapter Two, we introduce some of Wittgenstein’s views regarding the subject. We point out that placing the subject at the limit of the world and not regarding her as part of it with no functional role to play was erroneous. This discovery takes to Chapter Three where Lonergan introduces us to the idea of a self-appropriated subject whom we call the subject-in-act. We refer to her as the subject-in-act, because in the realm of knowing reality in all its aspects, the subject is acting all the time. She acts in all traditions and all systems of knowledge. She is always asking a further relevant question in order to reach the ultimate of knowing in all circles. This discussion takes to Chapter Four,



where the idea of intercultural learning is introduced by Winch. This serves as a buffer chapter to our thesis. In this chapter we attempt to show that any method that does not apply the idea of the subject-in-act is bound not to take us to knowing in all respects. Chapter Five helps us to anchor our idea of the subject-in-act more firmly. Barden comes in as proof to our claim that any attempt to disregard the subject-in-act may not successfully lead to intercultural learning or any other type of learning, scientific or otherwise. We conclude, in Chapter Six, with a further application that the idea of the subject-in-act works in all tradition European and African and it also works in all systems of knowledge, scientific and non-scientific.

# CHAPTER TWO

## FROM FORMAL LOGIC TO LANGUAGE-GAMES: WITTGENSTEIN

### 2.1 Introduction

As explained in Chapter One, the present thesis proposes the subject-in-act as the foundation for knowing. In this chapter we look at Wittgenstein's attempt to see logic as foundational and also his later language-game approach. As mentioned, we contend that the subject-in-act, in the sense that we will explain more fully in Chapter Three, should be ultimately basic or foundational in the understanding and explaining reality around us in all its manifestations.

In our analysis, as mentioned, we use mainly Wittgenstein's ideas to help us discuss this. In doing so we examine some of his early thoughts in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*<sup>1</sup> and some of his later thoughts in the *Philosophical Investigations*.<sup>2</sup>

Again as mentioned, we shall show that the subject-less approach in the picture theory, as it is put in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, does not work. The same is the case in following a rule in the language-game approach, as in the *Philosophical Investigations*.

#### 2.1.2 Commentators

To help argue the case, we shall use ideas from commentators who motivate and help us to explain Wittgenstein's thoughts. These include: Hudson, (1968); Van Peursen, (1969); Fogelin, (1979); Stroll and Popkin, (1979); Meynell, (1980); Harris, (1987); McCarthy, (1992); Taylor, (1997); Copi, (1998); Hacker, (1997); McGinn, (2000), among others.

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<sup>1</sup>Wittgenstein, L. [1921] 1974. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Hereafter, *Trac*.

<sup>2</sup>Wittgenstein, L. [1953] 1997. *Philosophical Investigations*. Hereafter, *PI* #.

We find Stroll and Popkin (1979) helpful, because they present the two sides of Wittgenstein: the earlier Wittgenstein, in the *Tractatus Logical-Philosophicus* and the later Wittgenstein, in the *Philosophical Investigations*. The text places Wittgenstein in the middle of the debate of the analytic movement in contemporary philosophy. This is the movement which is of the view that the problems of philosophy are largely due to conceptual confusion. Such confusion, to some extent, arises out of the misuse of language.

It was against this background that two streams of the movement were formed, namely what came to be known as “the formalist point of view,” led by Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell in their mathematical logic. According to this stream, mathematical logic was an ideal language and much more precise, in which

...ambiguities, equivocation and other forms of misrepresentation could not occur in its symbolism (Stroll and Popkin, 1997: 445).

Wittgenstein’s atomic or elementary propositions in the picture theory, where formal logic is supposed to reflect all reality, fits in well in this stream of the “formalist point of view.”

The second stream came to be known as the “ordinary language point of view.” This stream was led by G.E. Moore, John T. Wisdom, Gilbert Ryle, J.L. Austin and, of course, Wittgenstein himself, in his later thoughts in the *Philosophical Investigations*. This stream was of the view that problems of philosophy could be solved through clarification of ordinary language. Although Wittgenstein, in his later philosophy of the language-game, does not talk of clarification, still he fits in this stream. This is because he abandons his former position of formal logic, reflecting all reality, in his sense, to the language used in the social context and “following a rule” in the language-game. He abandons the language of pure symbolism and joins the debate on ordinary language.

We find this text of Stroll and Popkin useful, as mentioned, mainly because it presents the two diametrically opposed views of Wittgenstein. It is these two sides of Wittgenstein which help us to present our case. For us we argue that it was not right for Wittgenstein to place the subject at the limit of the world and accord him a metaphysical place, about which nothing could be said, as evidenced in the propositions: “There is no such a thing as a subject that thinks or entertains ideas” (*Trac.* 5.631). “The subject does not belong to the world: rather it is the limit of the

world” (*Trac.* 5.632). “The philosophical self is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul... but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world – not part of it” (*Trac.* 5.641).

It was also not right in the language-game to assign the subject the role of following a rule, as laid down by society, without questioning it. As a result of looking at the two sides of Wittgenstein we are enabled to show that, either way, it is the subject-in-act that is ultimately basic.

Fogelin (1979) makes a comprehensive criticism of both the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*. He examines critically the atomic ontology of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. More specifically, he looks at how Wittgenstein structures the “simples” to make the facts in the logical space, his version of the states of affairs and the world and how he defends his ontological atomism. Then he examines how Wittgenstein structures the propositional signs from atomic facts, making atomic propositions a source of knowledge for all reality. He looks at how Wittgenstein draws logical inferences from logical truths, how he structures logical propositions from variables and logical constants or connectives and how these propositions reflect objective reality.

Turning to the *Philosophical Investigations*, Fogelin interprets Wittgenstein as advocating the following of the rule blindly as actual blind following. He concentrates more on the weaknesses of Wittgenstein than on his merits. He makes elaborate criticisms of how Wittgenstein handles some of the rules of logic and points out that it was a big weakness for Wittgenstein to advocate following the rule blindly.

Although Fogelin is concerned more with pointing out the weaknesses in the early and later thoughts of Wittgenstein, our concern is to show the anomaly of not engaging the subject functionally, both in the formal logic and in the language-games. We believe that the subject plays a functional role in both formal logic and in following a rule.

Van Peursen (1969) examines the early and later Wittgenstein. In the early Wittgenstein he divides his ideas into sections, dwelling on the major themes. He examines Wittgenstein’s “logic of speech” by dividing it into minor sub-themes, looking specifically at Wittgenstein’s propositions as they project the world as states of affairs, then atomic propositions and how they picture reality, tautologies or *a*



*priori* propositions, truth-table matrices and the general use of the rules and laws of logic.

Then he proceeds to Wittgenstein's "metaphysics of silence", portraying and explaining some of the propositions referring to "showing" and "saying" and finally looks at language-games. In the language-game, he uses some of Wittgenstein's early thoughts such as the use of truth-table matrices and logical variables and constants to explain some of the ideas in the language-game.

He does this to show how Wittgenstein himself realised the problems in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and tried to address them in his later thoughts. What Van Peursen succeeds in doing is giving a balanced judgement on the strength and weaknesses of both the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*.

This fact, together with dividing Wittgenstein's ideas into major themes, such as the logic of speech, the metaphysics of silence and the language-games, and the analysis and criticisms therein, help us to show the shortcomings resulting from setting the subject at the limit of the world and not realising her foundational presence. We are enabled to show how a subject-less logic cannot work, contrary to what Wittgenstein had envisaged, and following rules would be indeed blind following if the subject does not continuously challenge their relevance in the changing world.

Harris (1987) and McCarthy (1992) concentrate on showing how the rules of logic can only work on objective realities. They project this scenario in order to show how Wittgenstein's idea of formal logic, representing all reality, does not work. This is because the world we are living in comprises both the general and the particular, or the objective and the subjective realities.

In our case we are arguing that there is something more foundational than formal logic, which can move from subjective realities to objective realities. This is made possible by the set of operations. To explain this fact we are assisted by Meynell (1980) with the idea of a "transcendental psychology." He believes that there is the subject that can be described by a "transcendental psychology" which, through the set of operations, can reach objective reality or knowledge by moving from particular subjective realities.

This fact helps us to present the case clearly that the subject-in-act is more foundational or ultimately basic and the unquestionable starting point towards understanding reality in all cases. It is the subject who thoughtfully, intelligently, rationally and responsibly functions in all rules, all traditions, all contexts and all sciences.

Hacker (1997), among others, provides a motivation for us to investigate Wittgenstein's ideas in the *Tractatus*. He says that by the time Wittgenstein joined the debate on logic, which was spearheaded by Russell, Frege and Moore, who were debating the philosophy of mathematics and its complementary concern with the nature of logic, the thrust was centred on areas such as the indefinables of logic, the use of logic, the use of variables in the specification of the laws of logic, the analysis of negation and also generality of logic and the theory of types. Wittgenstein's specific contribution was to be located in his interest in the proposition, especially its essential nature. He extended his interest from the formulations of logic to the nature of the world.

It is at this stage where our interest comes in. Wittgenstein attempts to make a proposition, which he later reduces to the status of an atomic proposition, foundational for the knowing of all reality. However, as mentioned, Wittgenstein leaves out the idea of a functional subject in the activity of knowing. Our contention is that this was not correct. We are arguing that it is the subject-in-act who is foundational for a proposition.

We are using Wittgenstein's ideas because he contends that a subject-less logical reasoning operating on atomic or elementary propositions is ultimately basic or is a starting point for explaining and understanding the world. We will argue that Wittgenstein's attempt fails. We shall show that his ideas are still unacceptable, to us even in his later thoughts where he puts forward the approach of following the rule in the language-games as being adequate for understanding and knowing reality in all aspects. In our case we intend to argue that it is not logic, a set of principles, or sets of propositions that are ultimately basic.

Regarding "understanding," Goldfarb (1992: 109), is of the view that what he calls a "dark point" in Wittgenstein's idea concerning understanding, needs to be

clarified. This dark point concerns Wittgenstein's attempt to reject mental states or processes of the subject. As he puts it,

Wittgenstein's treatments... of the cognitive or intentional mental notions are evidently meant to persuade us that, in some sense, understanding, believing, remembering, thinking and the like are not... definite states or processes; or ... there are no particular states or processes that constitute the understanding, remembering, etc (1992: 109).

Our concern here is that, though Wittgenstein wishes to deny these states, he himself talks of "a state of mental apparatus" (*PI* # 149). He also talks of "a state which is the source of correct use" (*PI* # 149). Goldfarb calls this paradoxical, because when one understands, say, a word, a sentence or a principle of a series one must be in a particular state, that is the state of understanding that particular word, sentence or principle. These states and processes are a reality. Therefore Wittgenstein's denials need to be investigated and elaborated on.

Goldfarb's discussion goes into empiricism, science and psychology, in which we are not interested. He motivates us with his mention of Wittgenstein's denials of "states" and, at the same time, recognises that it is the "states" which are the source of correct use. We are also interested in his expression that in order for one to understand, one must be in the state of understanding. These views, as we shall argue are akin to Lonergan's idea of the "presence to self." That is, we do not only understand but we understand that we understand. This is tantamount to one being in a state of understanding in order to understand.

In our case, states such as being present to self are real and processes which are remembering, thinking and the like are operations of the subject. We are in agreement with Goldfarb's suggestion that Wittgenstein's denials of the states and processes which, in our case, are characteristic of the subject-in-act, actually need clarification. In the next chapter we shall examine more closely these processes or operations of the subject.

McGinn (2000) calls our attention to Wittgenstein's ideas concerning language and explanations which he presents as follows. "We must do away with all *explanations...*" (*PI* # 126). Instead we should redirect our efforts to the investigation of language. His belief is that the problems that confront us in philosophy are rooted in the misunderstanding of the logic of our language (*PI* # 93). McGinn, in presenting Wittgenstein's view, points out that language is both the source of philosophical

problems and the means to overcome them. Hence, "Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language" (*PI* # 109).

McGinn agrees with Wittgenstein on this matter of solving philosophical problems through clarification of language. He recognises Wittgenstein's idea of "a grammatical investigation" (2000: 13) as being central to Wittgenstein's later philosophy.

We argue that the aspect of "a grammatical investigation" is an approach or a method like any other, just as formal logic is. It is one of the methods that lead to understanding. The means itself is not ultimately basic. What is ultimately basic is what puts the means into practice or what makes judgement about whether the means works or not and that is the subject-in-act. Neither is following the rule, in the case of the language-games, that is ultimately basic. What is ultimately basic is a set of operations, defining the subject-in-act: the subject wondering and asking questions, seeking to understand and critical of his own interpretations. We now proceed with our discussion of the general exposition of Wittgenstein's ideas. Thereafter we shall discuss his attempt to make atomic propositions foundational to knowledge and finally discuss his views on following a rule in the language-games.

### ***2.1.3 Résumé of Wittgenstein's Ideas on Atomic Propositions and on Language-Games***

In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein aims at establishing a structure of atomic propositions. These propositions represent facts. It is these facts which picture the world. He developed Whitehead's and Russell's legacy of logical symbolism comprising variables and constants – variables representing simple statements linked together by logical constants. His endeavour was to create a logical language that would serve as a measure for reflecting the facts in the logical world. This would free them from the semantic vagueness found in the ordinary language. Wittgenstein wanted to create a logically perfect language based on logical syntax operated by rules and laws of logic. Using logical rules, laws and symbols, he emphasised logical syntactical structure more than deep semantic structure. In other words, logical symbolism should have a one-to-one representation with the facts which they symbolise. This would help to



reduce the confusion caused by the multifarious semantic interpretations characteristic in ordinary language.

He developed the picture theory. In this theory Wittgenstein advanced an argument that while words in ordinary language could be multi-definitional a picture could not. The picture would map reality as it was. This conviction made him divide propositions into two clear-cut categories. These were the *a priori* or purely logical propositions, which were certain and indubitable, and the *a posteriori*, which were synthetic and probable. The *a priori* propositions yielded tautologies or logical truths; this meant that the rest of the natural and social sciences could be reflected in the *a posteriori* or synthetic propositions. He created a situation where propositions were either logically determinate or empirically determinate. This fact is implied in his propositions, such as “All deductions are made *a priori* (*Trac.* 5.133). “The propositions of logic are tautologies” (*Trac.* 5.133). “What is certain *a priori* proves to be something purely logical” (*Trac.* 6.3211).

However, with time, Wittgenstein became disenchanted with logic altogether and turned to ordinary language. He shifted from the position from where atomic propositions pictured reality, to language use. He advanced a new theory that language played a social role and therefore should be looked at in terms of its functions in society. The concern of the individual was to learn and strictly follow the rules that governed language use. It was the mastery and expertise in this endeavour that enabled the individual to play what Wittgenstein called the language-games. He introduces the idea of “language-games” by using the analogy of a teacher pointing to objects and naming them; and the student repeating what the teacher had uttered. He says,

In the practice of the use of language... one party calls out the words the other acts on them...the learner *names* the object...when the teacher points...I shall...call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the “language-games” (*PI* # 7).

Although Wittgenstein introduces the idea of the language-games rather simplistically, this new development marked a fundamental change in his thinking. He shifted from a position where language played a dual role: that of pure logic and that of fact. His perspective changed from that of logical relations, states of affairs, propositional symbols, and what they symbolised or pictured, to semantics in the language use. He was disappointed by his earlier thought that though tautologies

carried “value true”, all the time, as demonstrated in the use of truth-table matrices, they had no epistemic value. That is they could not give factual information. He points out that: “one cannot guess how a word functions. One has to *look at* its use and learn from that” (*PI* # 340).

Here Wittgenstein is placing language in a social context. He concluded that logic was now a spent force as a way of fully capturing our knowledge, or as an adequate framework for all our knowledge. It was high time for him to devise another *modus operandi* – the language-games – in which the formal structural symbols were replaced by semantic usages of human language. He became aware of the infinite variety of ways in which language could be used. It was not proper to reduce language to mere naming of objects and describing states of affairs. Language, with its many uses, played a cardinal role in society.

To illustrate his thoughts, we shall look at his own example of following a rule in the language-game. In the example in section 2.3, Wittgenstein argues that knowledge and understanding of reality can be achieved by looking at what everybody is doing in society and following it. We now turn to the atomic or elementary propositions.

## **2.2 Formal Logic as Ultimately Basic to Knowing**

### ***2.2.1 Atomic Propositions Foundation for knowing: Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus***

In his earlier thoughts in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein is concerned with establishing a language that can give knowledge of all reality or the world as he sees it. He divides the world into atomic facts and not things. These facts are expressed by atomic or elementary propositions. He structures these propositions in logical form. He uses logical symbols and connectives to construct propositional signs. It is these propositional signs, constructed in logical form, that picture the whole of reality. It is this idea of finding a pure language in the form of atomic or elementary propositions that preoccupies Wittgenstein’s mind in his earlier thoughts.

### ***2.2.2 Atomic (Elementary) Proposition Reflecting Knowledge of all Reality: Some of Wittgenstein's Early Assumptions***

In this particular section we shall quote extensively from *Tractatus*. This is because of the uniqueness in Wittgenstein's style of writing. He writes using propositions which he numbers. An attempt to change this style to the ordinary continuous prose in order to summarise his ideas would mean paraphrasing the numbered propositions. Since these propositions are in some cases cryptic and in some cases technical, the attempt to paraphrase them could result in loss of their original meaning. So we quote his propositions the way he puts them, in order to retain their originality. We will select only those propositions that have direct relevance to formal logic picturing all reality in Wittgenstein's sense.

#### ***2.2.2.1 Reality: the World is Facts***

Wittgenstein begins by placing the reader in the framework of the world as he sees it, that is, all reality. In doing this he is preparing the reader for the picture theory that is supposed to picture the entire world through atomic or elementary propositions.

The world is all that is the case (*Trac.* 1). The world is the totality of facts, not of things (1.1). The world is determined by facts, and their being all the facts (1.11). For the totality of facts determines what is the case and also what is not the case (1.12). The facts in the logical space are the world (1.13). The world divides into facts (1.2). What is the case - a fact - is the existence of states of affairs (2). A state of affairs (a state of things) is a combination of objects (things) (2.0.1). It is essential to things that they should be possible constituents of states of affairs (2.011).

In the above statements, Wittgenstein is drawing our attention to two cardinal elements. There is the element of things or objects and the element of states of affairs. By states of affairs he means that the world is orderly and organised. If that were not the case, then the world would be made up of scattered objects and things without any order whatsoever. So it is vital that things and objects be organised in states of affairs. It is this orderly world - states of affairs - which constitutes facts. The world therefore is made of facts, not of things. That is what he means by "world" or reality, is what the whole thing means (to us): how it is configured. You never get "objects" alone, in isolation.

### **2.2.2.2 Configuration of Objects**

Wittgenstein proceeds to consolidate his idea of states of affairs and facts through what he called *the configuration of objects*.

Objects, the unalterable, and the substance are one and the same (2.027). Objects are what is and subsistent; their configuration is what is changing and unstable (2.0271). The configuration of objects produces states of affairs (2.0272). In a state of affairs objects fit into one another like a link of a chain (2.03). In a state of affairs objects stand in a determinate position with one another (2.031). The totality of existing states of affairs also determines which states of affairs do not exist (2.05). The sum total of reality is the world (2.63).

In the above statements, Wittgenstein provides a clear perspective of what he means by "The world is all that is the case" (*Trac.* 1). He establishes relationships between what he calls substance and states of affairs or facts, which, in turn, are supposed to make up reality. It is clear that there are objects. These objects configure into states of affairs that are tantamount to facts. It follows that the structure of states of affairs forms the structure of facts. It is this arrangement that gives us the pattern of facts as we see them.

In a state of affairs objects do not relate to one another in a haphazard manner. They stand in a determinate position, fitting into one another like a link of a chain. It is that orderly scenario which projects the world intelligibly.

### **2.2.2.3 Picturing Reality**

In the propositions below Wittgenstein moves from the configuration of facts to how these facts are projected in picture form.

We picture facts to ourselves (2.1). A picture presents a situation in the logical space, the existence and non-existence of states of affairs (2.11). In a picture objects have the elements of the picture corresponding to them (2.13). In a picture the elements of the picture are the representatives of objects (2.131). What constitutes a picture is that its elements are related to one another in a determinate way (2.14). The fact that the elements of a picture are related to one another in a determinate way represents that things are related to one another in the same way. Let us call this connection of the elements the structures of the picture, and let us call the possibility of this structure the pictorial form of the picture (2.15). That is how a picture is related to reality. It reaches right out to it... (2.1511). What a picture must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it - correctly or incorrectly - in the way it does, is itself pictorial form (2.17). A picture can depict any reality whose



form it has. A picture can depict any thing spatial, a coloured one any thing coloured, etc (2.171).

For Wittgenstein, practising the epistemology of empiricism, it is only the material objects that make sense to him. We saw that, according to him, the material world first configures into states of affairs and facts within the logical space. Now we see that facts are captured in pictorial form. This form is in a state of symbols and propositional signs. A propositional picture is enough to reflect the existence and non-existence of states of affairs or facts.

In the logical space, objects and their elements get assimilated in the picture, making determinate relationships. These determinate relationships, among the elements of the picture, constitute a structure. The structures of the elements are tantamount to its form. The pictorial form reflects a commensurate relationship between things or objects and the elements of a picture. It is this scenario that projects the relationship between the material objects that makes sense to him. We saw that, according to Wittgenstein, the material world first configures into states of affairs and facts within the logical space. Now we see that facts are captured in pictorial form. This form is in a state of symbols and propositional signs. A propositional picture is enough to reflect the existence and non-existence of states of affairs or facts.

In the logical space objects and their elements get assimilated in the picture making determinate relationships. These determinate relationships among the elements of the picture constitute a structure. The structures of the elements are tantamount to its form. The pictorial form reflects a commensurate relationship between things or objects and the elements of a picture. It is this scenario, which projects the relationship between the picture and reality. There is a correlation between the picture and what is pictured. The picture and what it depicts must be identical in form. Above all, what is cardinal between the picture and what is pictured is the pictorial or propositional form. That is what enables the picture to depict any reality whose form it has.

#### ***2.2.2.4 Facts in Logical Form***

Still within the picture milieu, Wittgenstein extends his propositions to logical form, as stipulated in the propositions below.

What any picture, of whatever form, must have in common with reality in order to be able to depict it - correctly or incorrectly - in any way at all, is logical form, i.e., the form of reality (2.18). Every picture is at the same time a logical one. (On the other hand, not a very picture is, for example, a spatial one) (2.182). Logical pictures can depict the world (2.19). A picture has logical - pictorial form in common with what it depicts (2.2). A picture depicts reality by representing a possibility of existence and non-existence of states of affairs (2.201). A picture represents a possible situation in logical space (2.202). A picture agrees with reality or fails to agree; it is correct or incorrect, true or false (2.21). What a picture represents it represents independently of its truth or falsity, by means of its picture form (2.22). In order to know whether a picture is true or false we must compare it with reality (2.223). It is impossible to tell from the picture alone whether it is true or false (2.224).

It is evident that Wittgenstein exemplifies systematicity in his presentation. He moves from objects or things to states of affairs or facts and then to pictorial form. He now extends his line of thought to logic. **In his exposition** he shows that reality is not pictured haphazardly. States of affairs or facts are pictured in a logical form. Logical pictures depict the world. This is so because a picture has logical-pictorial form with what it depicts. A picture is supposed to agree or not to agree with reality. If it is not logical then its correctness or incorrectness, truth or falsity cannot be determined. Here we must add that comparing a picture with reality can sometimes be hugely problematic. This is particularly so as the picture may be two-dimensional and reality is three-dimensional, not to mention other realities such as hunger, wish, hate and love. These may be difficult to symbolise or picture. In that respect it is difficult to envisage how a picture, and what it depicts, can have a one-to-one representation

#### ***2.2.2.5 Logic and Thought in a Subject-Less Milieu***

In the propositions below, Wittgenstein combines logic and thought in a subject-less milieu.

A logical picture of facts is a thought (3). A state of affairs is thinkable: What this means is that we can picture it to ourselves (3.001) The totality of true thoughts is a picture of the world (3.01). ... what is thinkable is possible too (3.2). Thought can never be of anything illogical, since, if it were, we should have to think illogically (3.03). We use the perceptible sign of a proposition (spoken or written, etc.) as a projection of a possible situation. The method of projection is to think of the sense of the proposition (3.11). I call a sign with which we express a thought a propositional sign.... (3.12).

Perhaps unaware, in combining logic, facts and thought, Wittgenstein presupposes the operations of the subject. That is, the subject examines this combination and judges the truth in what constitutes it. He crystallises a logical picture of facts into a thought. In saying that a state of affairs is thinkable, he presupposes an operation, which is implied in the phrase "...we can picture it to ourselves." The expression "...true thoughts..." implies an operation. The establishment of truth also involves judgement; judgement is an operation. Thus, when he says that the totality of true thoughts is a picture of the world, he implies that the world can be understood after the operation of judging the thoughts as being true. If thoughts cannot be illogical and since thinking is an operation, it is because of this operation that we cannot think illogically. He says that the method of projection is to think of a sense of a proposition.

We know that Wittgenstein's method is to project facts by mapping or picturing them in propositions. If the method of projection is to think of the sense of what is projected, and thinking is the operation of the subject, then the entire method of projecting is subject-based. This will be argued in full in the section on analysis. Combining facts, thought and logic is problematic outside the framework of the operations of the subject. This problem remains as long as Wittgenstein continues to regard the subject as a metaphysical limit outside the framework of the world of facts. A full discussion of our alternative notion of the subject is set out in Chapter Three.

#### ***2.2.2.6 Deductive Derivation***

In the propositions below Wittgenstein introduces a case that is particularly relevant to deductive logic. It is a case where truth of the premises necessarily leads to truth of the conclusion; or where the truth of the conclusion is necessarily derived from the truth of the premises.

If all truth-grounds that are common to a number of propositions are at the same time truth-grounds of a certain proposition, then we say that the truth of a proposition follows from the truth of the others (5.11). In particular, the truth of a proposition 'p' follows from the truth of another proposition 'q' if all the truth-grounds of the latter are the truth-grounds of the former (5.12). The truth-grounds of the one are contained in those of the other: p follows from q (5.121). If p follows from q, the sense of 'p' is contained in the sense of 'q' (5.122). A proposition affirms every proposition that follows from it (5.124). Logic must look after itself... In a certain sense we cannot make mistakes in logic (5.473).

The above case stipulates consistency in deductive reasoning. As far as logic is concerned there is no problem; as long as we adhere to the rules of logic, as the computer does, we may not make mistakes, but if logic is to map the world of facts of ordinary life then there is a problem. This is because propositions, which picture facts in ordinary life, may not necessarily adhere to strict application of the rules of logic, as implied in the above case.

#### **2.2.2.7 Subject-Less World of Facts**

The propositions below show Wittgenstein's views on the subject. Wittgenstein's world is the world of facts. The subject appears only as a metaphysical entity, with no functional role in this world.

There is no such a thing as a subject that thinks or entertains ideas.... (5.631). The subject does not belong to the world; it is a limit of the world (5.632). Thus there really is a sense in which philosophy can talk about the self in a non-psychological way. What brings the subject into philosophy is the fact that "the world is my world". The philosophical self is not a human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world, not a part of it (5.641).

According to Wittgenstein, it is the atomic propositions that reflect all knowledge about the world. So the thinking subject who entertains ideas is unnecessary in the world of pictured facts. Wittgenstein projects the world as he perceives it; it is his empirical world in which the subject forms the boundary. The subject is neither a material body nor a psychological soul, but a function-less metaphysical self.

This stand, when linked to Wittgenstein's earlier propositions, "A logical picture of facts is a thought" (*Trac.3*). And "I call a sign with which we express a thought a propositional sign..." (3.121) creates a problem which Wittgenstein does not solve. It is difficult to envisage the existence of a thought-less metaphysical subject at the limit of the factual world, playing no role in that world, in the former propositions, and at the same time talk of "thought", which is the operation of the subject in the latter propositions. Thought is a function of the subject; whether that subject is metaphysical or otherwise. The operations of the subject must participate in the factual world if that world is to be intelligible. We can see that Wittgenstein holds a spectator's view of knowledge. His problem is that he needs an unquestioned starting point, that is, the point outside the world of objects that identifies the objects



or names them. The problem here is that if the subject is also an object then how can we have knowing and naming? As we shall argue in the next chapter, this spectator view of knowledge is solved by Lonergan's idea of the presence to self.

#### ***2.2.2.8 Transcendence of Logic***

As far as logic is concerned, the proposition below crowns Wittgenstein's stand on logic. "Logic is not a body of doctrine, but a mirror-image of the world. Logic is transcendental" (6.13). Because it is not a body of doctrine therefore it is transcendental. In our case, we assert that logic (formal logic) is not transcendental. It is the subject-in-act who is transcendental, that is to say, the subject-based set of operations participate both in logic and in the world. Since logic is a social activity it is part of the world.

#### ***2.2.3 Scope of Human Knowledge: Hudson's Clarification of Wittgenstein's Early Thought***

We begin our analysis of Wittgenstein's earlier thought, namely that the scope of human knowledge can be founded on atomic or elementary propositions, with Hudson's clarification. While other authors like Fogelin, (1979) concentrate on criticising Wittgenstein's views, Hudson, (1968) helps us to give a general overview of what Wittgenstein's earlier thought in the *Tractatus* was all about. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein was working out the logic of the view that the meaning of language is its referent, or that language is truth functional. That was the foundation of his thought in working out his theory that reality can be represented by atomic or elementary propositions. By the term referent, Wittgenstein means the object to which language refers. As he puts it, "A name means an object. An object is its meaning" (*Trac.* 3.203). He proceeds to say that an object can be indicated either verbally, by definition, or ostensively, by pointing. For instance, we can identify a typewriter by defining or pointing at the typewriter. By pointing we are indicating the thing to which the word "typewriter" refers. The expression, "the meaning of a word is its referent" is equivalent to the expression "language is truth functional." In other words, for meaning to be meaning there must be a referent. As we shall see in this chapter, this is what forms the basis of Wittgenstein's early thought.

Wittgenstein's principal task was to show that the world, in his sense, could be understood through logical language. In fact, Hudson reminds us that

Wittgenstein was not concerned as the philologist or physicist might have been, to show how... words are used or the world is made. His investigation was not empirical, but entirely logical (1968: 8).

So what Wittgenstein is trying to establish is how the world can be known through the pure logical language.

At the initial stages of his thought, he talks of logical "simples" and matches these logical simples with "objects" and from there he proceeds logically to language and reality.

At the beginning of his thought he makes it clear that in order for meaning to be meaning it must satisfy two criteria. The first criterion is that there must be an object to which meaning refers. In other words, there must be a referent or referents. The second criterion is that meaning must be determinate. That is, it must refer to one "simple" or one object. In that respect, logical language must follow the following trend. First, it must have meaning. Secondly, this meaning must refer to an object, or else it will not be meaning at all. Thirdly, this meaning must be determinate. It must refer to one and only one object; or else meaning will be ambiguous. He puts it as follows, "A proposition has one and only one complete analysis" (*Trac.* 3.25). That is, meaning must designate what something is and nothing else. Discourse must refer to something specific or else it would be logically impossible for us, as he puts it, to differentiate between meaningful and meaningless discourse.

Here Hudson helps us to point out Wittgenstein's view that if meaning is referent and must be determinate then we can draw two types of inferences from that position. We can draw inferences concerning language and we can draw inferences concerning the world.

We can say that these types of inference form the foundation of Wittgenstein's entire edifice of his earlier thought in the *Tractatus* and that is, as he puts it, "... all meaningful language must in the last analysis be reducible to ... 'elementary propositions'" (*Trac.* 4.221). What could this possibly mean? In order to understand what Wittgenstein meant, Hudson, for purposes of illustration, takes us through the following example. "The motorcar is in the garage" (1968: 10). Wittgenstein's argument is that in order for this statement to be determinate it must be referring to a

particular motorcar. But, the problem is that this proposition is descriptive and therefore general. It does not tell us which particular motorcar is in the garage. The statement does not give us a determinate meaning. That means it is a complex proposition. That makes it imperative to break it down into simpler propositions. It is these simpler propositions that will eliminate its indeterminateness. Hudson gives us a possible breakdown of this complex statement. In our analysis we can be more specific and say that the motorcar in question is a Ford Zephyr. But still this does not help us, because there are so many Ford Zephyrs. This means we shall go on with our analysis until we reach one statement, which refers to one particular or specific Ford Zephyr, that is, a statement which will be determinate. It will be that one proposition which will be atomic or elementary. It will be that determinate proposition which will have meaning, because it makes the object what it is and nothing else.

After establishing the case that an atomic proposition must be both determinate and meaningful, the next question that Wittgenstein examines, is how to get to the atomic proposition. He proceeds as follows: "An atomic proposition consists of names. It is a nexus, a concatenation, of names" (*Trac.* 4.22). In other words, we come to an atomic proposition through names. But then another question emerges and that is, what does Wittgenstein mean by "name"? Hudson helps to clarify what Wittgenstein means. Wittgenstein does not mean a proper name such as "Smith." He uses the term name in the logical sense or, as Hudson puts it,

.... It was not proper names but the logically proper names of simple objects. A "name" or a "simple sign" is a term which does not describe but designates or denotes, that of which it is the name: and so it can refer to that and that alone (1968: 11).

Here Wittgenstein means that it is such names that are meaningful and determinate which, when combined, constitute atomic propositions. If a nexus or a concatenation of names is meaningful and determinate, then the propositions made of such a nexus are also meaningful and determinate. It is such a case which eliminates the possibility of a procedure which would have turned out to be *ad infinitum*, that is, where propositions replace other propositions or words replace other words. According to Wittgenstein, it should not be possible for propositions to go on replacing other propositions or words replacing other words. Words must refer directly to things, or, as Wittgenstein puts it, "The requirement that simple signs be possible is the requirement that sense be determinate" (*Trac.* 3.23). So from this exposition



Wittgenstein draws his basic proposition, as explained by Hudson, "...the ultimate constituents of language must be 'elementary propositions and names'" (1968: 11).

This is how Wittgenstein formulates his maxim that atomic or elementary propositions are basic to reality, reality according to Wittgenstein being the logical world.

This exposition reflects how Wittgenstein projects his first inference, which concerns the logical language. After this exposition a question emerges: what is the world in the Wittgenstein sense and how do we come to know it? As an answer to this question, Wittgenstein proceeds to draw the second type of inference which concerns the world or reality. The world, according to Wittgenstein, must, in the final analysis, consist of "simple objects". We can only use language to refer to them by naming them and not by describing them. This is because language can only refer to simple things, if it is to be referent and determinate. Descriptions are to some degree indeterminate. It therefore remains logically necessary for the world to which language refers to consist, in the last analysis, of simple objects; as Wittgenstein puts it, "Objects make up the substance of the world..." (*Trac.* 2.021). From this, Wittgenstein proceeds to assert that these objects do not exist in isolation. They translate into a nexus or a concatenation of facts. As he says, "The world divides into facts" (*Trac.* 1.2). "A state of affairs (a state of things) is a combination of objects (things)" (*Trac.* 2.01). From there, his second inference then comes, while language reduces to atomic or elementary propositions which consist of names, the world or states of affairs consist of objects.

This is how Wittgenstein's maxim emerges that we can come to know the world or reality through atomic propositions. For the present case, as we shall argue, the atomic or elementary propositions, or any other type of propositions emanating from other systems like natural sciences, or propositions such as postulates or axioms, are only a means to knowing reality, indeed all reality but not basic or foundational to this knowing. It is the subject-in-act, who in the first place is responsible for the creation, or the formation, of these propositions and who is basic or foundational to them.

That said, however, we have not answered the question fully of how, according to Wittgenstein, we get to know his world or reality. Wittgenstein attempts



to answer this question using his idea of the picture theory. His position here, as we shall discuss later in this chapter, is that, as Hudson summarises, “language reduces to elementary propositions which consists of names: the world to states of affairs which consist of objects” (1968: 13). In other words, it is the atomic or elementary propositions which represent the world or reality.

We now proceed to see, through Hudson, how Wittgenstein attempts to enable us to know the world through the picture theory. First of all, what is the picture theory? This is a theory that a proposition is a logical picture of a situation. In order for this to be the case, Hudson identifies three conditions which must be fulfilled. The first one is that the elements of the proposition must correspond one-for-one to the elements of the states of affairs, or the atomic fact, represented. In other words, there must be as many distinguishable parts as in the situation that it represents. What does Wittgenstein mean by this? Perhaps, before we proceed, we should clarify what Wittgenstein means by “states of affairs” and “situations”. States of affairs consist of elements that are simple objects. These objects are expressed through names. A concatenation of these names makes an atomic fact. An atomic fact is a combination of simple objects. Situations, on the other hand, comprise molecular facts. They can be broken down and analysed into simple facts.

Since situations are molecular facts, they are therefore deceptive. That means they cannot represent reality. It is the atomic facts, which comprise simple objects, which can represent reality. This clarification explains why the first condition is necessary. As we said, in order to have reality the elements of the proposition must correspond one-for-one with the elements of the states of affairs or the atomic fact represented. For instance, if an artist draws a picture of a glass and a jug on a tray, then in that picture there must be a representation of a glass, a jug and a tray.

The second condition, which must be fulfilled before the atomic proposition can picture reality, concerns the features of the proposition and the simple object, which are represented or expressed. In the picture, there must be a featuristic representation. Objects which are represented in the picture are “simples” expressed by names. Wittgenstein’s point is that a mere list of names cannot represent a state of affairs. These names must form an atomic fact, which represents reality. As Wittgenstein puts it, “Only facts express a sense, a set of names cannot” (*Trac.*3.142). In other words, a picture should portray a logical arrangement. The simples or the

objects, which form the atomic fact must portray a logical structure or framework. The simples should not be scattered haphazardly, but must be arranged in the picture in a way that what they represent is arranged in reality.

The third condition, which must be fulfilled if the picture is to represent reality, is that the proposition must be correlated by the law of projection with the states of affairs which it represents. As he puts it, "A proposition is a propositional sign in its projective relation to the world" (*Trac.* 3.12). Here we again ask ourselves what Wittgenstein means by this condition. Before we answer this, it is essential to differentiate at this level between a proposition and a propositional sign. Hudson reminds us that, according to Wittgenstein, a propositional sign is a sentence, which may be written or spoken, which expresses the proposition. The propositional sign consists of words. It is what these words express which is the proposition. Hudson gives the example of "the cat is on the mat". This example consists of the proposition and the propositional sign. The propositional sign is made of six simple signs, but the proposition itself is not.

What Wittgenstein means by a proposition must be correlated by a law of projection with the state of affairs, which it represents, is exposed in following example.

There is a general rule by means of which a musician can obtain the symphony from the score, and which makes it possible to derive the symphony from the groove of the gramophone record, and, using the first rule, to derive the score again. That is what constitutes the inner similarity between things, which seem to be constructed in such an entirely different way. And that rule is the law of projection, which projects the symphony into the language of musical notation. It is the rule of translating this language into the language of gramophone records (*Trac.* 4.0141).

In simple terms, what Wittgenstein is saying here is that there must be a correlation between the words that constitute the propositional sign and the named simples or objects. If that were not the case it would be impossible for one to make sense from the propositional sign of the proposition that it expresses. In order for an atomic proposition to represent reality, it must fulfil those three conditions.

The explanation of how atomic propositions picture reality could not be completed without discussing the relationship between names of objects, which constitute the atomic or elementary propositions, and the atomic propositions themselves. According to Wittgenstein, propositions, whether true or false, do make

sense, as Hudson exemplifies. He gives the example of “Edinburgh is the capital of England” (1968: 15) as making sense, though the statement is false. The proposition is false but still meaningful. It is meaningful because it is a possible picture of a situation. To reiterate, a “situation” comprises molecular facts, which are analysable into atomic facts. In the example above, the proposition remains meaningful but it is the situation that it pictures that is not available. That does not make the proposition nonsensical or meaningless. That said about propositions, what about names? In order for a name to make sense or to have meaning, it must have a referent. A name without a referent is meaningless or nonsensical. Hudson gives the example of “Ipe”, (1968: 15) which is a name. The expression “Ipe” will not make sense to anyone unless it is explained first. But a proposition such as “Wittgenstein once thought of becoming a professional musician”, whether it is true or not, still makes sense, as long as we know the objects which the names in the final analysis refer to.

Wittgenstein concludes that names have reference and propositions have sense. What is common to both is meaning. So if we are to understand the meaning of simple signs or words, they must be explained to us first. With propositions, however, Wittgenstein continues to say, we make ourselves understood, as long as we know the meaning of the simples that constitute the proposition. So all in all we get to know reality by comparing it with the atomic propositions which represent it.

But, that said, Wittgenstein in the picture theory still has one more question to answer, and that is the role of the “logical constants” in the propositions. What role do constants, such as the negation or the ampersand, play? Wittgenstein is of the opinion that logical constants are not representative. This is because logical constants do not name objects as other non-logical words do. For instance, we can take “not” as an example. If “not” named an object in the expression such as “- - P” we would have a situation where “P” would name an object and two other objects. By using the logical rule of double negation, it would be impossible from “- - P” to get “P”, because the logical constant “not” cannot logically refer to any object.

This aspect is fundamental because, as Hudson reminds us, Wittgenstein regards all propositions as truth functions of atomic or elementary propositions. What this means is that any complex proposition can be broken down, in the last analysis, into propositions consisting only of objects. This would mean that the truth or falsity

of the complex proposition would depend on whether the atomic facts, or the states of affairs to which these refer, do, or do not, exist.

To illustrate this point, Hudson gives the following example. Let “A” represent the proposition “Tom is in the house and Mary is in the garden”. In this proposition “and” is the constant. The whole proposition can be broken down into simpler propositions: A1 “Tom is in the house” and A2 “Mary is in the garden”. Accordingly, if A1 is true and A2 is also true then A is true. On the other hand, if either A1 or A2 or both are false, then A is false. This means that the truth-value of A depends only on the truth-values of A1 and A2. The constant “and” only connects them. So “and” is simply a connector and not a representative of any object. That is, in order to know whether A1 or A2 is true or false, we do not need to know the truth-value of “and”, as distinct from the truth-values of A1 and A2.

We can say that it is this brief exposition which underlies or forms the foundation for the whole of Wittgenstein’s early thought in the *Tractatus*. We now proceed with the analysis of the *Tractatus* itself. Our main objective in this analysis is to show that Wittgenstein was not particularly right to make atomic or elementary propositions basic to the knowing of all reality without the subject-in-act. We shall, therefore, in the rest of the thesis, show that it is not the atomic propositions which are basic or foundational to the knowing which can be uncovered in all disciplines and areas of inquiry, scientific, historical, theological and commonsense, to mention a few. What is basic is the subject-in-act.

#### ***2.2.4 The Subject as a Necessary Factor in the Projection of all Reality: Analysis and Critique of Wittgenstein’s Early Assumptions***

In this section we wish to reflect on Wittgenstein’s early assumptions, giving our view on them. We also wish to introduce the concept of the set of operations defining the subject-in-act: the subject wondering and asking questions, seeking to understand, and critical of her own suggested interpretations.

Although Wittgenstein begins by putting us in the framework of the world of states of affairs and facts, he does not mention the architect of the states of affairs and facts. Though later he talks of the metaphysical subject, he makes him the limit of the world. In other words, the subject is like any other object without the mind, or



someone who is unable to really advance in knowledge. Yet objects need to be organised into states of affairs or facts, by the mind. Clearly, this does not happen by accident. States of affairs should be organised at two levels: the empirical level and the rational level.

It is clear that, hitherto, Wittgenstein has shown the basic structure of any thing that we can know or the world. He has also shown that the world of facts is the configuration of states of affairs. So far, so good. However, still he does not mention how the configuration comes to be. He projects the states of affairs and the configuration in a finished form. By doing that he creates a gap. Neither the states of affairs nor the configuration of facts have the capacity to put themselves into existence, except through the mind. It could be argued, though, that configuration can be explained by the rules of natural science, for instance through the science of evolution. Even if that were to be the case, still it is the subject-in-act who interprets the rules of science. The subject-in-act questions science by examining its methods and making a decision on whether these methods are adequate or not. So it is this subject-in-act who puts the world of facts in place. He does this through a set of operations. He thinks about a certain scenario and thereafter generates suitable propositions which are commensurate with that scenario.

So we contend that the generation of knowledge of states of affairs or facts come to be through deliberate operations of the subject-in-act. It is the subject-in-act who formulates states of affairs from “things” or “objects” into facts. It is still the subject-in-act who configures these facts. The world of facts exists as a consequence of deliberate operations by the subject.

Our concern is that, even in the picture theory, there is no way Wittgenstein can alienate the subject-in-act. Wittgenstein’s very statement, “we picture facts to ourselves” is indicative of the presence of the subject-in-act. Picturing facts to ourselves presupposes perception and interpretation. We are not exposing the objects to a blank film. A subject is supposed to make sense out of the picture. This fact calls for the set of operations to perceive, analyse, synthesise and pass judgement about what has been projected. In Chapter Three, using Lonergan’s concept of the subject, we shall elaborate on the operations of the subject-in-act.

Wittgenstein, with his idea of picturing facts, succeeds in starting us on what may be regarded as the philosophical method. But he does not complete it. Meynell summarises what we will show in detail on Lonergan in Chapter Three. He shows how the subject acquires knowledge in a way that is particularly relevant to philosophy. This is how: The subject,

...has attended to the evidence relevant to his topic; he has thought of a number of ways in which that evidence can be accounted for; and he has preferred the account which best explains the evidence (Meynell, 1980:154).

So it is not just picturing facts to ourselves that leads to our knowing or understanding the facts. Picturing facts can only be serving as the initial stage towards acquiring evidence, but the subject-in-act proceeds with the set of operations to verify what is pictured.

This is how a knower - the subject-in-act - acquires knowledge. Her method is definitely different from that of a psychologist investigating knowledge. To a psychologist, knowledge may be acquired through feeling. For instance, the way one feels hunger, pain, anger, pleasure or depression. Although these may be described as knowledge, they *are* knowledge, but at the elementary level. They can be verified at that level. This type of verification is for the psychologist. Looking at it from this angle, understanding a fact of this nature is more or less automatic. It is a type of chain of cause and effect. There is almost no conscious effort required. If one is denied what is due to one, one becomes annoyed; and if it is given one is happy. This is particularly relevant to psychology.

But, looking at facts, which in the Wittgenstein sense are consternations of atomic propositions, knowledge cannot be acquired simply through picturing. Picturing will only serve as the initial stage. In the philosophical sense the subject proceeds with the set of operations to verify what is pictured. To a knower - the subject-in-act - conscious effort to understand a fact is essential. Evidence must be acquired and examined intelligently and judgement as to its truth and relevance passed. So knowledge is not picturing and knowing as Wittgenstein puts it. In order to understand what is pictured, the subject-based operations must be involved. That may be described as the typical philosophical approach to knowing what is pictured. The philosophical approach includes

...wondering, envisagement of possibilities, forming of judgements and so on... (Meynell, 1980: 155).

We can see that this is not causal knowledge, which may be acquired by exciting a sense so that a response is triggered off; like someone seeing something they like most and laughing; neither is it getting trapped in one's thought, as the Cartesian approach implies. But it is the subject-in-act involving a set of operations, self-conscious and present to herself, trying to reach objective truth from the level of picturing or the senses, all through rational intelligence to judgement of truth or relevance. In picturing and knowing the pictured facts Wittgenstein may be stopping at the elementary, or sense evidential level. That is only the beginning of the approach to knowing the facts. Wittgenstein succeeds in bringing us to this first level.

We remain strongly convinced that agreement or disagreement between logical form or a logical picture and reality presupposes judgement. Again, correctness or incorrectness and truth or falsity presupposes correlation between the pictorial form or logical form and reality. A logical picture is a fact. We know that facts are constructed by a set of cognitional operations. Facts are states of affairs and states of affairs are thinkable. We know that thinking is the operation of the subject; so is judgement and correlation. Therefore the totality of true thoughts, which is a picture of the world, cannot be pictured by logical form alone, outside the operations of the subject. We must mention here, as will be shown, that the set of cognitional operations is still missing in Wittgenstein in his later attempted solution in the *Philosophical Investigations*.

### ***2.2.5 Summary of What Went Wrong in the Atomic Proposition Theory: Various Commentators***

#### ***2.2.5.1 Attempt to Make Atomic Propositions Basic***

In this section we shall use Wittgenstein's ideas and those of the commentators on his work to show that it is not the atomic or elementary propositions in the picture theory or formal logic that are basic; but what is basic is the subject-based operations.

Wittgenstein, in the *Tractatus*, argued that all reality, in Wittgenstein's sense, could be structured in atomic facts and then expressed through atomic propositions. It

is these atomic propositions that were to serve as a basis for understanding all reality. If all reality could be reduced to the ultimate atomic facts and then expressed in the atomic propositions, each proposition would have a one-to-one meaning with the fact it expresses. This situation would ensure that there is no more misunderstanding in philosophy, which would mean that the problems of philosophy would have been solved.

Wittgenstein was not the first to think in terms of atomic ideas. The idea “of simples and ultimate entities...” (Stroll and Popkin, 1997: 45) emerged from the ancient Greek thinkers: Democritus and Epicurus. It is then picked up by Russell, who concludes that in the world there are two basic things, “...simples and facts...” (1997: 448). According to Russell it is these simples which constitute facts; and it is these facts which make statements true or false. It is still Russell’s idea that

...the world can be thought of as being the totality of facts there are (1997: 449).

At this stage Wittgenstein picks up the idea of facts with which he opens the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. “The world is the totality of facts...” (*Trac.1.1*). Wittgenstein thought that he would solve the problems of ambiguity by constructing atomic structures through which atomic facts would be expressed. Since an atomic fact can have one and only one meaning, atomic propositions would eliminate the problems of ambiguity. The problem here is the thinking that objects in the world can be reduced to their ultimate simples, where each simple has one and only one meaning; then construct these simples into atomic propositions and finally make these propositions the basis of understanding all reality.

Here we are concerned with Wittgenstein’s failure to recognise the fact that establishing an atomic fact with one ultimate meaning requires the subject-in-act to examine an assortment of all possible meanings that can accrue to that atomic fact under different circumstances and conditions. Wittgenstein fails to realise that, even if atomic propositions were to express all reality, at the base of it all there would be need for the subject-in-act to determine the truth of those propositions. It is possible that an atomic proposition can mean one thing under certain conditions and a totally different thing under different conditions, a fact which Wittgenstein recognises later in the language-games. In order to determine whether an atomic proposition expresses truth or not, there should be the subject-in-act to make the right judgement.



### 2.2.5.2 Creation of one Universal Language (Formal Logic)

The early Wittgenstein tries to establish a pure formal logical language, comprising logical syntax devoid of ordinary prose discourse, in which matters of reality could be established. In the process of advancing his efforts, he took logical empiricism to its logical conclusion, that is philosophy having no subject matter. He puts forward logical calculus, based on symbols or variables, and constants operating on laws and rules of logic as a language, which would objectively describe all reality. In order to comprehend all reality, all one needed was to calculate these symbols and one would be sure to reach objective truth. He confirms this in his own words: “One can calculate whether a proposition belongs to logic, by calculating the logical properties of the symbol” (*Trac.* 6.126).

We can describe the world completely by means of fully generalised propositions, i.e. without first correlating any name with a particular object (*Trac.* 5.526).

His strong conviction was that form, or logical signs, could fully describe all reality, in complete disregard of content. Fogelin (1976) confirms Wittgenstein’s conviction:

He does believe that in a logically constructed language all logical questions can be settled without an appeal beyond the symbols themselves (1976: 53).

McCarthy (1992) helps to shed light on Wittgenstein’s problem. He quotes him as saying,

The logical constants and tautologies and contradictions are not semantically correlated to any strand of reality....Logical constants have meaning without reference; tautologies have truth values without correspondence (1992: 106).

McCarthy points out the problem between the logical structure and reality. Usually the sense of a proposition is seen in terms of its semantics. If there is no semantic correlation between the logical structure and reality, then it becomes difficult to see how the logical structure relates to reality. This is so because formal logic expresses form, while semantics express particularities. Hudson (1968) crowns this problem by pointing out that Wittgenstein “... had been wrong... because he had tried to impose on language preconceived ideas...” (1968: 45). This is so because Wittgenstein had attempted to put in place one ideal language (formal logic) that would reflect all reality. What Hudson is saying is that language handles both general and particular matters. So for Wittgenstein to attempt to impose a kind of language (formal logic) as

a language that would reflect all reality was indeed misconceived, because logic would only give generalised truths, at the expense of particular truths. This would be expressing reality, but only partly.

The problem that emerges with suggesting logic as the language that can give knowledge of reality is that logic leads to generalised knowledge. But reality is both general and particular. We live in the real concrete world of both the general and the particular. So a standard that focuses on the general, at the exclusion of the particular, in itself is not adequate as a means for expressing our affairs.

Our concern in this particular respect is not very much whether logic can or cannot reflect reality, neither are we much concerned with whether symbols, laws and rules of logic can express reality better than ordinary prose language. Our concern is that logical language cannot be basic to the subject-in-act. Before logical language is put in place it has to be formulated first. This formulation requires the subject-in-act. It is for the subject to draw a distinction between what is logical language and what is not logical language; or whether the language in question is being used logically or not. At the level of the operation or functioning of the language, the subject-in-act is consciously and intelligently deciding whether the language in question is being used logically or not. This fact places the subject-in-act at the base of logic. He is inevitably placed in a position where he can judge its effectiveness.

Apart from the application of logical language, even the formulation of the laws and rules of logic presupposes the subject-in-act. That is, intelligence, rationality, justification and judgement are required at this stage. Although logical symbols - variables and constants - may be arbitrary, it is for the subject-in-act to decide on what symbols, laws and rules are conveniently applicable in the construction of the logical language. Again it is for the subject-in-act to judge whether the variables, the constants, the rules and the laws are in appropriate interplay. So whether we look at logic at the level of applicability, or that of its formulation, it remains a fact that it is the subject-in-act who is basic or the starting point to the understanding and knowing of reality in all cases and not a subject-less logic.

### ***2.2.5.3 A Non-functional Metaphysical Subject***

The serious problem created by Wittgenstein is failure to recognise the role of the subject-in-act. This anomaly puts Wittgenstein in a contradictory position, as seen in “There is no such a thing as the subject that thinks or entertains ideas” (*Trac.* 5.631). This declaration seems to contradict the proposition made earlier “Everything that can be thought at all can be thought clearly. Everything that can be put in words can be put clearly” (*Trac.* 4.116). It is clear that Wittgenstein is deliberately using the third person indirect expression in order to avoid the subject-in-act. “Everything that can be thought ....” This expression presupposes the subject-in-act, that is the subject doing the thinking.

Wittgenstein’s contradiction is amplified in his statement,

A state of affairs is thinkable: what this means is that we can picture it to our selves (*Trac.* 3.001).

We know that, according to Wittgenstein, “a state of affairs” is the atomic proposition. If a proposition is thinkable then inevitably there must be a thinker. What remains missing is the subject whose role would be to operationalise them.

So Wittgenstein is not particularly right in his assertion:

.... What brings the self into philosophy is the fact that the world is my world. The philosophical self is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world – not part of it (*Trac.* 5.641).

In this assertion Wittgenstein creates a problem. He accepts the presence of a metaphysical subject. However, he does not assign him any role in the knowable world. He actually excludes him from the world of knowable reality. This is a mistake. Formal logic cannot operate on its own, without the conscious and active operations of the subject-in-act.

Precisely what went wrong was that Wittgenstein attempted to remove formal logic from its context, that is the subject-in-act. In this he failed. The subject must continue to participate in the formulation and interpretation of the rules and laws of logic. He attempted to create a logical language in form of atomic or elementary propositions, which would map or picture the whole of reality, without involving the subject-based set of operations. Again he failed in this endeavour.

**2.2.6 Relevance of Wittgenstein's Ideas on the Operations of the Subject. Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus: Various Commentators**

In this sub-section, we shall show that formal logic functions in its context. The context of logic is the subject-in-act whose operations are to observe, wonder, ask questions, reason or make justifications and judgements.

Wittgenstein's stand on the atomic or elementary propositions in the picture theory, or formal logic representing all reality, was bound to fail. He admits this fact himself.

My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: any one who understands me eventually recognises them as nonsensical... (Trac. 6.54).

We cannot agree more with Fogelin (1979), when he says, "Wittgenstein's approach ... is not only destructive but self-destructive" (1979: 112). Van Peursen (1996) helps to illustrate this problem with an example where,

... the logical symbolism of a proposition... and language are unable to express their own factual agreement with reality (1996: 44).

We express this fact in the use of the truth table calculus; where a proposition such as " $\sim (P \vee Q)$ " is logically equivalent to " $\sim P \ \& \ \sim Q$ ". Both propositions have the same truth values:

P	Q	$\sim (P \vee Q)$	$\sim P \ \& \ \sim Q$
T	T	<u>F</u> T T T	F T <u>F</u> F T
T	F	<u>F</u> T T F	F T <u>F</u> T F
F	T	<u>F</u> F T T	T F <u>F</u> F T
F	F	<u>T</u> F F F	T F <u>T</u> T F

This fact is in consonance with the rules of logic. That is, whatever truth values of "P" and "Q", the two sentences agree on truth value. As we can see, the two propositions are only equivalent in logical form. The case will be different, however, if the two propositions are expressed in prose or content form, that is when actual propositions substitute the symbols. Let us look at some examples from the English language. "It is not true that I go to town or I have some tea." This means that I might do neither. I



might have some coffee at home instead. Or “It is not true that I go to town and it is not true that I take some tea.” This means nothing about what I might do. Another example is, “ $P \vee Q$ ” where “P” is “I have some tea” and “Q” is “I have some coffee.” In the English language “I have some tea or I have some coffee” means not both. In logic, however, it means some tea, some coffee, or both.

These examples help to emphasise the fact that logic separated from content continues to express general principles and leaves out the particulars. Since reality consists of both the general and the particular, a situation that reflects only the general is not adequately reflecting reality in all cases.

There is no justification for Wittgenstein to side-step or marginalize the subject-in-act in favour of atomic propositions or formal logic, however justified he might think he is. In this respect, Wittgenstein’s proposition, “logic must look after itself” (*Trac.* 5.473), becomes null and void and should be appropriately replaced by: logic should be looked after by the subject-in-act. Although Wittgenstein is at pains to avoid the subject, at times he finds himself face to face with the subject, as is evident in the following assertion.

Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a body of doctrines but an activity. Philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations. Philosophy does not result in “philosophical propositions”, but rather in the clarification of propositions. Without philosophy thoughts are, as it were, cloudy and indistinct: its task is to make them clear and to give them sharp boundaries (*Trac.* 4.112).

Wittgenstein’s trend of reasoning had hitherto reflected that propositions, whether logically determinate or referentially determinate, are supposed to picture or mirror reality. But now, according to the quoted assertion above, philosophy is not projected as substantial alongside other sciences such as physics, biology or psychology, but operational. In the operational status it becomes an activity. It is common knowledge that an activity, in itself, cannot operate. Wittgenstein points out that

The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a theory but an activity. A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations. The result of philosophy is not a number of “philosophical propositions”, but to make propositions clear. Philosophy should make clear

and delimit sharply the thoughts which otherwise are, as it were, opaque and blurred (*Trac.* 4.112).

If philosophy is not substantial but operational, what can “its” possibly mean? If elucidation is operational and philosophy has also become an operation; how can an operation carry out another operation? Wittgenstein has cornered himself into a tight position, where he cannot underrate the function of the subject-in-act. Wittgenstein’s proposition, (*Trac.* 4.112) could be restructured so that the “it” becomes the “knower”- the subject-in-act - who carries out the elucidation and the clarification of propositions in order to remove the cloud and indistinctness in thoughts. Again, since it is the subject-in-act who is elucidating and clarifying the propositions, they cannot be basic to him.

We recall the statement, “What can be shown cannot be said” (*Trac.* 4.1212). This comes in the wake of definitions becoming infinite; when a definition describes a concept by means of another concept, which is, in turn, defined by another concept, up to the time when no more definitions can be given. This is when the saying stops and the showing begins. However, as is common knowledge, the showing may cause more confusion than the actual definitions. (Wittgenstein, though, agrees with this problem later, in the *Philosophical Investigations*). Many interpretations may result, leading to the misunderstanding of the issue altogether. At this stage the subject is needed to give a kind of “quasi-ostensive definition.”<sup>3</sup> This is where the pointing, the defining, the explaining and, where necessary, the illustrating, are all done simultaneously. This could be followed by the subject-in-act soliciting a response, to ensure maximum comprehension. This means that Wittgenstein is not particularly right in saying that “what can be shown cannot be said.” This is because, with the empirical approach, proper understanding may require the application of more than one sense. That is, applying the visual and the audio senses at the same time, but the audio cannot be shown. For instance, a proposition such as: “A nice cup of tea is on a clean table,” expresses a state of affairs or a fact. It may be a bit difficult to show this fact with the visual only. So Wittgenstein, as mentioned, is not particularly right in

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<sup>3</sup>This expression is picked from Copi, I.M.’s *Introduction to Logic*. He says, “...an ostensive definition refers to the example by means of pointing or some other gesture... gestures are invariably ambiguous. To point to a desk is also to point to part of it, and also its colour and its size and its shape and material... and to every thing that lies in the general direction of the desk including the wall behind it and the garden beyond.... This ambiguity can be reduced by addition of some descriptive phrase...the result being a quasi ostensive definition” (1998: 141-142).

saying that what can be shown cannot be said. As we see, showing can result in ambiguity. After showing, saying may be inevitable. Here the subject-in-act is needed to point and explain at the same time.

In clarifying Wittgenstein's position, Van Peursen reiterates Wittgenstein's claim that

...so long as one obeys the logical rules, it is impossible to talk nonsense, or even to ask an illogical question. If one does in fact ask such a question, someone can always point out an improper use of words or an illogical relation between meanings of words so that the question can then be reformulated.... (1969: 61).

We again have the sense of the subject-in-act in the "someone." It is this someone who notices that a norm of logic has been violated and therefore correction is necessary. This someone does not only stop at pointing out anomalies but helps to fill-in or clarify situations or states of affairs where the rules of logic are inadequate. In this respect the "someone" – the subject-in-act – possesses a capacity and ability to go beyond the rules of logic. That makes him more foundational than the rules. In fact, he can establish further foundation for the rules.

Wittgenstein leaves us wondering whether it should be logic to set limits to what can be thought or the subject-in-act.

It must set limits to what can be thought: and, in doing so, to what cannot be thought. It must set limits to what cannot be thought by working outwards through what can be thought (*Trac.* 4.114).

In this case Wittgenstein not only alludes to the subject-in-act but creates a problem. If we perceive states of affairs through symbols and pictures, how is it possible to "work outwards"?

In his own words, Wittgenstein says that "There is no such a thing as a subject that thinks..." (*Trac.* 5.631). If that is the case the alternative is to reach states of affairs through the rules of logic. If it is not the subject-in-act that can lead us to what can be thought, then the alternative is the rules of logic. If it is the rules of logic that can lead us to what can be thought then we wonder whether or not there exists rules of logic applicable to working outwards, that is beyond their applicability. In the absence of these rules we remain uncertain whether working outwards falls within the ambit of logic or not.

It is obvious that we know what to expect when we follow the rules. However, Wittgenstein does not give us the criteria to follow when we are working outward. Do we reverse the elements in the states of affairs or in the atomic propositions or do we reverse the entire propositional sign? That omission notwithstanding, we still remain with the subject-in-act to do the thinking. In the absence of the method for working outward, the subject-in-act is left with no alternative but to do the inward or the outward thinking. That concludes our criticism of Wittgenstein's early analysis of logic as basic. We turn our attention to his revised thinking, that language acquires meaning from social use. In our argument we focus on two central ideas: language-games and following a rule.

## **2.3 Language-Games and Rules Functional in Society**

### ***2.3.1 "Following a Rule" in the Language-Game: Later Wittgenstein***

As in Wittgenstein's early thought in the *Tractatus*, Hudson helps us to clarify his later thought in the *Philosophical Investigations*. In *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein was of the view that atomic propositions formed a foundation for knowledge. But he abandons this idea in his later thought, in favour of following a rule in the language-game. Hudson gives a good introduction to his ideas. In this sub-section he gives us an overview of what following a rule in the language-games is all about. In this exposition he covers many other aspects, such as the religious beliefs. Our interest lies only in his views on following a rule in the language-games. We now proceed with his exposition.

Wittgenstein, in his later thought in the *Philosophical Investigations*, made an attempt to expose the defects in his earlier thought in the *Tractatus*. As he puts it, Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* had attempted to show that "A proposition has one and only one complete analysis" (*Trac.* 3.25). It is this position which seems to have formed a foundation of his arguments in the *Tractatus*. As Wittgenstein had argued, such a proposition is supposed to comprise simples or words that have referents. In order for a word to have meaning it had to correspond to something. That is the sense in which an atomic proposition is foundational. But in his later thought he repudiated this position that, as he puts it,



... a word has no meaning if nothing corresponds to it. – It is important to note that the word “meaning” is being used illicitly if it is used to signify the thing that “corresponds” to the world. That is to confound the meaning of a name and the bearer of the name. When Mr. N. N. dies one says that the bearer of the name dies, not that the meaning dies... (PI # 40).

Here Wittgenstein repudiates his earlier stand that in order for a “simple” or a word to have meaning it must have a referent. He proceeds to say that it does not make sense to speak of an absolute one-one correspondence between the simples of language and those of reality. The picture theory had required breaking reality down absolutely, into its simples. Now Wittgenstein is of the view that this does not make sense anymore.

He proceeds to say that analysing a proposition into more elementary propositions does not make its meaning necessarily clearer. To illustrate this he gives the example of a broom.

If for instance someone said, not “The broom is in the corner” but “The broom stick is in the corner and the brush is in the corner and broomstick is fixed in the brush...” (PI # 60).

If this were to be the case, the hearer, instead of understanding him better, would wonder as to why he was talking in such an odd and roundabout manner.

Wittgenstein also repudiates his earlier stand in the picture theory, that a proposition has no meaning if it does not have an absolute determinate sense. As he puts it,

If I tell someone “Stand roughly here” – may not this explanation work perfectly? And cannot every other one fail too? (PI # 88).

Though he uses the word “roughly”, which constitutes a refusal to say exactly to which place the speaker is referring, we can still understand perfectly what the speaker means. He points out that other explanations could fail because however precisely you told someone where to stand he could always ask you to be more exact.

In his later thought, Wittgenstein repudiates this outlook as well. According to his new stand, meaning is not just given to the proposition, which is distinct from uttering an arbitrary sign. What the case is now is that the propositional sign or the words in the proposition find meaning in the use to which they are put. For instance, according to Wittgenstein, you cannot say, “ ‘It’s cold here’ and mean ‘it’s warm here.’ ” (PI # 510). In other words, you cannot intend by the act of mind to say that “it is cold here” – and because the prepositional sign that signifies the intended act of mind is arbitrary – say, “it is warm here”. It would not make sense to say that one

intended “warm” but then said or uttered “cold”. But here, Wittgenstein could be challenged that it would still be sensible for one to say that one had invented a game or a code in which “it is cold here” meant what is normally meant by “it is warm here”.

It is this situation that motivates Wittgenstein to carry out an enterprise in which he explains all that he meant by language-games and following a rule. This new turnaround meant that Wittgenstein had given up his basic idea in the *Tractatus*; including the very basic idea that atomic propositions were foundational to all reality. In fact, he gives up the idea of foundations altogether. Instead he redirects his energy to the language-games and following a rule in these games.

### ***2.3.2 “Language-Games”: Hudson’s Clarifications***

We turn now to examine exactly what Wittgenstein meant by language-games. Again Hudson’s introduction is useful. In the language-games, Wittgenstein shifts from his former position of the atomic proposition picturing all reality, in his own sense. In an effort to show us how language, objects and actions interrelate, he uses the example of a builder, A, and his assistant, B. In their activity of building they are using stones, pillars, blocks, slabs and beams. These two inevitably have to use language consisting of the words, “block”, “pillars”, “slab” and “beam”. Their relationship is such that when A calls for stone, B brings a stone. When A calls for slab, B brings a slab and so on. According to Wittgenstein, B brings the right thing at the right time because he has learnt what to do.

The crucial question here is what B will need to know in order to respond correctly to A’s call? The answer is that B will need to know three things. One, what naming is. He must be able to interpret the word “slab” when it is uttered. Two, B must know the object which is being named. That is, the object to which the word “slab” refers. In order for this to happen, B must know the correct interpretation of the name. For instance, if “slab” is defined to him ostensively and it turns out that it is at the same time rectangular or white, then when A calls for “slab” B may bring him any object which may turn out to be rectangular or white. So B must know correctly the object to which the name refers. Three, B must know the action that is required of him

when A utters the expression “slab”. B must know that A is not just uttering the word “slab” for its own sake, but he wants a slab passed on to him.

The important point that Wittgenstein is raising here is that B requires training in all the three aspect, the naming, the object being named and the required action. In other words, this training will take two strands. The first is training in the uses to which words are put in such linguistic activities such as naming, questioning, commanding and so on. The second strand should be training in the activities with which words are interwoven such as obeying the command. In other words, B should not only know the linguistic sense of a word or a proposition but the activity to which it relates. So we could say that, after training, the language-game becomes a game of language and action to which language is put.

To extend his argument further, Wittgenstein compares words to the pieces in chess and asserts, “...the meaning of a piece is its role in the game...” (*PI*# 563). In order to understand the rules, the point and what is going on in each case, one needs some training. Hudson, explaining Wittgenstein, clarifies that in a game there are players and spectators. In relation to this, he compares a moralist who uses words like “right” and “ought” in what he calls the first-order way, to chide or exhort, to a player in the language-game. He also compares a philosopher who engages in the second-order activity of trying to understand what the rules and the point of moral discourse are in the language-game, to a spectator. Here he clarifies that the philosopher can only understand morality by watching what the moralist does with words. Similarly, a spectator can only understand soccer by watching what the players do with the ball. (He explains that watching includes reading and hearing about it).

At this point Wittgenstein realises that he had been wrong in the first place in his attempt in the *Tractatus* to try to impose on language preconceived ideas of what it was not. Now the appropriate thing to do is to “look” at the actual uses to which words are put and learn from these. If one undertakes this activity, the first thing one learns is the enormous variety of the kinds and uses of, for instance, sentences, assertion, questions, commands, symbols and words; with new language-games emerging and others becoming obsolete.

With that in place, Hudson reminds us that Wittgenstein made a very important point about the language-games. He expresses it as follows:

... the term “language-game” is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of a language is part of an activity, or a form of life (*PI* # 23).

To clarify further, Hudson uses Pitcher’s summary emanating from Wittgenstein’s statement, “If a lion could talk, we could not understand him” (*PI* II: 223). He imagines the following scene with the lion:

“Goodness, it is three o’clock; I must hurry to make that appointment” [the lion remarks], but he continues to lie there, yawning, making no effort to move... Assuming that the lion’s behaviour is in every aspect exactly like that on an ordinary lion... we could not say that he has asserted or stated that it is three o’clock even though he has uttered suitable words. We could not tell what, if anything, he has asserted, for the modes of behaviour into which his use of words is woven are too radically different from our own. We would not understand him, since he does not share the relevant forms of life with us (Pitcher in Hudson, 1968: 46-47).

Therefore, since language and activity are not isolated from each other, but are interwoven, and since language activities are a form of life, therefore language is a form of life.

Hudson has just shown us that Wittgenstein, in his later thought, realises that formal logic cannot form a foundation for knowledge, as he had envisaged it would do. He recognises the fact that formal logic can at best be one of the language-games of the many. This realisation makes him shift his attention from formal logic *per se* to his new theory of the language-game. In the language-game, one follows a rule, as stipulated in social interaction. There is no need for explanation or justification. Any attempt at explaining or justifying a rule may lead to misunderstanding. What one does is to see what everybody in society is doing and then follow without question.

### ***2.3.3 Following a Rule in the Language-Game***

In his later thought in the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein discusses how language relates to reality. He develops the theory of the language-game. The world or all reality can no longer be expressed in terms of facts alone. It can also be expressed in terms of things or events. All of these are “...just an account of one world in three languages.” (Wisdom in Pitcher, 1964: 173). The three languages are: the language of facts, of the things, and of the events. Wittgenstein’s new stand seems to be that each aspect in the world, that is facts, things, or events, can be expressed through its own language-game. All one has to do is to follow a rule of the language-



game of that particular aspect. The procedure is like that of playing any other game, provided one follows its rules; bearing in mind that each game has its own unique rules. For instance, the rules of playing football are different from those of playing chess. To play any game successfully one should follow the rules as they are laid down. This implies that the rules should be followed without question, otherwise attempting to explain to someone how a rule is followed can be problematic. This is because one explanation can lead to another and another to another, in a manner that may be endless. The best option is to show him how the rule works and ask him to follow. Wittgenstein exemplifies this problem below. He feels that one follows a rule in common practice and not through explanation.

#### ***2.3.4 Following a Rule Exemplified***

In this particular case, Wittgenstein uses the analogy of a teacher, A, and his student, B. He is demonstrating that it is not easy for one to understand a rule through explanation. Attempting to explain a rule to someone may lead to misunderstanding. He is putting across a point that in society one understands a rule by looking at what others are doing, or through social interaction, and simply following what is in common use. For example, following a certain formation rule, B is to write down a series of signs. The first series is to write down natural numbers in decimal notation. The problem which arises immediately is that how is B going to understand this notation? A embarks on the task of making him understand. First he assists him in copying the numbers, then asks him to copy them independently. In the process of copying the numbers, any of the following might happen. It is possible that he may copy the numbers in a disorderly and random manner; a reflection that B has not understood. It is also possible that B may make a frequent or a systematic mistake - it does not matter which mistake he makes - for instance, he copies the series, 0,1,2,3,4,5,... as, 1,0,3,2,5,4. (*PI* # 143). This still shows that the student has not understood. A may try to correct him from his bad habit and teach him the correct way of copying the numbers. Still B may not understand.

On the other hand, after several attempts, B may write down the series correctly, say 0 to 9 (*PI* # 145). After A's explanation and emphasis of certain points, B is able to continue on his own. He may demonstrate that he has mastered the

system. Even then, according to Wittgenstein, the problem still remains. How far does he need to continue the series in order for A to say that B has mastered the system? Wittgenstein asserts that the limit cannot be stated.

On the other hand, suppose B is able to continue the series up to the hundredth place. A will say that B has understood the system. However, Wittgenstein still wonders whether B's understanding depends on continuing the system up to this or that number, or whether it depends on the application of his understanding.

Wittgenstein wonders if understanding is a mental process. Where is B's understanding when he suddenly says, *now I understand*?

We are trying to get hold of the mental process of understanding, which seems to be hidden... but we do not succeed; or, rather, it does not get as far as a real attempt. For even supposing I had found something that happened in all these cases of understanding why should it be understanding? And how can the process of understanding have been hidden, when I said "now I understand" *because I understood*?! And if it is hidden – then how do I know what I have to look for? I am in a muddle (*PI # 153*).

Wittgenstein seems to be arguing that understanding is not a mental process, but is something which makes its appearance in a moment but we cannot say how. To illustrate this fact, Wittgenstein again uses a numerical example. Once again A and B go through sets of numbers. While A is writing down numbers, 1, 5, 11, 19, 29, (*PI # 151*), B is busy trying out various algebraic formulae on the numbers which had been written down. Then B says he now knows how to go on. On the other hand, B may not think of any formula but simply watches A writing out the numbers, such as 4, 6, 8, 10 (*PI # 151*), and recognises the difference in the series and is able to continue.

Wittgenstein wonders whether that could be described as understanding. He argues that it is imaginable that the formula may occur to B when he has not understood, or that it occurs to him under certain circumstances. In fact he affirms that:

Try not to think of understanding as a "mental process" at all - For that is the expression which confuses you. But ask yourself: in what sort of case, in what kind of circumstances, do we say, "Now I know how to go on," when, that is, the formula has occurred to me? –

In the sense in which there are processes (including mental processes) which are characteristic of understanding, understanding is not a mental process...when he suddenly knew how to go on ...it is the *circumstance* under which he had such an

experience that justifies him in saying in such a case that he understands, that he knows how to go on (*PI* # 154- 155).

As will be evident in the next chapter, the circumstances are important, but it is the judgement that justifies the understanding correctly. To Wittgenstein, mental processes are such things as “pain” or “hearing”. In fact in bringing in the notions of experience and circumstances, he is trying to do away with the possibility that understanding is an activity or a subject-based operation. He is advancing an idea that understanding is an occurrence, which suddenly happens as a consequence of what is going on at the moment. B watches A writing down even numbers or odd numbers and recognises the series. It suddenly occurs to him that he can now go on. His understanding of the sequence involved has nothing to do with “understanding” by the active subject. That is how Wittgenstein seems to interpret B’s understanding.

He proceeds to argue, however, that B can use the formula because he had learnt it or had previously used it. In that case his utterances are short of the description of the circumstances in which he utters them. There is also a possibility of B’s saying that “now I can go on” and actually does go on when nothing has happened in his mind, or he has not used the formula. He emphasises his point in his statement that

And in this case too we should say – in certain circumstances – that he did know how to go on (*PI* # 179).

Wittgenstein is sustaining his argument that it suffices for B just to look at what A is doing and know how to go on. He points out that the expression “I know how to go on” is not a description of a mental state. He calls it a “signal”. He goes on to say that we judge whether the signal was rightly used by what B goes on to do.

Here we can argue that, though a signal may participate in what it signals, for instance a red flag signalling blood, the situation becomes different when it comes to mathematical symbols or propositions. These may not necessarily participate in what they describe. There may arise a situation where the mathematical signals or propositions may be mistaken. In that case the conviction of going on may become an illusion, simply because your statements or propositions may turn out to be false. Illustrating the problem of misunderstanding, Wittgenstein proceeds with yet another numerical example. From natural numbers, A proceeds to making B write down other series of cardinal numbers.



Now – judged by the usual criteria – the pupil has mastered the series of natural numbers. Next we teach him to write down the other series of cardinal numbers and get him to the point of writing down a series of form  $0, n, 2n, 3n,$  etc. at an order of the form “+ $n$ ”; so at the order “+1” he writes down the series of natural numbers. – Let us suppose we have done exercises and given him tests up to 1000. Now we get the pupil to continue a series (say +2) beyond 1000 – and he writes 1000, 1004, 1008, 1012. We say to him: “Look what you’ve done!” – He doesn’t understand. We say: “You were meant to add *two*: Look how you began the series!” – He answers: “Yes, isn’t it right? I thought that was how I was *meant* to do it.” – Or suppose he pointed to the series and said: “But I went on in the same way.” – it would now be no use to say: “But can’t you see....?” – and repeat the old example and explanations. – In such a case we might say, perhaps: It comes natural to this person to understand our order with our explanations as *we* should understand the order: “Add 2 up to 1000, 4 up to 2000, 6 up to 3000 and so on.”

Such a case would present similarities with one in which a person reacts to the gesture of pointing with the hand by looking at the direction of the line from finger-tip to wrist, not from wrist to finger-tip (*PI* # 185).

The point being made by Wittgenstein is that, in order to carry out the order correctly, a new intuition or insight is needed at every step. Both A and B must take the right step at every stage. “The right step is the one which accords with the order, as it was meant. At every stage A and B must make a new decision on how to carry on, or else a new appropriate instruction must be given.” What Wittgenstein is demonstrating is that teaching a rule should be by example and practice and not by explanation.

Concretely, what Wittgenstein seems to be saying, by giving these examples of a student and a teacher, is that there are many language-games in society. Each game has its own rules. In order to play that game the player must follow a rule specified for that game. The player must see what everyone is doing in common practice and follow accordingly. In this respect no explanations are necessary, or else explanations may turnout to be endless. A rule is learnt through interaction and not through explanation. It is basic to any co-operative social behaviour and it cannot be understood without understanding the activity.

Nothing would function as expected in any society, including understanding and science, without rules. Our point of departure from Wittgenstein’s central view is placed against his insistence that a rule must be obeyed without seeking for explanation, because explanations can be endless. Though he has gone through pains



to show how an attempt to explain a rule can be an unending venture, we contend that seeking explanations and justifications is a necessary component of human intellectual nature. In order to know or to understand anything, questions must be asked; not only, in the manner a child asks, “Why? Why? Why?”, but in accordance with the subject being present to himself, consciously and intelligently seeking knowledge. Explanations and justifications must also be given. As an answer to Wittgenstein’s objection, we say that asking questions leads to the engaging of the operations, including thinking, reasoning and judging whether the rule we are following is still relevant in the given circumstances, or it is serving the purpose it was designed to serve? Our position will be made clearer in the following section in our discussion on Taylor’s perspective on following a rule.

### ***2.3.5 Monological versus Dialogical Consciousness: Taylor***

In another development, Taylor (1993) sets out to interpret Wittgenstein’s theory of following a rule. We recall that from the time of modern philosophy great puzzlement has arisen about rules when we try to understand their place in society, in particular, and in life in general. Taylor points out that Wittgenstein pressed this fact more acutely and famously in his *Philosophical Investigations*. This puzzle concerns what it means to understand a rule.

Taylor presents Wittgenstein using the example of a stranger in his bid to emphasise the problem of endlessness in an attempt to explain. He points out that what may seem perfectly clear to us may be completely confusing to the stranger. To us, going to town may simply mean only to follow the arrows. This is natural to us. But what is natural to us may mean the opposite in the stranger’s culture. For us we understand what it is to follow arrows towards a point. But the stranger may not understand.

The consequence of this example is that it raises a problem between Wittgenstein and the intellectualist philosophical culture. According to this culture, one has a set mental framework that serves as a foundation for understanding anything, including a rule. This conflicts with Wittgenstein’s view that understanding is simply looking at what society is doing and then following it in regular or common practice.

According to the intellectual culture, if we are to follow a rule, or arrows, then somehow, consciously or unconsciously, a premise has been laid in our minds. When we realise the stranger's confusion, we can explain to him what he should do. But, again, this presupposes that we have an explanation, so the thought of following arrows must be residing somewhere in us. Otherwise, if that were not the case, we would not know how to follow the arrow if we approached the place from another direction.

This fact is contrary to Wittgenstein's view. An attempt to explain a rule to a stranger might not stop the confusion. So the intellectualist stand of explaining to the stranger might only cause more misunderstanding. He puts it that

the number of potential misunderstandings is endless.... There is an indefinite number of points at which, for a given explanation of a rule and a given run of cases, some one could nevertheless misunderstand... (*PI* # 87).

Wittgenstein proceeds to emphasise the problem of misunderstanding using prose examples.

He gives the example of the biblical "Moses" (*PI* # 187). Moses is a man who led the Israelites out of Egypt. But his interlocutor may have had problems with the words "Egypt" and "Israelites", which Moses may have used because they may have been absent in the interlocutor's social context. Equally words like "red", "dark" and "sweet" may not be understood through explanation. What Wittgenstein means here is that terms with which the interlocutor is not familiar, because they are not in his social context, may lead to misunderstanding. So it remains that the explanation of these terms may in itself fail to prevent misunderstanding. In the previous section, we saw how Wittgenstein illustrated the problem of endlessness in explaining with numerical examples. In this section, we recapture his example as Taylor sheds light on it in his interpretation. In this particular case, Taylor emphasises Wittgenstein's conviction that, much as prose explanations cannot resolve the problem of misunderstanding, so also are numerical explanations. As we saw, a student is given figures such as 0, 2, 4, 6, 8... and asked to carry on. The student carries on until he reaches 1000 and then writes, 1004, 1008, 1012. The student becomes indignant when he is told that he is wrong; that he was expected to add 2 up to 1000, 4 up to 2000, 6 up to 3000 and so on. (*PI* # 185). This example illustrates the fact that the student had misunderstood the rule governing the sample range.

Wittgenstein calls these cases deviant and therefore wonders whether if, in order to understand directions or know how to follow a rule, we have to know that all these deviant cases are deviant and, if this means that we must have already formulated thoughts to this effect, then we need an infinite number of thoughts in our heads even to follow the simplest instruction; something he regards as crazy.

Wittgenstein is of the view that we do not have to resolve issues through explanation. This is because,

... any explanation leaves some potential issue unresolved, it stands in need of further explanations to back it up. Further explanation will have the same disability, and so the job of explaining to somebody how to do some thing will be literally endless. But then how does an explanation help me to understand, if after all is not the final one? In that case the explanation is never completed; so I still do not understand what he means, and never shall! (*PI* # 87).

According to Taylor, the above remarks by Wittgenstein are meant to undercut the mindset of the intellectualist tradition from Descartes onwards. This tradition thought that secure foundations for knowledge and explanations that were self-explanatory or self-authenticating could be found. It is the obsession with this foundationalism which made the modern intellectualist tradition fail to see the issue of misunderstanding as a problem.

Taylor projects Wittgenstein as saying that we are always bound to misunderstand an explanation. This is evident in the two questions asked and the answers given to them. These are: Why can someone always misunderstand? Why don't we have to resolve all these questions before we can understand ourselves?

Wittgenstein's answers to these problems are: Understanding is always against the background of what is taken for granted, or just relied on. Anyone outside the set-up is bound to misunderstand. But at the same time this set-up is not the locus of the resolved questions because it is unarticulated or unarticulatable. That is, it cannot be explained without needing further explanation.

So Wittgenstein's answer to the problem of endlessness in explaining is, as he puts it,

... obeying a rule is a practice... Giving reasons for one's practice in following a rule has to come to an end. My reasons will soon give out. And then I shall act without reasons... If I have exhausted my justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: This is simply what I do... I obey the rule blindly (*PI* # 217- 219).

This stand of Wittgenstein puts us in a position where we can interpret him as saying that we should obey a rule without involving our intellect. In fact, this notion prompts Taylor to come up with two interpretations of Wittgenstein's ideas on following a rule.

One is of Kripke, who interprets Wittgenstein as saying that we act without reasons. That is because connections, which form our backgrounds, are just, as a matter of fact, links that require no justification or reasons. Society imposes them on us. They are sort of "wired in", and therefore conditioned to act "automatically." He gives the example of the blinking of the eye when an object approaches it. No justification or reason is given for that. It is just automatic and therefore brute reaction or sense-based instinctive reaction.

Kripke's interpretation, on the surface, looks credible. This is evident in Wittgenstein's choice of words. He uses terms and expressions such as "bedrock", "my spade is turned", "this is simply what I do", and "when I obey a rule I do not choose. I obey it blindly." These expressions indicate that we operate within the limits of society. Our acts have been practised over and over again; there is no need for questions or justifications.

The second interpretation is that of Taylor himself, following Pierre Bourdieu, the social anthropologist. This new interpretation takes into account the fact that background incorporates understanding. Taylor is of the view that although things still remain unarticulated, there remains room for reason and explanation. In this case things are not just as they are, but make some kind of sense.

While in the first interpretation understanding is based on brute connections, the second interpretation of understanding is that it makes a kind of unarticulated sense of things. To affirm this point, Taylor quotes Wittgenstein's expressions, such as

...following a rule is not like the operations of a machine...to use a word without justification does not mean to use it without right (*PI* # 289).

Taylor clarifies that these remarks provide an instance of Wittgenstein's point that following a rule is a social practice. He takes the linking of background to society as an alternative vision to the intellectualist monological outlook, led by Descartes, that dominated the philosophical epistemological tradition. Taylor is in conformity with



this second interpretation; and, to him, Wittgenstein's insistence that following a rule is a social practice is a positive move. It removes the individual from the inner space or from being the centre of monological consciousness. It links him directly to society and its social practices; making him act harmoniously with everybody else in all respects; but not like a machine and without taking away his creativity.

The main reason why he gives Wittgenstein credit is that he is one of the contemporary philosophers who attempt "to get out of the 'cul-de-sac' of the monological consciousness...." (1993: 169). This is the situation which still pertains in modern philosophy at this time. According to Taylor, Wittgenstein deserves this credit because he shifts understanding from the inner space, the locus of the mind, and places it in social practice. To Taylor this is more realistic than having mental representations in the mind, as stipulated by Plato, or being trapped in thought, as reflected in Descartes.

Taylor projects Wittgenstein as shifting from what he calls "monological acts" to "dialogical acts". Modern philosophy thought of understanding as monological. That is, an attempt to understand reality by engaging more in ones thoughts rather than being more attentive to practical reality by the use of the senses as a starting point. Taylor regards Wittgenstein's placing of understanding in social practice as dialogical, in-between understanding as an inner activity and understanding as social practice, Taylor observes that understanding is an activity that is embodied. as he puts it,

...our understanding itself is embodied. Our bodily know-how, and the way we act and move, can encode components of our understanding of self and world (1993: 170).

He points out that one can move from place to place freely, but may be at a loss when asked to describe the directions to a stranger. Or one manipulates or plays familiar instruments in one's world in an unarticulated manner, that is without being able to explain how they work. In addition to that, the sense of the self is also embodied. That is, one's attitude to the world and to others is encoded in the way one projects oneself in public space.

In all these instances one may not possess the descriptive terms or appropriate vocabulary to portray one's behaviour. Although the guiding norms are unformulated or unarticulated, one can tell the difference between right and wrong from one's point

of view and that of others. Taylor describes this scenario as social understanding or the “habitus”<sup>4</sup>, which is tantamount to background understanding.

Taylor reiterates that social practices that encode understanding are not only acts of a single agent but flow from a single agent to others and back to the agent in a harmonious manner. He gives examples of people engaged in a conversation, where the interlocutor not only listens but participates, for example with head nodding, or “unh-hunh” and sometimes the semantic turn passes over to the other by a common movement.

Taylor is emphasising Wittgenstein’s point of the importance of social practice. He is reflecting the partners engaged in a conversation, gripped in some form of common rhythm where body language reflects mutual understanding or some sense of common purpose. He presses home the point that it is difficult to understand human life merely through the “disengaged subject” who forms representations about others. The fact is that the disengaged subject must become part of the “we”. This is because much of our understanding of the self, society and the world is carried out through dialogical actions.

He reiterates that

... background understanding, which underlies our ability to grasp directions and follow rules, is to a large extent embodied... It is a making sense of things and actions; at the same time it is entirely unarticulated... it can be the basis of fresh articulation... My embodied understanding does not only exist in one as an individual agent, but also as the co-agent of common actions. This is the sense we can give to Wittgenstein’s claim that obeying a rule is a practice (1993: 174).

In this quotation we find views that help to explain what Wittgenstein means by the expression of a rule such as a signpost or an arrow. Following a rule does not simply mean that one has been trained to react to a sign in a certain way and, when confronted with such a sign, one reacts as expected. This would be nothing more than reacting due to causal connection, or due to the tendency to react. One goes by a signpost because there is a standing regular use of the signpost, that is when it is a custom.

Taylor insists that,

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<sup>4</sup>Taylor borrows this term from Pierre Bourdieu which he coined during his anthropological studies of society.

...this standing use makes the connection and it is not to be understood as merely a causal one. The standing use gives my response its sense. It doesn't merely bring it on through brute causal link. But the sense is embodied but not represented (1993: 174).

That is how Taylor expresses Wittgenstein's notion of following a rule. It is this social practice that gives one's actions the meaning they have. Following a rule is reflected in social acts such as how one conducts oneself in front of someone of a higher social class, how women conduct themselves in front of men in different social environments and how children relate to adults. All these are neither done haphazardly nor are they acts of reflex, but they follow a rule. For example, in a society where the giving of gifts in exchange for favours is a normal practice, one must know to whom and when to give gifts; and also how and when to reciprocate to the same treatment. All these are testimonies of understanding the background as a social embodiment operating on unarticulated rules.

Taylor observes and recommends that

Just as intellectualist epistemology made deep inroads into social science to ill effect, so it is important that the scientific consequences of embodied understanding be developed (1993: 174).

In this section, Taylor attempts to exonerate Wittgenstein from Kripke's interpretation. Kripke took Wittgenstein literally, by saying that what Wittgenstein meant by "follow a rule blindly" was actually blind following. He gives his own interpretation of "following a rule". According to Taylor, following a rule is not blind following. He demonstrates that this is a positive contribution by Wittgenstein.

Taylor makes a good move to link Wittgenstein's theory of following a rule to social practice. For instance, he says,

But much of our intelligent action in the world, sensitive as it usually is to our situation and goals, is carried on unformulated. It flows from an understanding that is largely inarticulate (1993: 172).

We have agreed that intelligent action is partly formulated, as may be defined by instinctive actions. However, that is not all. This is because intelligent action presupposes conscious observation of data and its interpretation, weighing of evidence and, at times, employing a theory before drawing a conclusion. Again, intelligent action presupposes activity from the subject-based operations. Moreover, understanding that is largely unarticulated can be described as experience. He says,

Background understanding, which underlies our ability to grasp things and follow rules, to a large degree is embedded...it is a form of understanding, a making sense of things and actions; at the same time it is entirely unarticulated; ... it can be a basis for fresh articulation (1993: 173).

Saying that background understanding can be a basis for fresh articulation is a good point. But this is not Wittgenstein's point. Wittgenstein's point is that understanding can be explained by following a rule. So Taylor's point here can help to address the problem we have identified of not according the subject-based operations an active role in the exercise of following a rule. The key notion from Taylor is in the expression, "fresh articulation." We feel that the idea of following a rule does not necessarily explain how understanding occurs. The subject should always ask the question "why?" This is necessary, because the rule needs to be continuously updated in order to justify its relevance. We need to add that there are mainly two kinds of understanding that need to be differentiated. The first one, for example, is that of a cat understanding that this is milk or it is not milk. The second one is that of understanding resulting from questioning, suggesting, explaining and judging. The second kind involves arguments where the subject-in-act has to see that the arguments are sound or unsound, whether they make sense or not and whether the conclusions follow or not. We must say that both kinds of understanding are real; but for the first kind we see the causes of "understanding" in the needs of the cat, while the second one is human understanding.

In order to argue for the subject-based set of operations more confidently, let us look at understanding in the following two ways. The first one is understanding things as we find them in a tradition. These things include beliefs, practices and values. They are full of meaning and make sense to us even though we cannot explain their ultimate foundation. One thing is explained by another. For instance, a witch-doctor administers a local herb to a patient suffering from malaria and the patient is cured. But if this doctor is asked to explain the chemistry behind the whole process, he cannot explain it, but he knows and understands that it works in that particular situation.

However, one way of describing such a situation is that it is a tradition. It was handed down to him by his father and from his grandfather. He believes in it because from experience it works. In this case belief makes sense to him. But we may say that perhaps the only reason for him to believe and trust the practice is that it works. He



knows the rules of his game very well, he knows how to apply them and they work. The doctor is following a rule of the tradition as it was handed down to him and since it has worked thus far, there is no problem.

But let us look at the issue from another angle. Suppose malaria becomes resistant to the herb? The rule will not work anymore and the belief will be shaken. But that is not the end of the matter. The doctor will be forced to think. He will have to engage the subject-based set of operations, in order to tackle the challenge, if he is to remain a doctor. This is the issue that the present work is addressing.

This is the second way of understanding, that is, by consciously engaging the subject-based set of operations in the task of understanding reality. Traditional reality may be embedded and unarticulated, but let us not take understanding of how to participate in society through accepting beliefs, practices and values as an end in itself. Let this type of understanding form the basis for our conscious operations. Let our operations define all understanding.

### ***2.3.6 Relevance of the Subject-in-Act in the Language-Games***

In this sub-section, we are examining Wittgenstein's discrediting of formal logic in favour of language and its social role. We argue that, his criticism notwithstanding, the role of the subject-in-act still remains fundamental, even when language is playing a social role. Wittgenstein, in the *Philosophical Investigations*, still does not recognise the need for the subject-in-act in the language-games. In his earlier thought, it was the atomic propositions which pictured and mapped reality. The subject played only a metaphysical role but had no functional role to play at all in the knowable world as Wittgenstein understood it. This was erroneous, as Wittgenstein pointed out, himself, in his later thought.

Language is a labyrinth of paths. You approach from one side and you know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and you no longer know your way about (*PI* # 203).

Even with this realisation we still say that it is not enough to shift from atomic propositions to playing language-games by merely learning and following the rules involved. Even with a mastery of the rules, since language is a labyrinth of paths, and since reality is explained in terms of these paths, operational reasoning by the subject-in-act becomes eminent.

Wittgenstein's perpetual avoidance of the subject-in-act does not help. Van Peursen brings out Wittgenstein's ideas well:

...philosophy as a guardian of grammar can actually grasp the nature of the world, not only in the propositions of language, but in the rules of this language which exclude meaningless combinations of signs... disentangles the knots which we have meaninglessly tied in our own thinking.... When the system or notation of our language dissatisfy us, here philosophy must step in.... The task of philosophy is to remove this mental cramp (1969: 76 – 78).

These ideas help to emphasise the significant role of the subject-in-act. In the first place, one of the main reasons why we are switching to language-games is that the rules of logic can no longer adequately explain reality outside their context. That is the subject-in-act. What remains apparent is the self-appropriated logician – the subject-in-act – who uses the rules of logic and reason to carry out the investigations.

So we can comfortably substitute for logic the self-appropriated logician and, for philosophy, the self-appropriated philosopher. These are subjects-in-act equipped with the tools of logic and philosophy, ready to conduct functional operations. As Van Peursen puts it, the philosopher becomes the “guardian of grammar”. It is the philosopher – the subject-in-act – using philosophical analysis who is to “grasp the nature of the world”. It is him using the rules of logic and grammar to “disentangle the knots” which we have meaninglessly tied in our own thinking. When we get tired of the “systems or notations of language” it is the subject-in-act who must step in; and it is the philosopher using reason who must remove the “mental cramp”. It is the subject-in-act to effect the “depth-therapy elucidation.” It is the subject-in-act to look carefully at the mixed pieces of the “jigsaw puzzle” and rearranges them. It is up to the subject-in-act to “help the fly out of the bottle”, into which it has flown. Matters get worse when Wittgenstein says, as Van Peursen explains,

there can and must be more than one use of logical measure... when language becomes “chameleon-like”...the same signs and words...display very different application possibilities (1969: 85).

This situation leaves a thicket of confusion, which calls upon, more than ever before, the discerning operational powers of the subject-in-act.

Perhaps what is new in Wittgenstein is the re-linking of logic to content, as Van Peursen explains,

There are no questions here of static reflection of things in words. Rather there is a total dynamic pattern of words and actions. It does not belong to the

descriptive language which says what is and what is not the case... but to language which does something and generally to the context of social activity... words are not separate entities of isolated objects, but part of a lattice of human actions, where language itself can be a form of action... Language is part of an activity or a form of life (1969: 82-83).

In this respect Wittgenstein is placing language in the social context. He is shifting from his former position, of logic being foundational to looking at language, as being functional in the social milieu.

Wittgenstein had looked at atomic propositions, which were logically determinate in form of truth-values, which determined situations, which were the case or not the case. Logical truths were certain on logical grounds, that is to say were based on no conditions at all. They were rule-based tautologies. At the same time, atomic propositions in the logical space reflected states of affairs and not content.

It is in this new development that we begin to see the formal structure of atomic propositions changing identity, so that together with language, they play a social role, as Van Peursen explains:

we now get a situation where ... language is seen less as mosaic and more as a living organism, and ... no longer ... from a single view point, that of a pellucid logic, but from the many view points of everyday life.... (1969: 83).

However, even with this new development, language still remains a problem. Without the discerning powers of the subject-in-act, its use in the social context would remain a nightmare.

## 2.4 Conclusion

We conclude this chapter by reiterating that Wittgenstein was not completely correct in his earlier thought to assume that all reality, in his sense, could be pictured in the atomic propositions. It was still not right for him to think that he would create a pure logical language, formal logic, which would have little or nothing to do with content. It was not realistic for him to limit the role of the subject in the operations of logic.

Even after realising his own anomalies, he forgets the epistemic and rational endowments of the subject-in-act. He now imagines that reality can be better understood not by following the rules of logic *per se* but by learning and mastering the rules of language use. This mastery would enable him to play language-games in

society and that would constitute the alpha and omega of all societal semantic needs. As we have pointed out, this was an incorrect estimation by Wittgenstein.

In this Chapter Two we have seen that, though we continue to recognise the fundamental role played by logic in the reasoning operations and that of language in playing language-games, the subject-in-act continues to play a pivotal role, both in the edifice of logic and that of language. We have seen that the subject-in-act is basic to both logic and language, because she has operational powers to make, moderate and even change the rules of logic or those of language. It is evident that logic grows and develops; language use is exposed to the same situation. Events outgrow language use and situations and some aspects of language become either archaic or obsolete. The fact that the subject-in-act keeps abreast with all these changes and not only that but participates in the making of these changes is enough proof that the subject-in-act is ultimately basic to both logic and language.

Must we allow Wittgenstein's claims make us forget Protagoras' epigram, that man is the measure of all things? (In our case, "man" is the subject-in-act). We therefore do not agree with Wittgenstein that "there is no such thing as a subject that thinks or entertains ideas." It is the subject-based operations which make the world of facts possible.

In Chapter Three we proceed, assisted by Lonergan (1997) and other commentators, with discussion of the idea of the subject and how the subject turns out to be foundational to knowledge. In Chapter Four we shall use Winch's (1972) and other commentators' ideas to discuss the problem of inter-cultural learning. In Chapter Five we shall use Barden's (1990) ideas to show how the problem of a foundation to the understanding and establishing of reality in all its manifestations is solved. This we shall do by bringing in the subject-based set of operations, as elucidated by Barden. We shall show that it is actually the subject-in-act, the set of operations that is foundational, consequently solving the problem of how reality in all its aspects can be understood and known, particularly in a cross-cultural context.





# CHAPTER THREE

## THE SUBJECT AS FOUNDATIONAL FOR KNOWING: LONERGAN

### 3.1 Introduction

In Chapter One we looked at the major problem of the thesis and that was lack of a foundation for knowing that was ultimately basic. We also presented a major assumption which proposed the subject-in-act who acts in all traditions: African, European, Oriental and in all systems of knowledge, scientific and non-scientific. We also looked at the literature overview that gave us an on-spot-check for the literature of each and every chapter culminating in the résumé of the whole thesis.

In Chapter Two we discussed the attempt of Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* to establish a foundation that would expose all departments of reality through the subject-less formal logic. This did not seem to be successful. Even in the *Philosophical Investigations*, following a rule in the language-game without the intervention of the subject does not seem to establish a foundation that would eventually lead to the knowing of reality in all cases.

In this chapter, Chapter Three, we present the argument that this thesis comes as a consequence of Lonergan's concern for the lack of a foundation in philosophy. Philosophy seems to have lost trend and direction, as evidenced mainly by philosophies that emerged from the modern to the contemporary period. Philosophy has been divided and factionalised, as can be seen in the philosophies of Descartes, Hume and Kant and, more recently, Wittgenstein, who, for example, treats us to a melodramatic scenario of proposing the subject-less logic as foundational and then rejecting it himself. We feel philosophy should be redirected to its befitting, traditional role of being foundational to the understanding and knowing of all reality. For the purposes of this thesis, the desired foundation is rooted in the subject. This chapter is dedicated to arguing for that proposal. In our subsequent discussions we shall refer to the term "subject", in terms of "subject-in-act", "the basic pattern of operations" or the idea of "transcendental method" or "self-appropriation" and "basic pattern of operations", as used by Lonergan himself, or the idea of "interiority", as used by Cronin, or "the basic set of operations", as used by Barden, who we will

discuss in Chapter Five. The main purpose of Chapter Three is to discuss the nature of the subject and what his functions are.

In this discussion our main references are to include: Bernard Lonergan, (1975). Here Lonergan establishes a foundation in the subject. We shall specifically look at his book *Insight* (1970). It is in this book where he introduces us to the fundamental idea of our thesis, which is self-appropriation. In addition to this we shall also look at his other key text which is *Method in Theology* (1975). In this text he introduces the idea of the “Basic Pattern of Operations” which he uses synonymously with the term “Transcendental Method” which in our terms is the same as the subject-in-act, which is the foundation we are trying to establish. We shall also use his other text, *Understanding and Being* (1990) (ed. Morelli, E.A & M. Morelli). It is in this text where all the operations that are involved in the process of self-appropriation are discussed.

We shall see much of Lonergan’s ideas through Brian Cronin (1999) who restructures and simplifies Lonergan’s ideas in his book, *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan’s Cognitional Theory and Epistemology* (1999). In this text Cronin helps us to explain the need for a foundation to all knowledge. On top of that he carries us through Lonergan’s idea of self-appropriation, as we have said, in a manner which is simplified and down to earth. This makes our discussion easier and manageable.

We shall also use ideas from commentators, namely, Augustine Shutte and Patrick Giddy who will help us to elucidate the idea of the subject as foundational further. Shutte in his paper, “Aristotle and the Aristotelian Tradition in Theories of Knowledge” [n.pub.], talks of the “... basic unity of method that takes different forms in every different field.” This is Lonergan’s Transcendental Method, in our terms, the subject-in-act. It is the inevitability of this method that we are trying to establish in our thesis. Giddy also, in his paper, “The African University and the Social Sciences: the Contribution of Lonergan’s Epistemological Theory” (1989), pursues the same idea of the inevitability of self-appropriation and endeavours to consolidate its inevitability in all walks of life, traditional and modern.

### **3.1.1 Setting the Problem: Cronin**

Cronin begins in a state of wonder and asks,

Is there a trans-cultural philosophy equally relevant to Europeans, Africans, Americans and others? What would it look like? Where was it to be found? (1999:1).

Cronin feels that it is difficult, at least as exemplified in contemporary philosophy, to establish foundations of philosophy "... without falling into dogmatism, relativism or nihilism" (1999: 5). He is rejecting the fact that in order to have a foundation you must belong to a certain faction of philosophy. He reiterates Lonergan's idea that there is a foundation that is trans-cultural, trans-philosophical factionalism, and that is the subject.

He reminds us of the fact that, in the past, traditional societies were fairly stable. It was relatively easier for one to know where one stood. Beliefs and practices were passed on from generation to generation. No personal discrimination from the individuals was required. The welfare of the individual was in the hands of the entire community. What the individual was required to do was simply to conform. So a traditional society seemed capable of providing a foundation. But today things are changing too fast, not only in scope but also in meanings and values. As Cronin confirms, "Cultures are changing, intermingling, shifting, and incorporating new elements all the time" (1999: 5). Changes are apparent everywhere, in politics, economic and cultural institutions. These changes introduce new meanings. The present seems to be becoming more and more different from the past. Cronin wonders whether there is anything anymore which remains the same and whether there is any permanent truth and where this permanence is to be found.

Cronin observes that traditional philosophy used to play the role of solving the overall problems of truth and value. But now philosophy is factionalised into philosophies. Today a philosopher has the option and choice of a faction to belong to. If tradition can no longer provide a foundation, can science then stand in for tradition? Cronin points out that science has been successful and has accomplished many tasks. For example, by using technology science seems to have solved many problems in the universe, in the fields of health, transport, agriculture, and engineering, to mention but a few. However, even with wonderful breakthroughs, science *per se* cannot be taken as foundational. For instance, as Cronin points out, science does not express itself much concerning morality.



Science is not good at giving an account of its own methods, apart from asserting them as the only correct model. As things stand, it seems we cannot find a foundation in science, either. Cronin wonders if we can find a foundation through the eclectic method of choosing from science, philosophy, New Age, Eastern Meditation or from other sources. Taking this option, he warns, would be like building a house on sand, with all the risks of its falling at any time.

He invites us to look for unity within diversity. We are confronted with many theories and cultures. So instead of continuing to produce armchair theories we need to find guidance in the subject. He warns us against the standing belief that in order for knowledge to be knowledge it must be absolutely certain, completely necessary and permanently true. To him this is setting unreasonable expectations that would never enable us to reach our goal. He instead advises us, through the basic set of patterned activities, to see what we can know and then judge whether that knowledge is necessary or contingent, probable or certain, temporary or permanent. We should try to break through the existing belief of thinking that knowledge can be obtained either deductively or inductively. The categories of “deductive” and “inductive” are less basic ways of thinking about how knowledge is obtained. What we need to do is to engage the basic pattern of operations right from the sense data, all the way through to judgement.

According to Cronin, this set of patterned activities is integrative. Otherwise, if philosophy does not meet the requirement of being integrative then it fails in its task of integrating other disciplines. The task of philosophy is to see how other specialised and different areas of study fit together. Because of that enormous but necessary task it should remain the broadest of all disciplines. It must reflect the view of the whole. The present practice of factionalising philosophy reduces it to the level of a specialised science. Although, as Cronin puts it, philosophy should not be the whole of knowledge, nevertheless it should be a whole in knowledge. Philosophy can attain this credibility through the patterned set of operations that can follow data from the level of questioning to that of judgement. It remains a fact that much of the data is drawn from culture. Therefore it is legitimate to have different cultures, but at the same time we should know that culture and philosophy is not one and the same thing.

To make his case clearer, Cronin proceeds to draw a distinction between a culture and philosophy. A culture is a set of beliefs and values expressed in a common



way of life, while philosophy is a formal, critical, systematic presentation of a set of methods and conclusions. This clarification leaves him wondering whether, in the factionalised system of Western, African, Eastern and other philosophies, there exists a different foundation in each and every one of these philosophies. This is definitely not the case. He puts it that all human beings have a common foundation, which is neither Western nor African nor Eastern. That common foundation is the patterned set of cognitional operations that we describe in this chapter. This is part of our common heritage to which we all appeal. This foundation does not depend on any authority but on what we are, as human beings. For our part, we ask ourselves a similar question; what is it that is basic or foundational to all human beings, irrespective of race and culture, that can serve as a starting point for understanding, knowing and explaining reality in all spheres of knowing? So it remains apparent that you cannot easily find a foundation in what a philosopher says, or in what is said by his followers. What is said may hold today, but only because the circumstances and conditions demand so. But when these circumstances and conditions change, the idea which appears fundamental changes with them. A new idea is put in place; gets challenged, then another one, *ad infinitum*, leaving a trail of ideas, but all of them contingent and fragmented. This is because it is the previous ideas that provoke philosophers to think of new ones, and, to use Hegel's thinking; new ideas may contain traces of the old ideas. In that respect, it is wise to say that we cannot find a foundation in what is said, but rather a foundation is found in what puts what is said in place, the subject. When the idea gets out-dated or out-moded the subject can still generate another idea to suit and fit either the circumstances or the conditions. So what is basic or foundational still remains the subject.

Cronin tells us that,

We need to be wise in order to learn from wisdom...philosophies are many and we already need criteria in order to discriminate among them (1999: 5).

We ask ourselves where this wisdom and these criteria are to be found. In any case, while a philosopher can be the source of ambiguity she can at the same time be the source of clarity. She can be the source of ambiguity if she applies, for instance, the methods of common sense or the methods of science where empirical measures of verification were used to play the role of philosophy but outside the context of philosophy. This is attempting to make positivism foundational.

Because of ambiguities which are inherent in positivism, we see, many factions such as the case of Whitehead and Russell putting forward mathematics as foundational, Wittgenstein putting forward formal logic or picture theory as being foundational and Ayer putting forward ordinary language as being foundational. We have been arguing that it is clear that this trend or scenario cannot lead us to what is truly foundational. We have said that, while philosophers can be a source of ambiguity, they can simultaneously be a source of clarity. This reality guides us to where to find a foundation. We find this foundation in the philosophy of Lonergan. He directs us, we will argue, to the correct and most appropriate method of establishing a foundation and that is self-appreciation. This is the only relevant method that can genuinely and convincingly lead us to an authentic foundation that is the subject.

Cronin draws our attention to the success of science and scientific methods. But if one looks at the success of science it seems to have opened ground mostly in the empirical fields. Science with its technology and systematic research has, for example, tackled the problems of health through mechanised medicine; through mechanisation, such as computing, mechanics and electronics, most of the chores of life have been significantly simplified.

Science continues to break new grounds all the time and it continues to promise greater and greater success. Systematic research seems to be leading us to greater and greater horizons in terms of discoveries and inventions. Given that documented success and promise, are we sufficiently persuaded to accord science the status of being foundational?

As mentioned above, science seems to have registered success mainly in the empirical spheres. It appears to have little to contribute in areas concerning human relations. Scientific method, systematic and logical as it is, seems to lack the component of addressing the issues of the values of common humanity. Without human values humans are likely to be reduced to robotic machines. With this state of affairs it is difficult to find a foundation in science either. Although science has recorded success in many walks of life, in fact it is the subject who is responsible for this success. It is the subject who discovers the laws of nature, identifies problems, sets hypotheses, devises methods and eventually invents something. It is the same subject who can think about the consequences to humanity of her discoveries and

inventions. That leaves us with the option of nowhere to search for a foundation except in the very same subject herself.

For us, our thesis argues for a foundation. This foundation is the subject-in-act. It is largely based on Lonergan's epic that is propounded by Cronin as,

...foundations are not to be found in the formulated propositions of philosophy or in a tradition. They are to be found in a patterned set of ... activities by which we think and know and decide. This set... is common to all philosophies, cultures and traditions; this set of activities by which we discern the truth and evaluate moral and religious questions is, in fact, the source of all philosophies, opinions, truths and beliefs.... By identifying these activities we can make explicit the foundation of our own intellectual life, while at the same time honing a tool for discriminating between the various philosophies present in the contemporary culture. Implicit in the procedure of thinking and knowing are the norms and imperatives which are the source of all logics, moral laws and methods (1999: 6).

This quotation serves as a beacon for our thesis. It makes a complete turn from the common beliefs that what is foundational resides in the premises of philosophy or, as the early Wittgenstein put it, in the subject-less logic. Much as this is not possible, neither can we find a foundation in a tradition or a science. The true and real foundation cannot be found in all these facets. All these, in Lonergan's sense, can only serve as data to what is truly foundational and that is the subject, or the patterned set of activities as Cronin prefers to put it.

It is this patterned set of activities which asks questions within, around and about this data. Through asking questions, analysing and judging, the subject can challenge all philosophies, all rules, all institutions, all traditions and all laws. This patterned set of activities, that enables the subject to question and challenge everything, makes the subject, understood in this way, truly foundational to everything. This thesis proposes that what is foundational is the subject. The subject is indeed dynamic and the source of both permanence and change.

Cronin, like Lonergan, is not suggesting a new theory. He is inviting us to join in the task of self-discovery. We do the same. We first invite ourselves and everybody else to join in this task under the leadership of Lonergan as presented by Cronin. Like any other subject who is not yet self-appropriated, we are still in our native bewilderment and confusion. We need to begin with the task of self-appropriation, with a reminder that philosophy is not just a matter of learning about definitions, principles and conclusions. Philosophy is a series of spiral movements forwards and



backwards, moving slowly towards clarity, comprehension and depth. This is the approach that is characteristic of self-appropriation.

In trying to establish a foundation, Cronin reminds us that we are trying to look for unity behind diversity. This diversity is presented to us by contemporary culture. There is need to find a foundation that would serve as a guide, to see us through the challenges posed by this diversity. This state of affairs, According to Cronin, inevitably generates a succession of questions, such as where do theories come from? What purpose do they serve? These theories eventually lead to the notion of cultures in which we live, in the process generating more questions, such as why are there so many cultures? Are they all equal? Can we criticize the cultures of others? It remains a fact that we are surrounded by a pluralism of cultures, life- styles, moral values, different levels of education, class differentiation and ethnic diversity, specialisations and job stratification. This paraphernalia leaves Cronin wondering what is legitimate and what is not legitimate, what is authentic and what is not authentic, what might be the source of our intractable disagreements about the philosophy of life, why are there so many alternative theories of knowledge and how are we to choose among them? So what do we do?

We need to engage the patterned set of operations to guide us through the series of questions, through the analysis of data, to the conclusions and at the same time judge the truth of these conclusions. This task can only be accomplished through the subject. It is the subject who can identify both the data of the facts of material reality and the data of the human mind. According to Lonergan, the data of the mind is as real as the data of the material reality. This data, which is referred to as “an invariant cognitional structure” (1999: 9), constitutes the patterned set of operations. It is this pattern which can guide us through this multiplicity of theories, cultures and life-styles.

### ***3.1.2 Insight: Aim and Practical Good***

It must be emphasised that the main concern of this chapter is not so much to discuss all the contents in *Insight*, but to use some of Lonergan’s ideas in *Insight*, together with some of the ideas from his commentators, to help us argue our case, which is that it is the subject-in-act who is foundational to knowledge and not the subject-less

formal logic, as the early Wittgenstein had suggested, or any other approach. The Morellis, in their book *The Lonergan Reader* (1997), in which they edit Lonergan's work of *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*<sup>5</sup> (1957), present to us an introduction to *Insight* which discusses the aim and the practical good of *Insight*. The Introduction presents Lonergan's "The Original Preface", the second "Preface" and Lonergan's "Introduction to *Insight*." We are told that, in their judgement, in *Insight* Lonergan initiated a prolonged effort to meet the demands of our age. Lonergan offers a vision of the new cultural situation that characterises, as he puts it, the basic problem as a crisis of self-knowledge and emphasises the programmatic nature of *Insight*. The crisis of self-knowledge is to be met by insight into insight and insight into oversight, that is understanding what it is to understand and understanding why people run away from understanding. This task will be accomplished by unfolding the philosophic implications of insight into insight and by transposing the acquired self-knowledge to practical spheres of human affairs. *Insight* succeeds, we are told, in achieving Lonergan's strategic objectives.

We are also told that Lonergan's leading question about knowledge regards facts and not mere possibilities. The reason why he emphasises instances of insight from science and mathematics is to illustrate their value in bringing to light the nature and significance of insight. Lonergan begins by asking the reader to attend to his own intellectual performance and invites him to take possession of it. This is because that task forms the beginning of the transformation to self-appropriation. One should begin by examining what one has grasp of, that is the content of one's discipline or field and then proceed to examine one's rational self-consciousness, which he describes as follows:

Rational self-consciousness is a peak above the clouds. Intelligent and reasonable, responsible and free, scientific and metaphysical, it stands above romantic spontaneity, psychological depths, historical determinism and social engineering, the disconcerted existential subject and the undeciphered symbols of the artist and modernist (Lonergan, "*Insight*, The Original Preface," in Morelli and Morelli, 1997: 33).

Lonergan proceeds to tell us that if a person can scale the summit of her inner being, there is no way she can advert to the possibility of ascent or begin the climb, only to lose her way. What he means here is that the only way to reach the level of

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<sup>5</sup>Lonergan, B. (1957) *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*. Henceforth. *Insight*.

rational self-consciousness is through self-appropriation. That is, “scaling the summit of his inner being.”

For Lonergan, *Insight* is a programme rather than an argument. It does not begin by assuming premises, but by presuming readers. It does not advance by deducing conclusions, for example, from religious faith or the principles of philosophy. It instead invites the reader, as he puts it,

...ever more precisely and more detailed, to apprehend, to appreciate, to envisage in all its consequences, the inner focus of their own intelligence and reasonableness. That focus is ... insight. But to apprehend the focus is to gain insight into insight to piece the outer verbal and conceptual exhibitions of mathematics, of science and of commonsense, and to penetrate the inner dynamism of intelligent enquiry and critical reflection. To appreciate the focus is both to know and to know what it is to know one's own intelligence, one's own reasonableness, one's own essential and restricted by effective freedom. To envisage the focus in its full range of its implications is to discover for oneself what is meant by being, by objectivity, by metaphysics, by ethics, by God, and by evil (Lonergan, in Morelli and Morelli, 1997: 34).

This long quotation in a way summarises what Lonergan's theme of self-appropriation is all about. He is claiming that insight is understanding in his own sense, that is not merely taking a look. So *Insight* focuses on the reader rather than the premises. It invites us to envisage the inner focus of our own intelligence and reasonableness, rather than the principles of philosophy, for example. That is one side of insight. The other side is to comprehend what this focus is. That is, to gain insight into insight or to understand what it is to understand. It is these two sides of insight that complete the process of self-appropriation, in our case the idea of the subject-in-act.

On the practical good of insight, Lonergan has the following to say:

... insight is the source not only of the theoretical knowledge but also of all its practical application, and indeed of all intelligent activity. Insight into insight then will reveal what activity is intelligent, and insight into oversight will reveal what activity is unintelligent. But to be practical is to do the intelligent thing, and to be unpractical is to keep blundering about. It follows that insight into both insight and oversight is the very key to practicality (Lonergan, “*Insight, Second Preface,*” in Morelli and Morelli, 1997: 38).

Here we are told that it is insight into insight that brings to light the cumulative process of progress. Again insight into insight for concrete situations gives rise to insights that issue into policies and courses of action. The consequence of this is that action transforms the existing situation to give rise to further insights, better policies

and more effective courses of action. Again we are told that what follows from this is that, if insight occurs, it keeps recurring and at each recurrence knowledge develops, action increases its scope and situations improve.

Lonergan not only stresses the positive elements of insight into insight. He says that, on the other hand, insight into insight reveals the cumulative process of decline. This is because, as he puts it, the flight from understanding blocks the insights that concrete situations demand. What follows from this is the unintelligent policies and inept courses of action. The deteriorating situation demands still further insights which get blocked, resulting in policies becoming more unintelligent and actions more inept. What is worse, he points out, is that this deteriorating situation seems to provide the uncritical, biased mind with factual evidence in which the bias is claimed to be verified. From this situation, he concludes that in ever-increasing measure, intelligence comes to be irrelevant to practical living, with the consequence that human activity settles down to a decadent routine and initiative becomes the privilege of violence.

Lonergan observes that this is unfortunately the situation which is existing in every age, that is insight and oversight are commonly mated. The same can be said for progress and decline. Our love of truth is reinforced with a practicality that is equivalent to obscurantism. Old evil is corrected with a passion that mars the new good. He laments that we are not pure. We tend to compromise and hope to meddle through. Lonergan advises us that we have to learn to distinguish sharply between progress and decline and also to learn to encourage progress without putting a premium upon decline. Above all, we have to learn to remove the tumour of the flight from understanding without destroying the organs of intelligence.

So much for the practical good of *Insight*. Lonergan proceeds to highlight the aim of *Insight* in a five-point summary. The first point is that *Insight* does not necessarily address the existence of knowledge, but precisely what its nature is. Secondly, while we cannot disregard the content of knowledge, it is to be only in the schematic and incomplete fashion needed to provide a discriminant or determinant of cognitive acts. Thirdly, he does not aim at setting forth a list of abstract properties of human knowledge, but to assist the reader to effect in a personal appropriation of the correct dynamic structure immanent and recurrently operative in his own cognitional activities. Fourthly, such an appropriation can only occur gradually and, as he says, so



there will be offered, not a sudden account of the whole of the structure, but a slow assembly of its elements, relations, alternatives and implications. Finally, he concludes, the order of the assembly is not governed by abstract considerations of logical or metaphysical priority, but by concrete motives of pedagogical efficacy. In this survey we have looked at the aim and the practical good of *Insight*. However, we must emphasise it here that we do not intend to follow Lonergan through the stages of *Insight*. Our interest is only in the method of knowing, as Lonergan helps by summarising:

...our primary concern is not the known but the knowing. The known is extensive, but the knowing is a recurrent structure that can be investigated sufficiently in a series of strategically chosen instances. The known is difficult to master, but in our day competent specialists have laboured to select for serious readers and to present to them in an adequate fashion the basic components of the various departments of knowledge...the known is incomplete and subject to revision, but our concern is the knower that will be the source of the future editions and revisions (Lonergan, "*Insight*, Introduction," in Morelli and Morelli, 1997: 41).

In our case, the knower is the subject-in-act. It is the subject-in-act who forms the foundation for all knowing.

In reacting to Lonergan's ideas, in this survey, we say that the demand of our age is the method that integrates the content of knowledge and the knower. That is, understanding both knowledge and the understanding subject. Lonergan characterises the basic problem of human self-knowledge as a crisis. So *Insight* aims to offer a programme that would help in overcoming this crisis. *Insight*, as we shall discuss in this chapter, meets effectively the demands of our times. His slogan in *Insight*, which is expressed as

Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening up all further developments of understanding (Lonergan, "*Insight*, Introduction," in Morelli and Morelli, 1997: 44),

This provides a foundation for our thesis, that is the subject-in-act is foundational to knowledge. It is in this slogan that the theme of *Insight*, which is self-appropriation or the appropriation of one's own rational self-consciousness, is rooted. It is this theme that will be the driving force behind our discussion of the subject-in-act.

What Lonergan calls “rational self-consciousness” is in consonance with our idea of the subject-in-act. This is because, if the subject is a “peak above the clouds”, then he is transcendental. That means he can examine and check knowledge of all reality. Therefore he forms a foundation to all knowledge.

### **3.2 The Subject**

In the two sub-sections in this section we are following Lonergan (1996) *A Second Collection: Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan*, in Morelli and Morelli (1997).

#### ***3.2.1 The Neglected and Truncated Subject***

We now proceed with the exposition of the subject, as presented by Lonergan. Lonergan is of the view that in order to get knowledge of any kind, be it mathematics, science, or even common sense knowledge, one must first of all know oneself. Knowledge of the rest of reality is simply further knowledge. However, what has happened so far is that the subject has been neglected or sacrificed at the altar of objective truth. Empiricism has it that objective truth can only be reached through sense knowledge. Rationalism has it that objective truth can only be attained through reason, but according to Lonergan it is neither empiricism *per se*, nor rationalism *per se*, that can lead to objective truth. As he puts it,

... a subject may be needed to arrive at truth... what is true at anytime or place can be contradicted only by falsity. No one can gainsay it.... The fruit of truth must grow and mature on the tree of the subject before it can be plucked and placed in the absolute realm (Lonergan, in Morelli and Morelli, 1997: 422).

According to Lonergan, this can only be reached at the level of judgement. Judgement is only possible through the subject-in-act or through the set of operations. This is a fact which empiricism, rationalism, or any other philosophy, has overlooked, as we shall now argue.

Lonergan gives another reason why the subject is pushed into the background, namely a metaphysical account of the soul. Metaphysically it was held by Aristotle that plants, animals and men have souls. So emphasis was put on the study and analysis of the essential differences of these souls. The study of the soul was regarded as totally objective. There was a move of turning from the soul to its potencies, its

habits, its acts and its objects. The method used to study plants is the same as the one used to study animals and men and the results turn out to be completely universal.

Loneragan regards this metaphysical account as some form of obscurantism. According to him, it steered away attention from the subject to the soul, making the dualism between body and soul distinct, creating a belief that it was the soul that was fundamental. Lonergan, by contrast, feels that

The study of the subject is quite different, for it is the study of oneself in as much as one is conscious. It prescind from the soul, its essence, its potencies, its habits, for none of these is given in consciousness. It attends to operations and to their centre and the source, which is the self. It discerns the different levels of consciousness, the consciousness of the dream, of the waking subject, of the rationally reflecting subject, of the reasonable deliberating subject. It examines the different operations on the several levels and their relations to one another (Lonergan, in Morelli and Morelli, 1997: 424).

The message here is that the subject and the soul are not mutually exclusive, but to focus attention on the soul leads to the neglect of the subject. This temptation is akin to that of the empiricists, who concentrate on sense knowledge, and the rationalists, who concentrate on reason. Much as we cannot find a foundation in empiricism alone or rationalism alone, the same can be said about the soul. Searching for a foundation in the soul inevitably leads to the neglect of the subject-in-act or the set of operations. The foundation rooted in the soul *per se* would not lead to the understanding of all reality. Lonergan is concerned about the subject who has been neglected. As he says,

.... The neglected subject does not know himself, the truncated subject, not only does he not know himself but is also unaware of his ignorance and so, in one way or another concludes that what he does not know does not exist (Lonergan, in Morelli and Morelli, 1997: 424).

We see that efforts have been switched from the subject to other areas because of the neglect. The subject now is not only self-unappropriated or ignorant about herself, but is in a position to conclude that what she is ignorant of does not exist. This is a very unfortunate situation, which needs to be overhauled or revamped and redirected. The subject has been reduced to a mere object in existence, like any other being which is occupying space. It is high time that the subject be given her befitting status as a foundation to all knowledge. The subject is not only a being in existence but also a being in act, a being who attends to the data of the senses, who analyses this data and who passes judgement about this data. What we have to know is that the subject is



constituted by all the operations and not merely a part of them. He is a set of operations in the conscious act. Through self-appropriation she is self-knowing and through the set of operations she accesses knowledge in all its circles; therefore becoming truly foundational to all paraphernalia of knowing.

Loneragan is of the view that it is not enough to confine knowledge to sense data and the structures of mathematical logic, as positivists do. Neither is it enough to divert attention to action and results, as pragmatists do. In order to emphasise the practicality of the subject, Lonergan introduces the trend generated by conceptualism, that is certainty of concepts, as inferred from linguistic usage or scientific generality. The notion of conceptualism is of relevance here, because we are in a debate concerning logical and scientific generality and language use as a means of knowing. Conceptualism leads to a strong affirmation of concepts. We again say that conceptualism *per se* cannot in itself lead to knowledge of all reality. Lonergan points out three defects emanating from conceptualism. He calls the first defect an anti-historical immobilism. As he puts it,

.... Human understanding develops and, as it develops, it expresses itself in ever more precise and more accurate concepts, hypotheses, theories, and systems. But conceptualism as it disregards insight, so it cannot account for the development of concepts. Of themselves concepts are immobile. They ever remain what they are defined to mean. They are abstract and so stand outside the spacio-temporal world of change. What does change is human understanding and, when understanding changes or develops, then defining changes or develops...while concepts do not change on their own, still they are changed as the mind that forms them changes (Lonergan, in Morelli and Morelli, 1997: 425).

Loneragan is pointing out the fact that human understanding – the trend towards knowing all reality – is in a perpetual state of change. It is a dynamic enterprise. It is the subject-in-act responding to inquiry, grasping the intelligible from the sensible representations, formulating definitions on linguistic usage or inferring scientific generalities. The subject guides the path to knowledge. If the road is straight the journey towards all reality becomes easy. On the other hand, when there are obstacles on the road; the subject seeks to redefine the concepts. If it becomes impossible, the subject may choose to abandon them and formulate new definitions. Because the subject is dynamic, she can lead us to look forwards or backwards until we reach the desired goal. Given the dynamism in the development of knowledge, there is no way the subject or the basic pattern of operations can be sidelined or neglected.



The second defect of conceptualism which Lonergan identifies is that of excessive abstractness. He points out that the generalities of our knowledge are related to concrete reality in two distinct manners. There is the relationship of the universal to the particular, of that man to this man, of that circle to this circle.

There is also the far more important relationship between the intelligible and the sensible, between the unity or the data captured by insight and the data in which the unity or pattern is grasped. The universal abstracts from the particulars, but the intelligibility grasped by insight is immanent in the sensible and, when the sensible datum, image or symbol, is removed, the insight vanishes. But conceptualism ignores human understanding and so it overlooks the concrete mode of understanding that grasps intelligibility in the sensible. It is confined to the world of abstract universals and its only link with the concrete is the relation of the universals to particulars. This notion of the universal and particular leads us to obscuring the subject. This is another area which has led to the obscuring of the subject. The contrast between conceptualism as a mode to the knowing of all reality and the basic pattern of operations, also as a mode to the knowing of all reality, is that conceptualism is passive while the basic pattern of operations is dynamic. Being passive conceptualism gets to reality by simply relating the concepts to objects. Again, being passive it lacks the mechanism of being self-corrective. In case of the concepts requiring redefinition, or even overhauling the entire meaning of the concept, conceptualism has no mode of self-adjustment. This is further proof that the subject cannot be brushed away and simply pushed into the background. So, while conceptualism reflects tendencies of passivity, the set of operations, on the other hand, reflects dynamism. It has a mechanism for self-correction. This comes as a result of its inherent quality of the desire to know. This desire leads to knowledge through inquiry. It grasps knowledge intelligently. Through questions it checks itself. Through this process of self-correcting the ability to redefine concepts makes the subject foundational to conceptualism.

As Lonergan points out, in conceptualism the link between the abstract universals with the concrete is the relation of universal to particular, but that is to ignore human understanding. The subject is not confined to the world of universals. She reaches out to the concrete reality of the sensible, conscious of the concrete world of the senses and conscious of herself as grasping intelligibility in the sensible. This way she can gain complete knowledge of the sensible because she is using

intelligence or she proceeds through the process of asking questions where things do not fit together and then corrects them.

Lonergan traces the third weakness of conceptualism in the notion of being. He points out that conceptualists think of being as an abstraction, in fact as the most abstract of all abstractions. According to Lonergan, the notion of being is not abstract but concrete. The reason he gives is that it intends everything about everything, prescinding from nothing whatsoever. He observes,

.... But to advert to this clearly and distinctly, one must note not only that concepts express acts of understanding but also both acts of understanding and concepts respond to questions. The notion of being first appears in questioning. Being is the unknown that questioning intends to know; that answers partially reveal that further questioning presses on to know more fully. The notion of being then is dynamic, proleptic, an anticipation of the entirety, the concreteness, the totality, that we ever intend and, since our knowledge is finite, never reach. (Lonergan, in Morelli and Morelli, 1997: 426).

Lonergan here projects conceptualists as being erroneous in their presentation of the notion of being. Contrary to their belief that being is abstract, he corrects that being is actually concrete. That it intends everything about everything – as we have said – prescinding from nothing whatsoever. The fact that the notion of being first appears in questioning, that in itself makes it dynamic. The fact that it is the unknown that questioning intends to know, subjects it to the level of intelligence. The fact that the answers partially reveal that further questioning presses one to know more fully, does not only make the notion of being essentially dynamic but operational. That is, the notion of being fully falls within the investigative ambit of the set of operations.

Lonergan, up to this point, is being unambiguous about the fact that, to date, we lack a foundation that would lead us to all understanding and to the knowing of all reality, simply because philosophers and philosophies have searched in the wrong directions. This has not only left the subject neglected but also truncated, that is the subject lacks both the knowledge of herself and the account of human knowledge. Let us now turn to a discussion of what we mean by the subject being foundational.

### ***3.2.2 The Foundational Subject***

Lonergan reminds us that, though the subject has been thought to be “within”, she does not remain totally “within.” His knowing involves an internal self-transcendence

that is applying the basic pattern of operation in the process of knowing and being aware, at the same time, of what is taking place. It is the typical case where one can account for one's knowing. A neglected or truncated subject lacks that ability and so is merely the immanent subject. The subject remains "within", so is partly hidden. The problem with an immanent subject is his inadequate conception of objectivity. Human knowing, Lonergan explains, is not a single uniform property but a complexity of different operations. He points out that it involves,

...an experiential objectivity in the givenness of the data of sense and the data of consciousness. But such experiential objectivity is not the one and only ingredient in the objectivity of human knowing. The process of inquiry, investigation, reflection, coming to judge is governed throughout by the exigencies of human intelligence and human reasonableness... (Lonergan, in Morelli and Morelli, 1997: 426-427).

Lonergan is emphasising the fact that the subject is an integrated whole who cannot be looked at in terms of fragments such as an immanent subject or the soul or the body or the combination of all these. The subject is conscious and present to herself both within the data of sense and the data of consciousness. This is the only trend which leads to absolute objectivity. He further explains that we can reach absolute objectivity when we distinguish sharply between what we feel, imagine and think when it seems to be so and when it is so.

In this regard Lonergan helps us to draw a distinction between the subject of our thesis who is the foundation of knowing and the sort of mistaken subject – whom we have discussed in the previous section – who appears in the old schemas such as rationalism and conceptualism. The subject of the old schema is fragmented. It would be difficult for anything which is – in Lonergan's argument – fragmented to form a foundation; especially when these fragments are in direct conflict.

In order to make the subject of our thesis stand out clearly, let us recapture the notion of the mistaken subject, who is moulded on the pre-modern schema before the advent of Lonergan. The schemas of the old categories do distinguish faculties such as intellect and will, or do distinguish different uses of the same faculty such as speculative and practical intellect. They also distinguish different types of human activity such as theoretical inquiry and practical execution. According to Lonergan, none of these activities adverts to the subject as such. He regards these schemes as irrelevant and proceeds to help us build a scheme that will reflect the correct subject



who would actually serve as a foundation for knowing reality in all spheres of knowing. He draws six degrees, which constitute an integrated and complete subject:

At the lowest level, when unconscious as in dreamless sleep, or in a coma, we are merely potentially subjects. Next, we have minimum degree of consciousness and subjectivity of our dreams. Thirdly, we become experiential subjects when we awake, when we become the subjects of lucid perception, imaginative projects, emotional and connotative impulses, and bodily action. Fourthly, the intelligent subject sublates the experiential, i.e. it retains, preserves, goes beyond, completes it, when we inquire about our experiences, investigate, grow in understanding, express our inventions and discoveries. Fifthly, the rational subject sublates the intelligent and experiential subject, when we question our own understanding, check our formulations and expressions, ask whether we have got things right, marshal the evidence *pro* and *con*, judge this to be so and that not to be so. Sixthly, finally, rational consciousness is sublated by rational self consciousness, when we deliberate, evaluate, act... (Lonergan, in Morelli and Morelli, 1997: 430)

That is our unfragmented and complete subject, a foundation for understanding and knowing all reality. Lonergan helps us interpret what we mean by unfragmented and complete subject. In the process of getting to reality the most common trend is to begin from commonsense experience, or from the data of our senses, namely hearing, seeing, taste, smell and feel. Then the data of our senses is passed on to the intellect. That means human intelligence goes beyond human sensitivity. Yet, and this is very important, it cannot get along without sensitivity. Intelligence asks questions about the data of the senses. Without this data there will be no questions for the intelligence to ask, so sense data without the intellect will remain raw. If raw data is not analysed by the intellect it may not qualify as reliable knowledge, yet the intellect will not act in isolation, either. There must be data for the intellect to analyse. There is thus a necessary thread running through sensitivity and intelligence. It is necessary that human judgement goes beyond sensitivity and intelligence, but in order for it to function it must be in close collaboration with them. In other words, it cannot function except when in conjunction with them. We see the thread running through the whole enterprise from human sensitivity to human intelligence in an integrated and complete manner. We say reality is reached when this process of functional interdependence is completed.

This successive sublation of human sensitivity, human intelligence, and human judgement is referred to by Lonergan as the levels of consciousness. He summarises the procedure of the levels of consciousness as follows:



...the levels of consciousness are united by the unfolding of a single transcendental intending of plural, interchangeable objectives. What promotes the subject from the experiential to intellectual consciousness is the desire to understand, the intention of intelligibility. What next promotes him from intellectual to rational consciousness is a full unfolding of the sense intention: for the desire to understand, once understanding has been reached becomes the desire to understand correctly; in other words, the intention of intelligibility, once an intelligible is reached, becomes the intention of the right intelligible, of the true and, through truth, of reality (Lonergan, in Morelli and Morelli, 1997: 431).

Lonergan finds it opportune to remind us here that the subject is not just an intellect or just a will and his legitimacy is not just results, as pragmatists would put it; neither is it practical intellect or practical reason, as Aristotelians or Kantians might say. The subject, instead, is at the base of both actions and results. This is because results proceed from action, actions in turn proceed from decisions, decisions proceed from evaluations, evaluations proceed from deliberations and all these emanate from the subject-in-act who, deliberates, evaluates, decides, acts and finally brings about results. He or she forms the foundation of the whole enterprise.

Lonergan consolidates this position with an assertion that from the subject, we easily pass into the whole human world founded on meaning, a world of language, art, literature, science, philosophy, history, of family and mores, society and education, state and law, economy and technology. That human world does not come into being or survive without deliberation, evaluation, decision and action.

In this section we have encountered the reasons why, hither to, we have lacked a foundation to all knowing. The subject has either been grossly neglected or not accorded her proper functional status. On top of that, she has been truncated. Efforts from different philosophers to fragment the subject have led to obscurantism about the dynamic actuality in the potentiality of the subject.

Lonergan helps us to revamp this state of affairs. We now have a foundation in the form of the subject-in-act, who is not only foundational to all knowing and all reality but to all activity. Below, Lonergan helps us to expose what the basic pattern of operations is all about.

### 3.3 Basic Pattern of Operations

In this section we are following Lonergan's (1975) *Method in Theology*, Chapter One.

#### *3.3.1 Composition and Description of the Basic Pattern of Operations as a Method leading to Knowing in all cases*

Lonergan projects the basic pattern of operations as including,

seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, feeling, inquiring, imagining, understanding, conceiving, formulating, reflecting, marshalling and weighing the evidence, judging, deliberating, evaluating, deducing, speaking and writing (Lonergan, 1975: 6).

This pattern forms the edifice, which constitutes the subject-based method. It is in this method that we shall find the broad road towards understanding all aspects of reality, natural and human.

Lonergan proceeds to show us how the subject and the object relate. There is a direct relationship between the subject-in-act or the operations and the object being perceived. In other words, the subject intends the object or, as he puts it,

... 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... (1975: 7).

Here, by intending, Lonergan means that the subject becomes aware of the object to be perceived and becoming aware of the object and what is perceived, the object presents itself to the subject.

Lonergan refers to the subject as an operator; and the operations are operations of the subject. This subject operates consciously, that is this operation is a voluntary operation. There would be no operation to talk of if the operator was in a coma or under the influence of drugs. While operating, the subject is aware of herself operating and is experiencing herself operating. She is conscious and the intended objects occur to her consciously and by them the intending subject is fully conscious.

The point which Lonergan is making is that this relationship between the subject and the object is psychological and not mechanical. A mechanical operator would function according to the prescribed rule or set of rules. If something went wrong, a mechanical operator would not effect a solution, or even a correction, unless

the correcting rule or set of rules are invoked. The relationship between the subject and the object is psychological, because the subject is constantly aware of the intended object. If something goes wrong in the operation, the subject, through intelligence, will effect the necessary correction, or call upon a specialist if the problem is beyond her grasp and then the function will proceed. This is not possible with a mechanical operation. With the mechanical operation, if anything goes wrong then the whole function will stall. The subject does not only intend the object but she attends to the object which is intended. To use the example of seeing, the subject gazes at the object. The presence of the subject, however, resides in the gazing or the attending. In this situation it is the subject who is basic to the object. This is because she intends the object consciously. She may give her whole attention to the object as intended or attend to it and, at the same time, remain fully conscious of herself as the attending operator.

What makes the intending subject superior to the intended object is that, in the process of intending, she experiences herself operating. However, Lonergan explains that this experiencing is not another operation. This is because, when the subject is experiencing herself in the operation, she is not intending any object at all, but is only being conscious of herself in the activity of operating. In other words, it is not another operation over and above the operation being experienced. Lonergan says that it is that very operation which, besides being intrinsically intentional, is also intrinsically conscious.

Lonergan is introducing not only a new but also a fundamental idea of objectifying the subjective experience. Lonergan's fundamental idea helps us to solve a number of problems. He helps to solve the problem raised by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, discussed in Chapter Two, of the subject-less formal logic. It also helps us to solve the problem raised by Hume of sense knowledge being true knowledge, on the basis of sense experience only.

Lonergan identifies two aspects which are characteristic of the subject-based pattern of operations. These are consciousness and intentionality. These aspects are present whenever the subject is in operation. They operate at four successive, related, but qualitatively different, levels. Lonergan marshals these levels as follows. The first one is the empirical level. At this level the subject senses, perceives, imagines, feels, speaks and moves. The second one is the intellectual level. This is the level at which



the subject inquires, comes to understand, expresses what she has understood and works out the presuppositions and implications of her expressions. In close succession, the rational level follows this one. This is where the subject reflects, marshals the evidence, passes judgement on the truth or falsity; or certainty or probability of a statement. The fourth and last one is the responsible level. This is the level where the subject is concerned with herself, that is her own operations and her own goals. It is also the level at which the subject deliberates about possible courses of action, evaluates them, makes decisions and carries out her own decisions.

Lonergan stresses that, at all the four levels, all the subject-based operations are both conscious and intentional. There is, however, a qualitative progression evident as one moves from level to level and, at the same time, both intentionality and consciousness differ from level to level. Within each level, many operations involve further differences. For instance, consciousness expands in a new dimension when, from mere experiencing, the subject turns her efforts to the understanding of what has been experienced. This leads to the intellectual level of analysing what has been experienced and then to the third and more qualitative dimension and that is of rationality. There is the level where what emerged as the data of sense at the experiencing level and analysed at the intellectual level stands out as a bright idea and the subject has to confirm it as really so or not so or really the case or not the case. It is at this level where facts are judged as reality or truth and therefore accepted as knowledge. Because we are human beings and not machines, which may stop at functional reality, the subject proceeds to the fourth level and this is the level where we have to decide what to do with this knowledge.

At all the four levels Lonergan reminds us that the subject is aware of herself. But still, as she progresses from level to level, it is the fuller self which the subject experiences. More Lonergan reminds us that this awareness of the subject, as she moves from level to level, is different. For instance, as empirically conscious the subject does not seem to differ from higher animals. Unlike the animals, however, the empirical awareness and intentionality are only a substratum for further operation. This is because the data of the senses provokes inquiry in the subject. It is the inquiry that leads to understanding. Once something has been understood it is expressed; and this is done through language.



Lonergan reminds us that without the data there would be nothing for the subject to inquire about and there would be nothing to be understood. Inquiry, on the other hand, does not seek another datum. Questions, which emerge at the level of inquiry, seek ideas or form or the intelligible unity or relatedness, which organise data into intelligible wholes. It is evident that there is a higher and different form of awareness from the empirical awareness. Empirical awareness involves coming into contact between the intender, the subject – and the intended – the object. The operation of sight hits the object and knowledge is acquired there and then. The nose smells food and knowledge that dinner is ready is acquired. No questions are asked. But the second level of awareness – the level of enquiry – may involve conflicting results. This is a more challenging level of awareness than the empirical one. This is appropriate because judgement would not be feasible without first sorting out these conflicting results in order to find out which is the real case or the true case and which is not. This requires a higher and qualitative level of awareness and consciousness.

Lonergan tells us that as different operations yield qualitatively different modes of being conscious subjects, they equally yield different modes of intending. Here he draws the distinction between the intending of our senses and the intending of our imagination. The intending of our senses, he points out, is normally selective but not creative. The intending of our imagination may, however, be representative or creative. That notwithstanding, he points out that the most fundamental difference in the modes of intending lies between the categorial and the transcendental. The categorial mode of intention yields a determinate or specialised type of knowledge.

Lonergan contrast this type with the set of operations. According to him, the set of operations is not only comprehensive in connotation but also unrestricted in denotation and invariant over cultural change. He draws a further distinction that even though categories are needed for purposes of putting determinate questions and giving determinate answers, the set of operations, on the other hand, is contained in questions prior to the answers. This mode is the radical intending that moves us from ignorance to knowledge. He points out that this mode is *a priori* because it goes beyond what we know to seek what we do not know yet. Furthermore, it is unrestricted because answers are never complete. Instead they give rise to further questions. It reflects a characteristic of being comprehensive because it intends the unknown whole or totality of which our answers reveal only part.

Lonergan makes a compendium of the whole account of the modes of operations, as follows:

...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 is really so. Responsibility goes beyond fact and desire and possibility to discern between what truly is good and what only apparently is good (1975: 11).

In order to form the transcendental concept of the intelligible we have to objectify the content of intelligent intending. In order to form the transcendental concept of the true and real, we have to objectify the content of reasonable intending. In order to get the transcendental concept of value or the truly good, we have to objectify the content of responsible intending. This is so because we are the subject-in-act consciously operating. Such a progression entails dynamism of the subject's conscious intending, which promotes the subject from mere experiencing towards understanding. This, in turn, promotes her from mere understanding towards truth and reality and from factual knowledge to responsible action. This dynamism, apart from being a product of cultural advance, is the condition of its possibility. This is the case because culture itself is not static but dynamic. This dynamism can be better facilitated by the patterns of operations. Lonergan refers to the ignorance or error, negligence or malice, that may lead to the blocking of that dynamism as obscurantism in its most radical form. It is the energy which propels the subject towards acquiring all reality, from the most elementary to the transcendental level.

This exposition has unfolded before us the operations that intend objects. In order to make us have a clearer view or understanding of objects, Lonergan proceeds to draw for us the distinction between elementary and compound objects, or the distinction between elementary and compound knowing. Elementary knowing takes us back to the cognitional operations of seeing and hearing; in a nutshell, all sense knowledge. Consequently, elementary objects are those that are intended in the elementary knowing. Compound knowing, conversely, on the other hand is a combination of several instances of elementary knowing into a single knowing. The compound object comes as a result of uniting several elementary objects. In this respect it follows that

...the process of compounding is the work of 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 into a single universe (1975: 12).

Here we are made to see how truly foundational the basic pattern of operations is, or the subject is. The subject can intend objects at the most elementary level of sense and proceed, though intelligence and judgement, to responsibility. The conscious dynamism enables her to integrate knowledge up to its utmost comprehensiveness and conclusiveness.

After experiencing many conscious and intentional operations, and after arranging them in a succession of different levels of consciousness, we construct into large wholes the many elementary objects. We have also combined many operations into a single compound knowing. Lonergan proceeds to show us that even the many levels of operation are merely successive stages in the upholding of a single thrust. As he puts it, to know the good the subject must know the real. It follows that to know the real the subject must know the true. The subject gets to the truth from the intelligible and consequently, in order to know the intelligible, the subject must attend to the data. It is like emerging from slumber, from which the subject emerges to attend to the data. Her observation of data leaves her intelligence puzzled, something that propels her into inquiry. In turn, inquiry leads her into insight but insights may be many. At this stage, critical reasonableness leads to doubt and it is doubt that makes her check the competing alternatives in order to make sure. This is where alternative courses of action present themselves, leaving the subject wondering if the most attractive is the truly good. Lonergan observes that these successive transcendental notions are so intimate that they require specialised differentiation of consciousness for the subject to withdraw from the ordinary ways of leaving and devote herself to a specialised one. He gives the example of pursuing moral goodness, philosophic truth, scientific understanding or artistic beauty.

We crown this section with a reminder that the basic pattern of conscious and intentional operations is dynamic. It is dynamic both materially and formally. It is dynamic formally in a sense that it calls forth and assembles the appropriate operations at each stage of the process, for instance, as Lonergan puts it, the way a



growing organism puts forth its own organs and lives by their functioning. Concretely,

...this doubly dynamic method is not blind but open-eyed; it is attentive, intelligent, reasonable; it is conscious intending, ever going beyond what happens to be given or known, ever striving for a fuller and richer apprehension of the yet unknown incompletely unknown totality, whole, universal (1975: 13).

Loneragan posits this method as whole and universal. In the next section we explore the extent to which it is a method that transcends all methods.

### ***3.3.2 Subject: Basic Pattern of Operations as Truly Foundational to the Understanding of all Reality***

We begin this section with a couple of questions. Is the basic pattern of operations a method at all? If so, is it a transcendental method? Let us begin by asserting that the transcendental method is indeed a method. From Lonergan's point of view, it is a method because it is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations, which yield cumulative and progressive results. It is indeed a transcendental method, because its results are not limited categorially to some particular field or subject. This method yields any result(s) that could be intended by the completely open transcendental notions. This ability of the pattern of operations of being open to any field elevates it above all other methods which aim at meeting the exigencies and exploiting the opportunities pertaining to particular fields, as confirmed by Lonergan.

...transcendental method is concerned with meeting the exigencies and exploiting the opportunities presented by the human mind itself. It is a concern that is both foundational and universally relevant (1975: 14).

Now if it is acceptable that everyone has the potential of being attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible, and these are the precepts of transcendental method, then this method is open for application by anyone, irrespective of their field of specialisation. What is required of this one - for all method, as Lonergan says, is a matter of heightening one's consciousness by objectifying it. As a matter of fact, that is the unavoidable task, which this thesis is inviting all of us to do. Because transcendental method is foundational, and therefore a necessary tool for everyone, all of us should not only be aware of it but be obligated to practice it in our daily lives. The question now is, in what sense is this method foundational to everyone?



Lonergan gives us the answer. He reiterates the fact that heightening one's consciousness by objectifying it is something that each and every one of us, ultimately, has to do for herself. On top of that, it should be obligatory for every one to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible. Being attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible involves the operations as experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding. These operations are both conscious and intentional, since what is conscious can be intentional, so what Lonergan means by applying the operations as intentional to operations as conscious is summarised as follows: One experiences one's experiencing, experiences one's understanding and experiences one's judging. This is, at the first level. At the second level, one understands the unity and relations of one's experienced experiencing, understands the unity and relations of one's understanding, understands the unity and relations of one's judging and understands the unity and relations of one's deciding. At the third level, one affirms the reality of one's experienced and understood experiencing, one affirms the reality of one's understanding, one affirms the reality of one's judging and one affirms the reality of one's deciding. At the fourth level, one decides to operate in accord with the norms immanent in spontaneous relatedness of one's experienced, understood, affirmed experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding. Lonergan elucidates:

...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 subject, 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... that discovery of course is not a matter of looking, inspecting, gazing upon. It is awareness, not of what is intended but of the intending. It is finding in oneself the conscious occurrence, hearing, whenever an object is heard, and so forth (1975: 15).

What Lonergan is explaining is that if our questioning is unlimited we must question what questioning is, try to understand it and judge it. Secondly, that transcendental method is a method for all humanity, but which is largely in its latent state. In order to understand this correctly one can use the metaphor of sugar in a cup of tea. If sugar is added to the tea and left undisturbed, it will settle at the bottom of the cup and the tea will continue to taste sugarless. It is only when one uses a spoon and stirs the sugar that the presence of the sugar will be detected in the tea. Once this has been done it will no longer be possible for the tea to be tasted separately as bitter

and the sugar to be tasted separately as sweet. Both the tea and the sugar, though different items, will taste as one and the same thing. The same can be said for transcendental method. The onus is on us to function as a subject, the basic pattern of operations. In order to gain intelligibility, or to move in the direction of acquiring all knowledge, we should not only intend the objects but also be aware and conscious of what we are intending. We should be prepared to function as one integrated whole, as we move from seeing, understanding and being reasonable and responsible. Transcendental method carries us through all the stages that will finally lead us to understanding and knowing reality in all aspects.

At this stage, it is reasonable to say that gaining intelligibility at the sensual level is relatively simpler, because one can advert to them whenever there is an object which one intends to know. One reason why this method has not been taken seriously is that it gets more and more challenging as one climbs the rungs of the ladder that leads to knowing in all circles. Here Lonergan cautions that some forethought and ingenuity is required when it comes to heightening one's consciousness of inquiry, insight, formulation, critical reflection, weighing the evidence, judging and deciding. In this progression, knowledge of the precise meanings of each of these words becomes necessary. In addition to this, Lonergan points out that one has to produce in oneself the corresponding operation and keep on producing it until one gets beyond the object intended to the consciously operating subject.

All these, as a matter of fact, have to be done within the appropriate context, that is it should not be a matter of inward inspection but of inquiry, enlarged interest, discernment, comparison, distinction, identification and meaning. One has to be prepared in order to undergo all these operations, because they are not experienced singly but in their relations, that is they are not merely conscious operations but also conscious processes.

At this stage one may wonder to what extent this claim is authentic and acceptable. As Lonergan puts it,

...on the empirical level, it is true, process is spontaneous sensitivity; it is intelligible only in a sense that it is understood... 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 possible. Finally, the rational subject, having achieved knowledge of what is and what could be, rationally gives way to conscious freedom and conscious responsibility (1975: 16).

What comes out glaringly from this encounter is the fact that – as Lonergan puts it – the operations stand within a process that is formally dynamic, that calls forth and assembles its own components, doing so intelligently, rationally and responsibly. That means it is a unity and relatedness that exists and functions before we manage to advert to it explicitly, understand it and objectify it. Lonergan points out that it is a unity and relatedness quite different from the intelligible unities and relations by which we organise the data of sense, because these are merely intelligible but the unity and relatedness of conscious process is intelligent, reasonable and responsible. These are the characteristics that make the subject a rock to build on. We now proceed to show why this is the case.

### ***3.3.3 The Subject: a Rock to Build on***

We have no doubt in our minds that the exposition which we have demonstrated so far regarding the method, which is foundational and can lead to knowing, is unassailable. In this exposition the notion of operations does emerge succinctly and so does the understanding of their unity and relatedness. Now we have to consider the sense in which the basic pattern of operations is a rock on which to found all other methods, that is why it is foundational to all of them. Lonergan guides us through this justification by posing a number of questions. These are: do these operations actually occur? If so, do they occur in the described pattern? Is that pattern not just hypothetical, sooner or later due for revision, and when revised sooner or later, due for still further revision?

Is it possible, Lonergan wonders, whether there is any lecturer, for example, who can claim that she prepares her lectures without any experience of intellectual curiosity, or of inquiry or of striving and coming to understanding, or expressing what she has grasped by understanding. Would it be possible for any one in the literary field to remind her readers that never in her life did she experience anything that might be called critical reflection? Or that she never thought about the truth or falsity



of propositions, that she is not aware of herself making any judgement or, if she did, it was mere appearance? Or is there anyone who may claim that never in her life did she have any experience of acting responsibly? In view of this, Lonergan asserts,

...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 (1975: 17).

The next question is whether these operations occur as we have described. It must be noted here that operations are not experienced in isolation. For instance, we arrive at the pattern which links operations together through the process of inquiring and discovery. On top of this the unity of consciousness is given. It is also the case that the pattern of operations is part of the experience of the operations. Above all, inquiring and discovery are needed to analyse this unity. The situation would be different if there was no analysis. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to discern and distinguish the several operations that link the operations together before the operations are distinguished. It is inquiring which brings the pattern of operations to light. Before that happens however, the subject is already conscious. This means that when the relations are formulated they prove to be objectifications of the routines of our conscious living and doing.

Spontaneously we move from experiencing to the effort to understand; and spontaneity is not unconscious or blind...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 principal of sufficient reason; and it is the neglect or absence of this demand that constitutes silliness... (1975: 18).

Lonergan explains the necessity of this spontaneity and the problems that would arise if it were neglected. He tells us that this spontaneity moves to judgement and from judgement of fact or possibility to judgement of value that culminates in the deliberateness of decision and commitment. He reminds us that this spontaneity is not unconscious or blind. It is the one which constitutes us as conscientious and responsible persons.

On the question of whether this pattern is not just a hypothesis that can be expected to undergo revision after revision, as one's self-knowledge keeps developing, Lonergan's response is that we must draw a distinction between the



normative patterns immanent in our conscious and intentional operations, on the one hand, and the objectification of that pattern in concepts, propositions and words, on the other. The only area which can be affected by revision is the objectifications. There is no way revision can change the facts of the dynamic structure of human consciousness. Instead, revision can bring about a more adequate account of the structure of human consciousness. For revision to take place, certain conditions must be fulfilled. For instance, it may appeal to data which was either overlooked or missed altogether. That appeal takes us straight to the empirical level of operations. Any revision worth the name will definitely appeal to the intellectual level of operation. This is because it will be seeking to offer a better explanation of the previous data. It follows that the new explanation will have to appeal to the rational operations because it has to demonstrate that the new case is certainly the case, or is true. This is precisely what transcendental method is all about. What all this means, as Lonergan puts it, is that the activity of revising consists of such operations, in accord with such a pattern, so that any revision which rejects this pattern will be rejecting itself. At this juncture, the time has come for us to say that here is the rock which this thesis is offering. No method can bypass or sideline this rock. It is the foundation for all methods. Later, in Chapter Four, we will see how it can apply even to witchcraft.

#### ***3.3.4 Functional Usefulness of the Foundational Method***

We feel that, without doubt, we have established the fact that the subject based method is foundational, or basic, or transcendental, to all other methods. Now the pertinent question that we have to ask ourselves is: is this method functionally useful to everyone? Should everyone, irrespective of area of specialisation or field of scholarship, take it as basic to the methods which are relevant to his own field? The answers to these questions are our next main concern.

Lonergan escorts us through this exploration. He points out that transcendental method executes a normative function. This happens to be standard to all methods, because all special methods, by their very nature, consist of making specific the precepts of the transcendental method. These precepts are: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable and be responsible. They belong to the transcendental method because before they are formulated in concepts and expressed in words they have prior

existence and reality in the spontaneous, structured dynamism of human consciousness. Since the transcendental precepts rest on the operations themselves it means that the specific categorial precepts rest on the operations, operating in a specific field. This means that whatever is contained in the categorial method is ultimately based on the precepts of transcendental method. On this particular point, Lonergan surmises that

... the ultimate basis of both categorial and transcendental methods' precepts will be advertence to the difference between attention and inattention, intelligence and stupidity, reasonableness and unreasonableness, responsibility and irresponsibility (1975: 20).

The point here is that the standards of special methods are all-inclusive in the transcendental method. This makes transcendental method humanly basic and useful to all methods.

On top of a normative function, transcendental method executes a critical function. Lonergan calls it a "scandal", where scholars agree on the scientific questions but tend to disagree most outrageously on basic philosophical issues. They disagree on the activities of knowing; they also disagree on the relations of those activities to reality and stretch their disagreement even to reality itself. In this respect, when we say that transcendental method executes a critical function, what do we mean exactly?

In answering this question, Lonergan points out that disagreements can be resolved by looking at the different levels of knowing which lead to all knowledge. Differences on the data of senses can be resolved at the level of intelligence and differences at the level of intelligence can be resolved at the level of judgement and differences at the level of judgement can be resolved at the level of responsibility; where one has to make responsible decisions. Once again, this critical approach is commensurate to all special methods because the critical function is all-inclusive in the special methods, but it works on the principles of the normative pattern of the transcendental method. In addition, transcendental method is systematic. Before we see what this involves, we would like to point out that if a discipline is not systematic then it is likely to be disorganised. There must be order of progression in any field, or else the results of a disorderly approach will be unpredictable. All along, we should witness systematicity from the data of sense to intelligence, right through judgement to responsibility. As we have demonstrated, this holds for any method. Lonergan tells

us that the systematic function characteristic of the transcendental method is isomorphic. That is, it has in itself a capacity to construct the elementary acts of knowing into compound knowing and then proceed to construct the elementary objects of knowing into compound objects. The point here is that the systematic function ensures continuity and this holds for any special method. Another characteristic or the usefulness of the function of the transcendental method to special methods is that, though it ensures continuity, it does it without rigidity. What does this mean? In this respect we have concrete reality and we also have human cognitional process. The relationship between the two is that we perceive concrete reality through human cognitional process. There is no other way. It is the same movement from the sense data right through to responsibility. It is the movement from data to sense that leads us towards our intended, all reality. Transcendental method allows a reverse movement from responsibility to sense data. It oscillates from root to top and from top to root. That is, an aspect to be known, in the Lonergan sense, moves from sense data to intelligence and finally to reasonableness. It is at this level where its truth is judged. Should any doubt arise or further challenging questions emerge, there is a downward checking of the truth of that aspect of knowledge. This is a movement from reasonableness, back to intelligence and finally to sense again, so any misunderstanding or errors in this movement are corrected or confounded during these oscillations. This two-way traffic reflects systematicity for any method.

Apart from reflecting the characteristics of systematicity, transcendental method serves a heuristic function. Lonergan reminds us that in any field there is the intending – the subject – and the intended, the object. What is intended is the unknown, which is to be known. This is normally through inquiry. The function of inquiry is to transform the unknown into the known. This makes inquiry fall in between ignorance and knowledge. Lonergan points out that inquiry is less than knowledge. If it were not, there would be no need to inquire. It is more than sheer ignorance because it is the one which exposes ignorance and at the same time, strives to replace it with knowledge. We wonder whether this does not hold for any method.

Lonergan elaborates:

Fundamentally transcendental method is the exploitation of such intending, for it outlines the steps to be taken if one is to proceed from the initial point of intending the question to the eventual knowing of what has been intended. All along within transcendental method, the uses of heuristic device is

fundamental. They consist in designing and naming the intended unknown, in setting at once all that can be said 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 (1975: 22).

It is evident that what Lonergan is saying about transcendental method is characteristic of all methods. Lonergan gives examples in disciplines such as algebra, where a variable such as “x” becomes the intended unknown and through inquiry leads to the known. Such is also the function in physics of indeterminate and generic functions and the classes of functions specified by different equations. Because it brings to light the activity of intending and its correlative, the intended, transcendental method fulfils the heuristic function. Through experiencing, understanding and judging, it brings to note the intended object by the subject. This is what all methods aim at, namely the revelation of the unknown through the pattern of operations.

At this stage, using the example of theology, Lonergan exposes the functional usefulness and relevance of the transcendental method. Theology, just like any other discipline, has its own special method. This method involves special classes and combinations of operations. It is true that theology, natural sciences and human sciences for example, all intend differently. But what remains fundamental, and this is the point we are making here, is that none of these disciplines diverge from the mode of transcendental method and opt to proceed from attention to inattention, also from intelligence to stupidity or from reasonableness to silliness or from responsibility to irresponsibility.

Lonergan emphasises the point of the foundational nature of transcendental method by reiterating that theology does not lie outside the transcendental field. (Here we must mention that for the purposes of this thesis theology is being used as a case in point, but the case is meant to hold for any discipline). This is because transcendental method is unrestricted. As Lonergan expresses it, outside transcendental method there is nothing at all. He explains that this unrestrictedness does not lie in the fact that the notions of transcendental method are abstract. On the contrary, the notions of transcendental method are not necessarily abstract, but comprehensive. Their greatest merit is that they intend everything about everything. So, far from being abstract, it is from them that we intend the concrete, that is all that is to be known about a thing. It is true that human knowing is limited; nevertheless the transcendental notions are not just a matter of knowing but of intending. It is the case



that they intend what each and every one of us has managed to learn. It is also the case that even now they intend all that which remains unknown. That is, Lonergan surmises,

... the transcendental field is defined not by what man knows, not what he can know but what he can ask about; and it is only because he can ask more questions than he can answer that we know about the limitations of our knowledge (1975: 24).

Once again this is a characteristic readily available in all special methods. The subject intends and objectifies all reality, largely through questioning. Questioning reveals our ignorance and the intending subject proceeds to explore the unknown. As Lonergan explains, transcendental method is the concrete and dynamic unfolding of human attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness and responsibility. It provides a key to all developments towards all knowing. These are the developments, for instance, in unified sciences. This is contrary to the immobility of the Aristotelian ideal, which conflicts with the developing natural science, the developing human sciences and with theology. In addition, transcendental method is in harmony with the development in the human mind, which in turn, affects all other developments.

On the functionality and usefulness of transcendental method, Lonergan expands on the note of hope that understanding the subject or the basic pattern of operations,

... through the self knowledge, the self-appropriation, the self-possession that result from making explicitly the basic normative pattern of the recurrent and related operations of human cognitional process, it is possible to envisage a future in which all workers in all fields can find a transcendental method, common norms, foundations, systematics, and common critical and heuristic procedures (1975: 24).

He makes such a hopeful assertion because he believes that the basic pattern of operations act in all fields however differentiated they might be. It operates in these fields in radically the same way, hence making it foundational to all of them. It is the only method which can generate harmony in the human race, which can eradicate egoism through making people rational and responsible and which can make people focus in the same direction in a principled manner in search for reality in all possible cases.

Lonergan concludes this section on transcendental method as follows:

...there is the foundational function. Special methods derive their proper norms from the accumulated experience of the 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 sciences will be acknowledged, that a secure basis will be attained for attacking interdisciplinary problems, and that the sciences will be mobilised 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 (1975: 22-23).

There is the subject, the foundation, the basic pattern of operations, the transcendental method with which Lonergan helps us to propose a method which transcends all other methods. We now proceed with our discussion of the foundation of knowledge, assisted by views from commentators.

### 3.4 Commentators

In this chapter we are arguing for a foundation for knowing in all possible circles. To help us in this endeavour we are using the ideas of Lonergan himself, in his best-known book, *Insight* (1957), his more recent publication *Method in Theology* (1975) and collections in *Morelli and Morelli* (1997). Here Lonergan helps us to establish a foundation in the subject. We are seeing many of Lonergan's ideas through Cronin, who restructures and simplifies Lonergan's ideas, in his book, *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan's Cognitive Theory and Epistemology* (1999).

We are using Cronin because he introduces us to the debate concerning a foundation of knowledge as it has unfolded through the history of philosophy up to the present. Through the process of "interiority" he takes us through the stages of self-appropriation as propounded by Lonergan. He shows us how the process of understanding and knowing unfolds from common sense to theory to judgement. His ideas are appropriate in this thesis because we are also in search for a foundation to knowledge. We are in search of a method that can co-ordinate all other methods, in other words a method that is transcendental. We locate this method in the idea of the subject-in-act. We are opposed to Wittgenstein's idea of regarding the subject as a functionless metaphysical being who has no role to play in formal logic which he had taken as foundational to knowledge. We say that the subject-in-act is foundational to

knowledge. Through the idea of interiority, Cronin helps us to argue for the subject-in-act to be foundational to knowledge.

We are also using ideas from other commentators, namely Augustine Shutte [n.d] and Patrick Giddy (1996), who are helping us to further elucidate the idea of the subject as foundational. We are interested in Shutte's ideas because he feels that in order to get to knowledge in the true sense of the term, we must start with the subject. Otherwise our philosophy is without a foundation. In his arguments he supports the idea of the subject being foundational. It is in that sense that his ideas do find a place in our thesis.

Giddy compares the philosophies of empiricism, rationalism and Lonergan's philosophy of self-appropriation. He points out that empiricism stresses the role of sense-experience in the constitution of knowledge, while rationalism stresses the role of ideas. Giddy exalts Lonergan's philosophy of self-appropriation, in the sense that, as he puts it,

attention has to be paid to the role of that further questioning by means of which the enquirer considers his or her own grasp of the nature of the object (1996: 143).

Giddy puts emphasis on the precepts of self-appropriation or the subject. It is in this sense that his arguments fit in with our discussion. What is interesting about Cronin, Shutte and Giddy is that all of them are writing in the context of teaching and learning philosophy in Africa.

#### ***3.4.1 Dynamism and Self-Assembling of Transcendental Method: Shutte***

Shutte, in his paper "Aristotle and the Aristotelian Tradition in Theories of Knowledge", projects Lonergan as one of Aristotle's liveliest representatives in the twentieth century. Shutte is of the view that Lonergan, in his work

supplies precisely what we feel the lack of in Aristotle's own, a theory of knowledge based on a philosophical reflection of the knowing subject herself and the various mental processes that are involved in gaining her knowledge of reality [n.d.].

Shutte regards Lonergan as an integrating philosopher. In fact as he says, Lonergan, in his model, takes into account knowledge gained from natural science and



mathematics, human sciences, psychoanalysis, commonsense, interpersonal knowledge and from ethics and religion.

He reiterates Lonergan's assertion that knowing is a complex and dynamic activity. It is complex in that it involves many distinct and irreducible activities. These include activities of the senses, of the intellect and of judgement. Knowing is dynamic in that it is self-assembling and self-constituting. It puts itself together, one part summoning forth the next, till the whole is reached. He reminds us of Lonergan's point that this does not occur with the blindness of natural process, but consciously, intelligently and rationally; that experience stimulates enquiry and enquiry is intelligence bringing itself to act.

What Shutte is saying about Lonergan forms a foundation for our argument. He presents Lonergan's approach as self-assembling, a method that takes into account all fields of learning. It is a method that is self-corrective, that is it has a mechanism that helps it to check itself when things go wrong. This is what we are looking for in our thesis. We are looking for a method that is foundational to all knowing. We have, to some extent, seen why up to and until the advent of Lonergan, philosophy lacked a foundation. Shutte is one of the philosophers whose views help us to clarify this point further. He states:

Indeed philosophy right up to the time of Descartes was in some sense naïve. It took for granted that we know, read, concentrate on giving the best possible descriptions of reality we know. It did not ask Descartes critical question about the grounds for our conviction about our knowledge of the real. It was thus, in spirit, extrovert, focused on the object of our knowledge: rather than introvert, focusing on the knowing subject herself. We however... must start with the subject, with ourselves, without such prolegomena to our thinking, we feel our philosophy is without foundation [n.d.].

Here Shutte takes us back to the Ionian period. The foundation at that time was in the stuff that constituted the universe. The concern at that time was merely cosmological. Indeed, the answer to what was foundational was oriented towards objects. So we get water, as proposed by Thales; fire, as proposed by Heraclitus and air as proposed by Anaximanes, as answers to what was foundational. The minds of these historical philosophers were focused on the object of knowledge, rather than on the subject of knowledge.

One reason why we have hitherto lacked a foundation was this focusing on the cosmos. This is a legacy that has carried through to the contemporary period, as we



witness in empiricism. However, Lonergan now gives us the answer that Shutte agrees with and which we also agree with and that is the subject in act, or the basic pattern of operations. With the basic set of operations at our disposal, we cannot afford to continue focussing on the objects *per se*. We have to engage Lonergan's model of sensation, intelligence, reasonableness and responsibility. Continuing to defend other models such as the scientific method as foundational to all knowing will take us nowhere. The subject-in-act should be actively involved in human science and technology, commerce and business and the human enterprises, without exception.

Shutte gives us advice that we must start with the subject. He is correct when he says that without such a prolegomena to our thinking our philosophy remains without a foundation.

In our case, we are not promulgating the abrogation of the present edifice of philosophy, but if the status quo is maintained, we shall be doing philosophy the disservice of making it fail to perform its fitting role of being foundational to everything else. It is glaringly clear that the enlightened philosophers, like Lonergan and others, can see through the confusion between empiricism and rationalism and also between foundationalists and anti-foundationalists. Yet this confusion is unwarranted. The arbiter lies in the basic set of operations. Empiricism and rationalism can be amicably harmonised by the set of operations at both the sense and rational levels. Such an endeavour will re-link the chain which has been severed and the gap between them will be bridged, bringing to an end the confusion in philosophy, which has been caused by the disagreement between them. At the moment philosophy is without a foundation because philosophers have either focused on objectivism to the total exclusion of rationalism, or focused on rationalism, to the total exclusion of empiricism. Even in cases where an attempt has been made to bring the two together, as in Kant's "subjective idealism" (this is where empiricism and rationalism are brought together in the process of determining knowledge), the method of perfecting this endeavour had not clearly emerged until the onset of Lonergan's basic set of operations and their norms of functioning.

Shutte reminds us of the complexity and dynamism that are characteristic in the transcendental method. The activities in it are many, distinct and irreducible. They include seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting, understanding, conceiving, reflecting, weighing the evidence and judging. Shutte reminds us of what Lonergan

stipulated, namely that none of these activities alone and by themselves might be called human knowing. As Lonergan puts it,

an act of ocular vision may be perfect as ocular vision; yet when it occurs without any accompanying glimmer of understanding, it is mere gaping (Lonergan, in Shutte, [n.d.]).

The point being made here is that these operations need the intellect to sort out their relations and then synthesize them into comprehensible and credible reality.

Shutte reminds us of the dynamism involved in knowing. Knowing is,

...self-assembling, self-constituting. It puts itself together, one part summoning forth the next, till the whole is reached... (Lonergan, in Shutte, [n.d.]).

It remains obvious that some philosophers, precisely due to the lack of an integrating method, have mishandled the components that happen to be constituting philosophy at the moment. Here we need to mention that this fragmentation of the components is not evident in the components themselves only, but also in their subsequent subdivisions. For instance, epistemology, whose chief function is knowledge, is fragmented into empiricism and rationalism; where each component downgrades the other. Within empiricism itself there is the “picture theory” and “the ordinary language point of view” where, again, each downgrades the other. We again come across the fragmentation, where empiricism is downgrading metaphysics and the battle continues *ad infinitum*. This is not a healthy atmosphere in which to establish a foundation. In any case, with things as they stand, no foundation can be established. Either the major components or the subcomponents within the major components will want to claim that foundation.

In Chapter Two we saw Wittgenstein claiming a foundation to all reality with formal logic. As development of positivism, we also saw the ordinary language point of view claiming a foundation. These claims may be principled, but are not integrative in the sense of ensuring unity within diversity.

The question remains, can a foundation be established in the upper components? Much as it cannot work in the subcomponents, it will still be difficult, even in the upper components. This is because epistemology will claim to be foundational and metaphysics will do the same. This may be the case for other philosophies, too. In that case where does that leave us? As Cronin puts it, it leaves us on the top of the fence. In that case what right does philosophy have to claim to be

foundational to all reality? Such a situation places it in a worse situation than the natural sciences and the arts. The natural sciences can demarcate their boundaries with a certain measure of conviction. For instance, when biology is mentioned we can easily tell its constituent components as different from physics and, even when the sub-components are mentioned, for example botany, one will know that, botany is the biology of plants, which is different from zoology, which is the biology of animals.

Now when it comes to philosophy and one mentions epistemology, what does one understand? How do we get to knowledge? To the same question, Hume will say through senses, Descartes will say through reason and Kant will say through both. Now who is right and who is wrong? Given that state of uncertainty, this thesis is inviting us to join Lonergan to embrace the basic pattern of operations in its entirety. This is the only salvation for philosophers. Lonergan invites us all to put aside our petty squabbles, sober up and simply call to attention our conscious awareness and the set of operations, equip ourselves with these human endowments and follow the suggested road of attentiveness to the data of sense, intelligence to the puzzling questions of theory and hypothesis, reasonableness to the challenges of judgement of truth and responsibility to the call of choice. If this road is trodden carefully and faithfully, with determination and without reservation, it will slowly but surely lead all of us without exception to the desired goal of understanding and knowing all reality; hence making our discipline truly basic, foundational and transcendental to everything else. Lonergan is not inviting us to try this method as one more philosophy out of the many. It is instead a method that integrates all methods and all philosophies. Its truth can be critically found because it is the only method, as will be evident in our discussion, that has within itself a mechanism of self-checking. The subject-in-act can check her operations.

It should be mentioned here that, by being attentive to the data of the senses, we are likely to address, among other things, Hume's problem of empiricism, as well as its sub-components. By being intelligent, we are likely to address, among other things, Descartes' problem of rationalism and all its subcomponents and also, being reasonable, we are likely to address, among other things, Kant's squabbles of subjective idealism. Of course, by being reasonable, we are demonstrating that we have walked the road towards understanding and knowing all reality exactly the way

it should be done. In other words, we have reached self-transcendence. We are now authentic and genuine philosophers.

Shutte cautions us that our contemporary climate of thought can make it difficult to understand Lonergan's explanation. This is because we are in a climate where empiricists understand objectivity from sense experience alone; where knowledge is thought of as taking a look at, or accepting, what is sensed through vision as the only reality. On this matter Shutte points out that

...our senses do not give us things but only sensation, our experience is not of things, of what is real, but only data. For rationalists objectivity is given by the way in which each item of knowledge fits into the total scheme... (Shutte, [n.d.]).

Here Shutte echoes Lonergan, in that ultimately, unless knowledge is complete, it is not knowledge at all. These conceptions of objectivity are false and blinding to a contemporary who is trying to get to a true understanding of knowledge. To drive this point home, Shutte elaborates:

...objectivity is in act, because it resides not in a single operation but a structured manifold of operations, is not some single property of human knowing but a component of quite different properties. Empiricists have tried to find ground for objectivity in experience, rationalists have tried to place it in necessity, and idealists have had recourse to coherence. All are partly right and partly wrong, right in their affirmation but wrong in their exclusion (Shutte, [n.d.]).

This quotation helps to emphasise the problem that is characteristic of philosophers who try to locate a foundation by fragmenting philosophy. When philosophy is fragmented into sections and subsections, the foundation so found will be directly related to those sections and subsections. As emphasised by Lonergan, the empiricist will try locating a foundation in experience. While this is happening on one side, on the other side the rationalist will be busy locating the foundation in necessity. As experience tells us, these are two areas that are not only directly opposed to each other but are, at the same time, confrontational. As if that were not bad enough, the idealists will be busy locating their foundation in coherence. The problem here is that these so-called foundations will be mutually exclusive, and oriented to particular specific directions, which will later turn out not to be all-inclusive. This is the problem we have had, it is the problem we have now and it is the problem we shall continue to have. It is worrying that the foundations that are established in these fragmented scenarios are not foundations at all.



Shutte, using Lonergan, helps to explain this problem. The explanation is that the sensible only provides a clue to the real, but it is not the real. For anything to be real it has to be verified - in Lonergan's sense - and not just simply experienced. The problem posed by rationalists would be solved by pointing out that partial knowledge is a possibility, as it is witnessed in science. It is the case that each autonomous science gives partial knowledge. For instance, biology may expose knowledge of botany and zoology, but may not reflect what happens in physics and geology. Consequently, as Shutte interprets Lonergan, there is no such a thing as a super-science, in which all the sciences are reduced to one that comprehends the whole of reality.

On the contrary, the subject is obedient to the edicts of transcendental method of attentiveness, intelligence and reasonableness. As with Lonergan, we remain wondering whether there is any other alternative to this method. It is obvious that it is very unlikely that one's judgement will be well founded if one does not attend to the data of sense. Similarly, it is very unlikely that one's theories and hypotheses will fit the facts if one ignores the precept of intelligence. Is there any possibility of one's wealth of experience and the brilliance of one's insights counting for anything if one is unreasonable in one's judgement? It is reasonable to say that any possibility that will finally lead to the understanding and knowing reality in all cases inevitably calls for the intervention of the basic pattern of operations or the subject-in-act. The same basic set of operations provides an impeccable standard against which to judge the certainty, probability or possibility of other items or knowledge. Shutte confirms,

...the fundamental process of coming to know is the same in every field of knowledge, this is so partly because every kind of knowledge is an example of experiencing, understanding and judging. The unity of knowledge is achieved not by reduction of all the sciences to one science, or by reduction of reality to one kind of a thing, but by this basic unity of a method, that takes different forms in every field (Shutte, [n.d]).

In this respect, scientists do put forward experiments and measurements as the only way of achieving objectivity. This makes them erroneously go to the extreme of claiming that scientific method is the model method for all knowledge. Shutte clarifies that, given the basic pattern of operations, it is clear that the scientific experimental procedure can be appropriate only to certain aspects of the real. That being the case, the basic pattern of operations, that covers all fields of knowledge, undermines fundamentally this claim of the scientists. The scientific method on its

own cannot lead us to all reality. What underlies scientific method is the transcendental method.

A very important aspect that makes the basic pattern of operations, or the subject-in-act, fundamental, is that while all the other methods cannot account for their operations the subject-in-act can. For instance, if a certain mode in physics or biology or mathematics is found to be wanting, what will be required at the moment will be the attention of the subject. It will be up to the subject to make the correction where possible, or abandon the enterprise altogether.

The transcendental method, however, is self-corrective and, in addition, it is self-accounting for its operations. Shutte once again helps us to see what is meant here, by quoting from Lonergan. This helps us to answer the question: can the subject in principle get to all knowledge or is he a knower? Before we see how that question is answered, let us first look at one radical difference between the subject-in-act and any other method. The subject is conscious and aware of the dynamism in her operations. She is aware of herself as an operational method on all other methods. That is how she becomes self-corrective. None of any other existing methods has this capacity.

Returning to our question on whether the subject can get to reality in all departments of knowing, or whether she is a knower, Shutte quotes Lonergan:

Am I a knower, the answer, yes, is coherent, for if I am a knower, I can know that fact. But the answer, no, is incoherent, for if I am not a knower, how could the question be raised and answered by me? No less the hedging answer, I do not know, is incoherent. For if I know that I do not know, then I am a knower; and if I do not know that I do not know, then I should not answer.

Am I a knower? If I am not, then I know nothing. My only course is silence. My only course is not the excused and explained silence of the sceptic, but the complete silence of the animal that offers neither excuse nor explanation for its complacent absorption in merely sensitive routines. For if I know nothing, I do not have excuses for not knowing. If I know nothing, then I cannot know the explanation of my ignorance (Lonergan, 1957: 329).

Shutte once again emphasises the sense in which the subject is self-corrective. The subject knows that she knows. She has knowledge of herself as a knower. If she knows about herself, then she has the capacity to know what is right and what is wrong about herself. How does she do that? She does it through the basic pattern of

operations. It is this knowledge of the self that leads to the knowledge of everything else or to the knowledge of reality in all spheres.

Up to this point, Shutte has helped us to shed light on the transcendental method, in its entirety. That is of its dynamism and self-assembling, of its progression from sense data to judgement and how it helps to solve the problem of fragmenting philosophy as it happened in empiricism and rationalism, for example.

Patrick Giddy switches our attention from Shutte's ideas on the subject as self-assembling and self-accounting to his indeterminism. He does this in his paper, "The African University and the Social Science: The Contribution of Lonergan's Epistemological Theory" (1996). We proceed with our analysis, assisted by Giddy's ideas.

#### ***3.4.2 Indeterminism of the Subject-in-Act: Giddy***

Giddy (1996), in his discussion on Lonergan's view of knowledge, categorises Lonergan as an integrative philosopher. He points out that Lonergan's view of knowing does not presuppose the dualism of subject and object but entails a heightening of the presence to self. This position is in lieu of the "standard empiricist", whose view of knowing posits a notion of scientific objectivity that is achieved through the elimination of subjective elements. He points out the lopsidedness of the empiricist and rationalist stand and instead exalts Lonergan's approach of self-appropriation. He discusses the precepts of self-appropriation, that is being attentive to sense data, being reasonable and being rational in manner that projects Lonergan's approach as being integrative and therefore foundational to knowledge. He is of the view that following Lonergan's approach helps to refute any form of determinism. This is because self-appropriation implies self-transcendence. At this level, one is entirely responsible for what one does.

Giddy concentrates on the subject as being self-transcendent. He emphasises the fact that the subject has, within herself, the ability to check whatever she does. One can question one's activities and judge their truth. Giddy's discussion tends to take a moral tone, but it is relevant to our thesis in the sense that it presents the subject as transcendental, in our case, foundational to knowledge. So we discuss Giddy's paper under the notion of the indeterminism of the subject in its activities.

First of all we ask the question whether the subject is free in her operations, and, if so, to what extent? We ask this question because if the subject is not free, then it will be difficult for her to be transcendental. Giddy explains:

Under the exigency of rationality one stands back and interrogates one's own ideas. Similarly as responsible, one is able to consider the moral quality of one's commitments, to consent to or withhold consent from any particular desire according to one's judgement of its worth to guide one's course of action. The implications of this are that any form of determinism is refuted (Giddy, 1996:145).

What this means is that rationality is subject-based. It is an endowment in which the operation of interrogation is rooted. In addition to checking and cross-checking sense data, it also analyses and again checks and cross-checks the operations at higher levels, that is at the levels of judgement and responsibility. One is capable of standing back and interrogating one's ideas. This is self-accounting in its strict sense. We accept that the ideas may not be immanent in the individual subject. They may be rooted in the history of one's culture, or they may be imported, or a combination of the imported and those from one's culture or one's immanent ideas. Whatever the case may be, the subject has that rational endowment to interrogate them. The onus is on her, personally, depending on the evidence available, or lack of it, to accept the ideas wholly, to accept them after amending them or to reject them completely. Again, using one's endowment of rationality, the subject is in an unrestricted position of considering the moral quality of one's commitments. The subject will personally choose to consent or not to consent or to withhold the urges from her desires. The choice is entirely her own. She may choose to withhold action as she engages the levels of intelligence and reasonableness, in order to absorb fully the consequences of her action to herself and to all those who may be affected by her actions. The choice, once again, is entirely her own. Giddy is refuting any form of determinism. This state of affairs leaves the subject fully self-accounting for whatever she does or says. If mistakes arise in the process, the remedy is to resort to the second level of interiority and that is engaging intelligence in the operation of interrogation. After sufficient examination and cross-examination, the anomaly is put right.

In refuting any form of determinism, Giddy's point here, which is in consonance with the objective of this thesis, is that the field in which the subject is operating does not matter. He is using the ethical and moral dimensions but these can be taken as a case in point, for instance, in science, law, medicine, or in other practical



enterprises, such as business. There is no field, as long as one is a human being, where one may not interrogate not only one's ideas but also those of his close associates, business partners and even those at the receiving end of the consequences of one's actions. One has, no matter with what transactions one is engaged in, to consider the moral quality of one's commitments. Once again we would like to reiterate the point being made and that is using the precepts of transcendental method of being sensible, being intelligent, being reasonable, and being responsible. There is no way the subject can create excuses for unacceptable behaviour or transactions. This is because she can oscillate forwards and backwards from sense to responsibility. Similarly she cannot use the excuse of being determined, because she has the capacity and ability to interrogate herself and effect a correction. So Giddy's point, of self-accounting by the subject and refuting any form of determinism that would have led the subject to creating excuses under the guise of being determined, helps to promote the subject further as truly transcendental.

Another idea which emerges out of Giddy's submissions is that a human being can be understood through various sciences, with each contributing towards the understanding of a human being at different levels. These are chemical, biological and psychological, to mention a few. Knowledge from all these areas can all be integrated into an understanding of the self and therefore of self-determining. We are used to conceptions or philosophies where a person is either a body of senses, as purported by empiricism, or just a mind, as purported by rationalism, or a dualism of body and mind, as purported by subjective idealism. If we make the mistake of accepting such descriptions, then we are faced with the problem of locating the correct component of man in which to establish a foundation. Attempting to do this would be to waste time, as the history of philosophy reveals, and as we have clearly demonstrated in our discussions concerning the efforts of the empiricists, rationalists and subjective idealists and many other past and contemporary philosophers.

From Giddy's exposition, a human being is much more than a mere collection of senses or a mere mind or a combination of senses and mind. A human being is an integrated set of operations or a subject-in-act, aware and conscious of her actions. Giddy still raises questions such as,

How does the intellect affect a change in the will? How do those two faculties interact? And isn't the notion of the will arbitrarily choosing between good and evil, implausible? (1996: 149).

These questions may carry an ethical tone but they help to throw light on our thesis, in the sense that they portray the composition of the subject before the philosophies of the modern period. (For purposes of this discussion, we are using the term, subject, person, human being and human person synonymously.)

In the period of modern science, that is before Lonergan, the subject was regarded as a body, a mind, or a combination of both; or else he was regarded, as Giddy puts it,

...the human will operating autonomously of the deterministic laws of physical nature, and the intellect – supposed to be unaffected by those laws – guiding the will (1996: 149).

What we are learning from these expositions is that before we know what the subject is it is difficult to know what the subject is capable of knowing. If we pretend to understand and know, then our doing so will remain either partial or grossly impoverished. What does this mean? We may know the subject's knowing only from the empirical level, as in the case of the empiricists, or we may know the subject's knowing from the rational level, as rationalists do, or we may know the subject's knowing from the subjective idealism level, as Kantians do, or else we may be trapped in the Hegelian triadic circle. None of these approaches will adequately lead us to what the subject is and therefore to what he can know.

Giddy brings in a new dimension which goes beyond the traditional description of a human person of either empirical, rational, or both empirical and rational. He tells us that in order for the human person to reach the level of self determining – in Lonergan's sense – she must first of all be understood and understand herself in terms of a multiplicity of sciences such as chemical, biological and psychological. The subject is an integration of all these aspects.

What makes the subject transcendental is that she has the capacity to know herself in terms of all these components and, above all, she is aware and conscious of this fact. In the modern philosophy the focus on knowing was fragmented. There was the subject here and the object over there. The subject looked at the object over there and knew what it was.

Fortunately, with the onset of Lonergan's method, all the questions about the nature of a person, what a person can know and what she cannot know and the means by which she can know, are all answered in the precepts of the transcendental method of the senses, intelligence, reasonableness and responsibility. Through self-appropriation, the subject is enabled to know not only herself but to know that she is a knower. This fact helps to solve the epistemological problems of the relationship between the knower and the knowable.

The message that Giddy is giving us is that the subject is not a vacuum, to be filled in the empirical sense. She is not only a mind to function on forms and ideas, or any fragment, but a being that can relate herself to herself. In this way, as he puts it, the subject is in a position

...to integrate the various influences, on the various levels – physical, biological, economic – codetermining one's condition (1996: 151).

In other words, the subject can relate to herself and to everything else. She is conscious and aware of this and therefore can correct herself or any other anomaly where it surfaces. The choice is ours; either we accept transcendental method as the only salvation to our problems of understanding and knowing all reality, or else we risk remaining at the sense level, as empiricists do, or at the mind level, as rationalists do, or remain trapped in the dualism of body and mind, as Kantians do, or continue to circulate in the triadic circle, as Hegelians do. Once again, the only option is the transcendental method, which is a method for all methods. Let us therefore, as a matter of necessity, embrace the transcendental method in its entirety. We have portrayed our views regarding the foundation for knowing assisted by ideas from commentators. Now let us look at the notion of belief – in Lonergan's sense – and see how it fits in with the transcendental method. We are doing this because in Chapters Four and Five we will be looking at traditions and how the transcendental method fits in.

### **3.5 Knowledge, Belief and Science: Some Implications of Lonergan's Method**

In this section we shall mainly follow Cronin's (1999) *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan's Cognitive Theory and Epistemology* and Lonergan (1975).

#### ***3.5.1 Belief and Transcendental Method***

The question that we have to ask ourselves at this juncture is the extent to which transcendental method relates to the existing fund of knowledge. This question emerges at the level of judgement. It is clear that if one is to avoid being duped, one is to establish the truth of data through intelligence. In the picture, we have a person who has reached the level of self-appropriation. This person will not take responsibility or accept knowledge as true unless she has gone through all the levels of knowing, that is the levels of sense, intelligence and reasonableness. Perhaps a question that may appear worrying at the moment is that does what is being suggested not reduce the whole method to personal experience? If that becomes the case, then knowledge is reduced to what a person has personally experienced, subjected to his intelligence and personally judged as true. If that were to be the case, then knowledge would become private knowledge. If a person passes away his knowledge goes with him.

But Lonergan allays our fears on this matter by introducing the notion of belief. He reminds us that most of the judgements we hold to be true are not immanently generated knowledge. It is not knowledge that we acquire after personally subjecting it to the precepts of the transcendental method. We find ourselves sharing knowledge in history, geography and economics and in the empirical sciences, too. We continue to accept this knowledge not because we have personally experienced the grounds of our judgements, but because it has been passed to us by distinguished specialists such as our teachers, authors, editors, publishers, photographers, reporters and all the trappings of scholarship.

Cronin observes that the term belief has mistakenly been associated with religion and theology. Again, this is unfortunate, because the term belief is a neutral term which can be attributed to both religion and the empirical sciences. He makes a correction that the term belief is simply part of the human collaboration in the enterprise of knowing, which is applicable to all fields. In the growth and



development of knowledge, the notion of specialisation has emerged. Advancement of knowledge has made long strides in the fields of discovery and invention. In stock, we have a wealth of knowledge in all disciplines, which include those in the empirical and social sciences, in the humanities and in the arts and also in philosophy. Consequently, there would be no need to repeat all the research and experiments conducted by distinguished specialists in order to ascertain the truth of this knowledge. We have to believe these specialists and experts. In this context, belief is being used in the neutral sense and may be equally applicable to all disciplines.

For the purposes of this thesis the term belief is being used in a technical sense and not loosely, as people often utter an expression such as “I believe that is true.” Belief in our sense is being based on our trust of the specialist’s knowledge which is not necessarily uncritical and not based on imagination alone, as we discuss it below.

With those clarifications in mind, let us see how belief fits in with the transcendental method. We begin with a question. In order to accept belief as a legitimate activity, what is it that should be our guide? Cronin advises us to rely on judgement of value to assess the dangers we are leaving ourselves open to and also to have a firm grasp of the value of accepting belief as a reasonable part of human progress. We only need to take a glimpse at the current state of knowledge that has been accumulated in the sciences and all other spheres of learning. This includes research results, books, documents, tables, and knowledge acquired from our traditions. The wealth of information is simply overwhelming. If, at this moment, we were to repeat all the experiments and observations, we would not even reach the state of knowledge of the nineteenth century. That notwithstanding, there is now a prevalence of interdisciplinary dependence, where different specialisations require instruments invented and developed in other areas of specialisation. For example, human and veterinary medicine continue to depend on electronics and computer technology developed in physics. Do we have to check these instruments personally in order to ascertain whether these instruments were correctly made? If not, then what is the alternative; do we choose primitive ignorance or do we opt for belief and accept it as a legitimate process that enormously facilitates learning.

Belief is a kind of shortcut to learning. We do not have to repeat complicated calculations, which might even require expensive equipment. We might have to accept the results as true on the basis of our belief of the reports. We have to believe

that the instruments we are using are made to the correct specifications. Cronin wonders whether it would be possible and feasible to begin checking all the slide rules, barometers, thermometers, tables of logarithms, computer programmes, calibrated scales and all the measuring instruments currently in use. We have no choice but to believe that they are accurate, because it is distinguished specialists who made them.

On similar lines we have to believe our lecturers and professors on the basis of their academic excellence and professional integrity. We have also to believe in our history. As Cronin points out, our own immanently generated knowledge is limited to our short lifespan. We have to trust the whole series of human sources that have accumulated what really happened. In the archives of our history, we have reports, eyewitnesses, state documents, files in government offices, the annals of armies, diaries of individuals; some of which are compiled by distinguished historians across the ages. We have to believe in these. Otherwise, Cronin reminds us for example, that our immanently generated knowledge of geography is limited to what we have seen and heard; probably we have travelled a little or not at all. We have to depend on honest publications, say from meteorologists on weather, maps on physical features and locations, photographs on flora and fauna and oral communications from specialists and experts in their respective fields. In this respect, reasonable belief becomes the alternative to ignorance. Belief is not blind acceptance, but simply trust in the distinguished experts and specialists. It would be unreasonable and unnecessary to attempt to check each and every aspect of knowledge personally, in order to accept it as true. Cronin assures us that belief can be quite certain.

There still, however, emerges a question of the relationship between judgement, in Lonergan's sense, and belief. Is it not possible that judgement, which has to undergo the rigorous norms or precepts of transcendental method, is certain, while belief, which is not subjected to this scrutiny and discipline of transcendental method, however much we may try to defend it, still remains dubious? Again Cronin allays our fears. As he says,

... we do not distinguish judgement and beliefs on the basis that judgements are certain and beliefs are slightly dubious. We distinguish them on the basis of how we come to grasp the true as true. In the case of judgement we rely on the grasp of the sufficiency of evidence for the conclusion; for the belief we rely on trustworthiness of the source to communicate truthfully. But

immanently generated knowledge as in the empirical sciences may only reach a degree of probability, whereas a belief can be quite certain (Cronin, 1999: 211).

So, in this respect, belief and judgement are both legitimate, each in its own context. Here we see a situation where belief may command certainty, compared to the revelations of the empirical sciences. This realisation casts a shadow of doubt on the certainty of the empirical sciences and puts their status as models for other methods in a questionable light.

From this account we see that belief - in Lonergan's sense - would not be outlandish in the context of transcendental method. In matters of truth or reality, however, a genuine and authentic, self-appropriated subject cannot afford to take chances. Much as there can be mistaken judgments, there can also be mistaken beliefs. We must thus always stick to the precepts of transcendental method. Even in belief, as in judgement or any other aspect of knowing, there is always the possibility of being duped. Cronin warns us to be on our guard all the time. The question is how we go about it, as far as belief is concerned. He suggests three ways: the first one is to look at the source of information. We should check the trustworthiness of the source. If it is a person, we check his honesty, we try to establish whether it would be in his interest to tell lies or slant the truth. We may also look for evidence of bias, prejudice, self-interest and self-glorification. Our overall objective would be to establish the neutrality of the source, or to use an observer who is non-involved or someone who has nothing to gain personally. We have also to look for competence. For instance, a sick person should believe, and have faith in a medical doctor and not a veterinarian.

The second way is to look at communication. It is obvious that sometimes there are communication gaps between the source and the target or the believer. Problems could emanate from translations, that is the translation may misleadingly focus more, for example, on the interpretation of the text itself or on the message, or sometimes on the whims and fancies of the interpreter. In between the original source and the believer there might be an assortment of intermediaries, such as publishers, editors and reporters. All these cause an ever-increasing gap between the source and the believer: the wider the gap the more the wandering from the original truth or

reality. So a self-appropriated subject has to establish the authenticity of the communication process.

Finally, we have to consider the message itself. We have to consider its credibility and reasonableness and see whether it fits not the context of what we already know. In this case, we have to summon the weight of our education, which should have prepared us, as Cronin says, to build up a knowledge of what is possible or what is probable, what does fit in and what does not. Where we anticipate doubt we check or, if necessary, conduct the experiment ourselves. Cronin reminds us that, in life, situations are as many as the conditions leading to them and the contexts are as many as the circumstances. He advises us to stick to Lonergan's slogan of ever being attentive, intelligent and reasonable. A self-appropriated subject should not be easily gulled or be too credible. That said, although transcendental method impresses on us to stick to the prescribed precepts of being attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible, we cannot altogether avoid believing. On the other hand Cronin points out that it may be more reasonable to believe than to want to see all the evidence for ourselves, especially that from trusted sources, such as the distinguished specialists such as professors, or authors of international standing.

Cronin sums up the notion of belief:

Belief requires a value judgement...that this particular person is worth believing in this specific instance. Belief involves an assent, a decision, a willingness to collaborate in the process of human knowing and a willingness to accept this person's word for his truth. Belief differs from judgement in motive and origin. Judgement is motivated by the strength of the evidence, but belief is motivated by the desire to collaborate reasonably in the search for knowledge. The origin of judgement is rational necessity; the origin of belief is a free and responsible decision to believe (1999: 213).

Belief, however, still falls within the realms of transcendental method. We have seen that reasonable believing is unavoidable, but where we anticipate or detect anomalies we can always switch back to transcendental method, that is to subject the suspicious data to intelligence. We add that belief brings in tradition and co-operation in knowledge, and so avoids the idea that it is the isolated individual who founds knowledge. Having seen the value of belief in the process of acquiring knowledge, coupled with the foundation in the form of the subject-in-act, who is not only foundational to all knowing and intends all reality but to all activity as well, still we ask ourselves the question, in what sense is the basic pattern of operations



foundational? To answer this question, Lonergan picks on the scientific approach or method as an example and juxtaposes it with the basic set of operations. It is to that aspect that we now turn our attention. It is also of importance for our debate around Winch in the next chapter.

### ***3.5.2 The Scientific Approach***

In order to show conclusively the transcendence of the basic pattern of operations over and above any other method, we examine it in relation to the scientific method. Lonergan points out that the scientific method is characterised by the tendency of recurrence. It presupposes inquiry, observation and description. All these, Lonergan points out, recur. The scientific approach praises discovery and it is known that discoveries recur. Discoveries are formulated in hypotheses. Hypotheses also recur. Implications deduced from hypotheses recur. Experiments are devised and performed to check the implications of these hypotheses against observable facts. Processes of experimentation also recur.

We can see that what is prominent in these operations is the chain link of relatedness, that is mere experience is transformed by inquiry into the scrutiny of observation. In turn, description pins down what is observed. Inevitably, problems do arise due to contrasting descriptions. As we have seen, discoveries are expressed in hypotheses, then implications are deduced from hypotheses and these, in turn, suggest the performance of experiments. We see that there is relatedness among the many operations, which aggregate into a pattern which defines the right way of how scientific investigations are conducted.

What is apparently clear is that what emerges out of these investigations is that the results are both cumulative and progressive. This is due to the fact that the process of experimentation yields new data. Experiments also yield new observations and new descriptions, which may or may not lead to the confirmation of the hypotheses that are being tested. The hypotheses may be confirmed or not. Where they are confirmed the process is deemed to be correct and where they are not confirmed the hypothesis may be modified, a trend which may lead to new discoveries, deductions and even new experiments altogether.

Lonergan observes that the wheel of the scientific method does not only turn but rolls along. What is discovered as new is added to the old. The formulated new hypotheses and theories do not only express new insights, but also bring all that was valid in the old to the fore. This trend gives the scientific method a cumulative characteristic. It creates an onward urge to pursue the conviction that the goal of the complete explanation of all phenomena is now closer than it was before. This account seems to constitute the scientific method, which is characteristic of natural sciences. It culminates in what Lonergan calls

... a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results (Lonergan, 1975: 5).

This account seems to cover the field of natural sciences sufficiently. It raises the question, however, of whether it could be prescribed as a model to be transposed to all fields of knowledge and whether it would lead to an understanding which intends reality in all departments of knowing.

### ***3.5.3 Observations on the Scientific Method***

First of all, the scientific method is generally regarded as a set of rules. This means that if one follows them meticulously they would yield the desired or expected results. However, we can say that the same would be true even if one followed them blindly. A good example may be cited in a car assembly. It is the same result all the time. One wonders, however, about what happens when not only cumulative but also progressive results are required. What happens when there is need for new, sustained discoveries? Such a case requires analysis and synthesis of the old and the new valid insights. But Lonergan observes, "... neither discovery nor synthesis is at the beck and call of any set of rules" (1975: 6). In this particular respect the scientific method seems to lack comprehensiveness. At this juncture Lonergan finds it opportune to compare the scientific method with the basic pattern of operations or the subject-based method. He points out that the basic pattern of operations is not a set of rules but a normative pattern of operations from which rules may be drawn or derived. He indicates that the operations envisaged are not limited to strictly logical operations. That is to operations on propositions, terms and relations. The subject-based operations include describing, identifying problems, formulating hypotheses and deducing implications. It also includes inquiry, observation, discovery, experiment,

synthesis and verification. So even at the preliminary level the subject-based method is relatively more comprehensive than the scientific method, in the sense that it is not limited to specific rules, as the scientific method would demand.

Lonergan notes that modern science derives its distinctive character from grouping together the logical and the non-logical operations, in the sense that the logical tends to consolidate what has been achieved, while the non-logical keeps what has been achieved open for further advancement. According to Lonergan,

...the conjunction of the two results in an open, on going, progressive and cumulative process. This progress contrasts sharply not only with the static fixity that resulted from Aristotle's concentration on the necessary and the immutable but also with Hegel's dialectic which is a movement enclosed within a complete system (1975: 6).

So, in a way, the scientific method seems to be a step ahead of the Aristotelian "static fixity", Hegel's "enclosure within a complete system" and Kuhn's idea of "normal science".

Our concern in this thesis has been to establish a method that would lead us to the understanding and knowing of all departments of reality. So far we have seen that the method of science succeeds in *starting* the journey towards this goal, but it does not complete it. It leads us from common sense knowledge, where "looking is understanding", to the theoretical level, where intelligibility is rooted in theory and hypothesis.

This journey to knowledge in all aspects of knowing is, however, suddenly cut short, because it does not succinctly proceed to the philosophical level of judgement and responsibility. Although this method does not necessarily lead us to all knowledge, it is comparatively a step ahead of Aristotle's concentration on the necessary and immutable, which Lonergan describes as fixed and static, and that of Hegel's dialectics, which he describes as a movement enclosed within a complete system. It is a step ahead in a sense that it leaves the gates open for cumulative and progressive results. It also leaves room for a sustained succession of discoveries. Lonergan makes observations in which he shows us that the scientific method can start us on the journey towards knowing, but it does not conclude this journey as adequately as transcendental method does.

### 3.6 Conclusion

We end this chapter with a message from Lonergan:

For it is a paradox of man that what he is by nature is so much less than what he becomes; and it is the tragedy of man that the truth, which portrays him as actually he is, can descend like an iron curtain to frustrate what he might be (Lonergan, "Introduction to *Insight*," in Morelli and Morelli 1997: 33-34).

The lesson which we glean from this message is that too much time has been wasted while looking in the wrong directions and searching in the wrong places. The Ionians searched for a foundation in cosmology, to the exclusion of the subject. Thereafter the drama that ensued was to search for a foundation in the fragments carved by different philosophers in different fields. These fragments lacked a chain to link them together. Even where the chain appears to have been present it was either incomprehensive or a non-progressive trap, like that of Descartes, Kant and Hegel.

Empiricists searched for a foundation in sense data, rationalists searched for a foundation in the mind. Some even searched for a foundation in principles and rules, as in the case of Wittgenstein. What we can say is that because we have focused and searched in the wrong directions we have, at the lower level, missed what the subject really is; and at the upper level, missed what he can become. As Lonergan describes it, this is indeed tragic. The more we continue to search in the wrong directions, the further we shall move away from what the subject really is. For instance, if you asked a biologist what the subject is, it is likely that he will describe him as a biological being; a sociologist will describe him as a social being, a psychologist will describe him in terms of behaviour; a theologian will describe him in terms of soul or spirit.

These provide some of the examples of looking in the wrong directions. What we should know is that the subject is not only any one of these divisions, but an integration of all of them, and much more, each performing a specific function as an operation. Lonergan gives the progression of the subject's self transcendence. This can only be done through self-appropriation. For clarity's sake we shall not paraphrase this progression, but give it in its original form. Lonergan tells us that the road to self-transcendence is realised in stages.

The first is the emergence, of consciousness in the fragmentary form of a dream, where human substance yields place to the human subject. The second is waking when our senses and feelings come to life, where our memory recalls pleasure and our imagination anticipates fears, but our vitality



envisages courses of action, the third is enquiry which enables us to move out of the mere habitat of an animal and into our human world of relatives, friends, acquaintances, associates, projects, accomplishments, ambitions, fears. The fourth is the discovery of the truth, which is not idle repetition of a "good look" but the grasp in the manifold of data of the sufficiency of evidence for our affirmation or negation. The fifth is the successive negotiation of the stages of morality and/or identity till we reach the point where we discover for ourselves what we have to make of ourselves, where we decisively meet the challenge of that discovery, where we set ourselves apart from the drifters. For drifters have not yet found themselves. They have not yet found their own deed and are content to do what every one else is doing. They have not yet found a will of their own, and so they are content to choose what everyone else is choosing. They have not yet developed minds of their own, and so they are content to say and think what everyone else is thinking and saying. And everyone else, it happens, can be doing and choosing and thinking and saying what others are doing and choosing and thinking and saying (Lonergan, "A Post-Hegelian Philosophy of Religion" (1980) in Morelli and Morelli, 1997: 596-597).

This long quote invites us to focus in the right direction and search for a foundation in the right place. It reflects the fact that self-appropriation is an integrated movement encompassing the subject and the intended objects, or the understanding and knowing of the self and everything else; and above all the involvement of awareness and the consciousness of the knower in the process of knowing. In short, it demonstrates how the entire enterprise of self-appropriation is started and accomplished. We are shown that operations flow qualitatively from the lower levels of higher animals to the upper levels of human responsibility. We are shown that we have to move consciously from sense data, of taking a good look, to the grasping of data, through sufficiency of evidence, and later make judgements of affirmation or negation after reasonableness. Above all, it is incumbent on us to engage fully our basic pattern of operations.

In Chapter Three we have responded to Wittgenstein's problem of looking for a foundation in non-functional subject-less formal logic. This failed to work and led him to yet another venture of following a rule, in the language games. This venture, we argued, also fails, because the subject becomes simply a social being, conforming to rules.

This chapter succeeds in establishing a foundation in terms of the subject-in-act or the basic pattern of operations, which we have referred to as transcendental method. We have seen that transcendental method is a method for all methods and therefore it has all it needs to enable us reach reality in all possible spheres. This is so because it functions on the precepts of being attentive, intelligent, reasonable and

responsible. We have also seen that there is no discipline or field of inquiry which escapes this progression. Transcendental method is a method which is self-corrective; one cannot criticise it without criticising oneself in the process. Furthermore, we can say that it is a method which comes as salvation to philosophy, by rescuing it from some philosophers who fragment it and then proceed and try to find a foundation in these fragments.

Transcendental method is the only method which can restore the identity and dignity of philosophy in making it play its befitting traditional role, which is to be foundational to all learning. We end this chapter by reiterating that in Chapter Two Wittgenstein provokes us into action when he attempts to establish a foundation in the subject-less formal logic. We disagree with him in favour of Lonergan, who establishes a foundation in the subject. As we have demonstrated in Chapter Three, the basic pattern of operations turns out to be the method for all methods, in short, a foundation to knowing. In Chapter Four, Winch suggests the inter-cultural approach, in which one culture can learn from another culture. Good as he sounds, he does not follow up this idea to its logical conclusion. He does not tell us how this can be accomplished. For example, how can someone who is deeply biased towards the scientific approach as the only correct method learn from someone who thinks that he can get to reality through the oracular approach and *vice versa*? A solution to this problem is suggested in Chapter Five, where Barden emerges with the notion of the actualisation of the subject-in-act. In that chapter, Barden makes Lonergan's method of the subject-in-act functional. He does this by applying it to traditions, contexts and systems. He helps us to put the ideas of Lonergan into practice. He helps us to show practically that the subject-in-act is the only method that can truly lead us to the knowing and the understanding of reality. It is to Winch's refutation of the scientific method as a model for other methods that we now turn, in Chapter Four.



# CHAPTER FOUR

## INTER-CULTURAL LEARNING: SCIENTIFIC AND NON-SCIENTIFIC CULTURES

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter we shall mainly follow Winch's "Understanding a Primitive Society," Chapter Two of his *Ethics and Society* (1972), in which we encounter Winch's ideas on inter-cultural learning. Inter-cultural learning forms the main theme of our discussion in Chapter Four.

In Chapter Two we saw how Wittgenstein, in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, attempted to make formal logic basic or foundational to the understanding and knowing of reality in all departments. He realised that this could not work. We saw him shifting his centre of gravity from formal logic to following a rule in the language-games. Here we argued that reality in all spheres could not be understood on the paradigm of isolated language-games. The subject was needed to link up these games and accord them integrated meaning in relation to the societies in which they were operating. In Chapter Three Cronin (1999), following Lonergan (1990), carries us through different episodes and philosophers, attempting to establish a foundation or what is basic to all knowing. He takes us through the ancient period to contemporary philosophers like Wittgenstein. Still, he argues, the problem of what is foundational to reality in all its entirety remains unsolved and he points us to Lonergan, who provides the subject as a foundation that would lead to the intelligibility of knowledge or reality in its totality. This task will be picked up by Barden (1990) in Chapter Five, who in turn, using the ideas of Lonergan (discussed in Chapter Three), helps us to solve our problem of establishing a foundation to the intelligibility of knowledge or reality in its completeness.

In this chapter we discuss Winch (1992), who attempts to solve the problem of intelligibility in two cultures. One of the cultures, the science culture, uses theory to gain intelligibility. The second culture, the non-science one, uses common sense knowledge to gain intelligibility. The science culture sets the scientific approach as standard for gaining intelligibility in all cultures. Peter Winch exposes the problems in



this scenario. He uses the ideas of Wittgenstein, as reflected in Chapter Two, to illustrate the problems therein. We are using Winch in this chapter because he helps us to show that attempting to gain intelligibility - in our case reality in its completeness - without a foundation does not work. In this section, we examine how Winch presents his case.

## **4.2 Rationality Relative to Culture**

### ***4.2.1 Evans-Pritchard's Problem of Understanding a Primitive Culture: Winch***

Winch begins by pointing out what is likely to happen when a social anthropologist – of European origin – carries out a study among a primitive people such as the African Azande. He points out that these people may be holding some beliefs which cannot possibly be shared by the Europeans. The Azande engage in practices which are peculiarly difficult for the European to comprehend. For instance, they hold a belief that some of their members are witches who are capable of exercising a malevolent occult influence on the lives of their fellows. They, in order to safeguard themselves, engage in rites to counteract witchcraft. They also consult oracles to reveal witches and at the same time protect themselves from harm by using magic medicines.

### ***4.2.2 Likely Attitude of the European Anthropologist Studying a Primitive Culture: Winch's View***

An anthropologist, Evans-Pritchard for example, wishing to study the beliefs and practices of a primitive society like the Azande, may first of all become interested in making these beliefs and practices intelligible to himself and the readership from his cultural background. (By primitive, we do not in anyway mean inferior. We mean a society, from whatever part of the world, whose beliefs and practices are still characterised by compactness that is, lack of clear definitions of these beliefs and practices and to some extent lack of clear differentiation). Such an anthropologist would face the problem of presenting an account of such beliefs and practices in a manner that would satisfy the criteria of rationality demanded by the culture to which he and his readership belong.

The problem here is that his culture is already deeply influenced and therefore affected by the achievements and methods of science. To such a culture, belief in magic and the practice of oracular consultations are almost a paradigm of the irrational. Consequently, the anthropologist is likely to adopt a biased position that the Azande belief in the influence of witchcraft, the efficacy of magic medicines and the role of the oracles in revealing what is going to happen, are mistaken or illusory. This is so because the scientific methods of investigations show conclusively that there are no relationship of cause and effect, as may be implied in these beliefs and practices. The task of the anthropologist would be to show how such a system of mistaken beliefs and inefficacious practices would maintain itself in the face of objections that seem so obvious in the face of European culture.

Winch helps us to see that, although Evans-Pritchard tries to project the situation as it is among the Azande, he himself suffers from an attitudinal problem. Winch points out that in Evans-Pritchard's book *Witchcraft, Oracle and Magic Among the Azande* (1937), he makes several remarks such as,

... "obviously there are no witches" and he writes of the difficulty he found... with the Azande, in shaking off the "unreason" on which Zande life is based and return to a clear view of how things really are (Winch, 1972: 9).

Evans-Pritchard's attitude is partly a consequence of the fact that he comes from a scientific culture. That difficulty notwithstanding, Evans-Pritchard, in his expositions, expresses it clearly that we are all born in a certain culture. That culture has its own beliefs and practices. Members of each culture simply inherit these beliefs and practices so it would not be appropriate to regard one culture as superior and the other as inferior in intelligence or one culture as rational and the other as irrational. It would also be inappropriate to say that one culture thinks more logically than the other.

#### ***4.2.3 Logic Equally Present Among the European and the Azande Approaches***

Evans-Pritchard clearly states that in as much as we cannot say of one institution, with its beliefs and practices, that it is more rational than the other, neither can we talk of one institution as being more logical than the other; although *de facto* the European institution is scientific. Winch shows Evans-Pritchard illustrating this fact:

Scientific notions are those which are in accord with objective reality, both with regard to the validity of the premises and the inferences drawn from their propositions.... Logical notions are those in which according to the rules of thought inferences would be true were the premises true, the truth of the premises being irrelevant.... A pot has broken during firing. This is probably due to grit. Let us examine the pot and see whether this is the cause. That is logical and scientific thought. Sickness is due to witchcraft. A man is sick. Let us consult the oracle to discover who is the witch responsible. That is logical and unscientific thought (Pritchard, in Winch, 1972: 10 – 11).

What is being demonstrated here is the fact that what is not scientific is not necessarily illogical. A similar operation takes place in both the scientific and the unscientific cases. Something has gone wrong. In the scientific, a pot breaks; in the unscientific a man falls sick. There is a problem which necessitates action in both cases. The respective problem raises the question of who or what is responsible. In the scientific it is probably grit and in the pre-scientific it is probably a witch. In each situation an investigative procedure is conducted. In the scientific case the pot is examined; in the pre-scientific the oracles are consulted. When it comes to rationality both the Europeans and the Azande are equally rational. However, the problem which emerges between Evans-Pritchard and Winch is that of reality. Winch presents Evans-Pritchard as registering the fact that a member of the scientific culture has a different conception of reality compared to the Azande believer in magic. Evans-Pritchard proceeds to make this difference clearer. He infers that it is the scientific conception that agrees with reality and the magic conception does not.

Winch thinks that Evans-Pritchard is not only saying that the scientific European and the non-scientific Azande have different conceptions of reality, but says that in the final analysis it is the scientific conception which agrees with what reality actually is, whereas the magical conception does not.

#### ***4.2.4 Reality Determined by Language Use Within the Context of a Particular Culture***

Winch finds the above conviction taunting and attributes this problem to the expression “agreement with reality”, which he describes as “unwieldy and misleading...” (1972: 11). He points out that we should not lose sight of the fact that a person’s beliefs and ideas must be checked by reference to some independent reality, of which he makes two related points. He associates these points, like Wittgenstein,

with language use. His first point is that “the check of the independent real is not peculiar to science” (1972: 12). He attributes the bias toward science to the fascination with science that has made it easy for the adoption of the scientific form as a paradigm against which to measure the intellectual respectability of other forms of discourse.

Winch uses the idea of God to put across the first point. He says

God’s reality is certainly independent of what any man may care to think, but what that reality amounts to can only be seen from the religious tradition in which the concept of God is used, and this use is very unlike the use of scientific concepts, say of theoretical entities (1972: 12).

In this quotation Winch is exemplifying the first point, that the conception of God’s reality has its place within the religious use of language or discourse, much as the practice of witchcraft is in the primitive discourse.

Winch’s second point, that he relates to language is the following:

Reality is not what gives language sense. What is real and what is not real shows itself in the sense that language has. Further, the distinction between the real and the unreal and the concept of agreement with reality themselves belong to our language (1972: 12).

He points out that certain concepts may be missing in a language. For instance, it is possible to imagine a language without the concept “wetness”, but it is difficult to find a language of which there is no way of distinguishing between the real and the unreal. Winch’s second point could be interpreted to mean that there is no way in which one can distinguish the real from the unreal without first of all understanding how this distinction operates in the language. Consequently, the intelligibility of concepts depends on examining the actual use they do have in a particular language discourse.

Winch is advancing a criticism on Evans-Pritchard’s attempt to work with the conception of reality without taking it to its actual use in language and instead looking for something against which that use can be appraised. According to Winch, this is not possible, either in scientific discourse or any other. He cites a scientific example to explain this problem. He takes a case in which someone may begin by asking herself whether a particular scientific hypothesis agrees with reality. One proceeds to test it, using experiment and observation. He says that, given the experimental methods and the established use of the theoretical terms entering into the hypothesis,



according to Evans-Pritchard, the question whether it holds or not is settled by reference to something independent of what I, or anybody else, care to think.

Winch observes that the general nature of the data revealed by the experiment can only be specified in terms of criteria built into the methods of the experiment that are employed. In turn, these make sense only to someone who is well versed or conversant with the kind of scientific activity within which they are employed.

If, on the other hand, someone who is illiterate in science is asked to observe and later describe the results of the experiment in an advanced physics laboratory he would not be able to do it in terms relevant to the hypothesis being tested. In such a situation it is impossible to talk of the results of the experiment.

According to Winch, Evans-Pritchard is not particularly right when he implies that what constitutes a true link between the ideas of the Europeans and an independent reality are the criteria applied in the scientific experimentation. This would imply that the characteristics of other systems of thought, such as the magical systems, do not constitute a true link between the Azande ideas and an independent reality. For Winch, however, there can be many ways of making the link, not just the scientific.

#### ***4.2.5 Oracular System in the Context of the Azande Leads to Reality Understandable to Them***

As Winch puts it, the above situation raises the question whether

... a primitive system of magic, like that of the Azande, constitutes a coherent system of discourse like science, in terms of which an intelligible conception of reality and clear ways of deciding what beliefs are and are not in agreement with this reality can be discerned... (1972: 14).

Before dealing with this question, Winch warns that a system of magical beliefs like that of the Azande forms one of the foundations of their whole social life. This reality should be distinguished from that in which someone learns or acquires magical beliefs, practices and rites when that person is from an alien culture.

Evans-Pritchard recognises this fact, and tries to clarify, it as follows:

When a Zande speaks of witchcraft he does not speak of it as we speak of the weird witchcraft of our own history. Witchcraft to him is a common happening and he seldom passes a day without mentioning it.... To us

witchcraft is something which haunted and disgusted our credulous forefathers. But the Azande expects to come across witchcraft anytime of the day or night.... (Evans-Pritchard in Winch, 1972: 15).

What this means, as Winch explains, is that the indigenous Azande is entangled in a web of beliefs and practices with strands which are all dependent on one another. It is a fine mesh from which the Azande may not easily disentangle. This web is the very texture of Azande thought and not an external structure in which he is enclosed. It is the only world he knows. The case is different from that of the European attempting to understand the thought systems, beliefs and practices of the Azande. The European enters from outside when he is already influenced by the thought systems, beliefs and practices of his culture. In this case the temptation to regard his approach – the scientific – as a paradigm with which to gauge other approaches, like that of the Azande, becomes difficult to resist.

After that caution Winch proceeds to answer the question, namely whether it is the case that a primitive system of magic, like that of the Azande, constitutes a coherent universe of discourse like science, in terms of which an intelligible conception of reality and clear ways of deciding what beliefs are and are not in agreement with this reality can be discerned. He attempts to answer this question by examining the institutions described by Evans-Pritchard, in order to determine the extent to which his claims are justified. Winch further explains that witchcraft is the mainstay of the Azande. It is a mystical means by which certain individuals harm others. Witches are detected by oracles. This is a procedure where *benge*, a poisonous drug, is administered to a live fowl. According to this ritual the fowl is supposed to die or survive. The survival or death of the fowl reveals the presence or absence of a suspected witch. This is in consonance with Azande beliefs and practices.

Winch argues that, apart from revealing the presence or absence of witches, "...witchcraft explains why events are harmful to man and not how they happen" (1972: 17); proceeds to explain that the Azande perception of how events occur in daily life is as clear as that of the European. They understand the chain of cause and effect. For instance,

Azande... does not see a witch charge a man but an elephant. He does not see a witch push over the granary but termites gnawing a way its supports. He does not see a psychical flame igniting thatch but an ordinary lighted bundle of straw... (1972: 17).

To make his point clear, Winch likens the importance of witchcraft to that of an engineer in European society, who may be required to build a bridge without the use of mathematical calculations, or a military commander, who may be required to mount a co-ordinated military attack without the use of a clock. Winch presents these analogies to show that the Azande cannot function without the witchcraft facilitation, much as the European cannot function without the facilitation of instruments. However, he brings out a very important point, which may emanate from the European, who may argue that

... the Zande practice of consulting the oracle, unlike my technological and military examples, are completely unintelligible and rest on an obvious illusion (1972: 18).

Winch notes that the Azande do conduct their affairs to their own satisfaction and are at a loss when forced to abandon their practices. In any case, Winch wonders as to whom the Azande practices are alleged to be unintelligible. It is difficult for the European to understand what the Azande are up to when they consult their oracles, much as it is difficult for the Azande to understand how the engineer's motions with his slide rule could have any connection with the stability of his bridge, or how a commander's mechanical clock, rather than the gun, could have any connection with the efficiency of the troops on the battlefield.

Here Winch is emphasising the fact that someone with a scientific background would have a problem of intelligibility when exposed to the mystic approach. Equally, someone whose understanding is embedded in witchcraft would find it difficult to understand the ways of someone with a scientific background.

#### ***4.2.6 The Sense in the Oracular Approach***

At this moment we may need to ask ourselves whether the oracular approach makes sense in itself or not. It seems obvious that belief in witchcraft and oracular practices does not necessarily make sense to Europeans, however satisfied the Azande may be with them and *vice versa*: that is, the scientific approach may not make sense to the Azande, however satisfied the European may be with them.

Here again a question arises and that is, what would be the criterion for ascertaining that something does or does not make sense. Winch's partial answer is

that if a set of beliefs and practices involves a contradiction then it does not make sense.

Looking at the Azande way of consulting the oracles, contradictions are bound to arise and they do arise in two ways. Two oracular pronouncements may contradict each other, or future experience may contradict a self-consistent oracular pronouncement. In the first instance, the oracle may say "yes" and later say "no" to the same question. Obviously this amounts to a contradiction, but this occurrence does not make the whole enterprise of consulting oracles futile. What we have to note is that, over time, the concept of oracle gets built into the whole network of Azande beliefs and practices. In the process, a mechanism for explaining away the contradiction, according to the understanding of the Azande, has been instituted. For instance, it may be said that:

bad *benge* is being used; that the operator of the oracle is ritually unclean; that the oracle is being itself influenced by witchcraft or sorcery; or it may be that the oracle is showing that the question cannot be answered straightforwardly in its present form... (1972: 19-20).

This shows that the Azande, in their own context, which may be difficult for Europeans to understand, have their own ingenious ways of interpreting the behaviour of the fowl, which may be under the influence of *benge*. Although the enterprise may look contradictory to Europeans, it does make sense to the Azande. The case holds in a similar manner in a situation in which a subsequent experience may contradict an earlier oracular pronouncement.

In any case, Winch reminds us that the function of the oracles is to reveal the presence or absence of mystical forces. The ways of revealing this presence or absence do not correspond with the empirical confirmation or refutation of hypotheses in the context of the scientific approach. The mystical approach is different from the scientific experiment-based approach. The Azande do not treat the oracular revelation as confirmation or refutation of hypotheses. Therefore oracular revelations are not treated as hypotheses. It is important to note that oracular practices are the main way through which the Azande decide how they should act. To the Azande this issue is not a matter of intellectual interest that may or may not involve contradictions. This point will be explained later, in Barden.

Another important point which Winch emphasises is that



...if the oracle reveals that the proposed course of action is fraught with mystic dangers from witchcraft or sorcery, that course of action will not be carried out; and then the question of confirmation or refutation just will not arise (1972: 20).

What Winch is saying is that it is not correct to look at the oracular approach, whose purpose is mainly to reveal mystical dangers, in the same way as the scientific approach whose main purpose is to refute or confirm scientific-based hypotheses.

Winch is of the view that Evans-Pritchard would have concurred with him up to this point, but, according to Winch, Evans-Pritchard, judging by his trend and expositions "... would have wished to add: and the European is right and the Azande wrong" (1972: 22). Winch regards this judgement of right and wrong as illegitimate. We will now discuss how he proceeds to demonstrate his views on this illegitimacy.

#### ***4.2.7 Non-Scientific Nature of the Azande Oracular System***

It is clear that the Azande have mechanisms for explaining away oracular contradictions. However, there are situations in which what appear to be obvious contradictions to the Europeans are left where they are and apparently unresolved. According to Winch,

Perhaps this may be the foothold we are looking for, from which we can appraise the "correctness" of the Azande system (1972: 24).

Apart from the role the oracle plays in establishing whether one is a witch or not, there is a more direct way and that is by the post-mortem examination of the suspect's intestines for "witchcraft substances." What this demonstrates mainly to the Europeans is that if a man is proven to be a witch then it follows that the whole of his clan are *ipso facto* witches. This is because the Azande are related to one another through the male line. The Azande see the sense of this argument but do not accept its conclusions. Were they to do so, it would involve the whole notion of witchcraft in a contradiction. This would be the case because the results of a few scattered post-mortem examinations of the intestines would prove that everybody was a witch and a few scattered negative results would prove that nobody was a witch.

This case would be so in the context of the Europeans, but Winch suggests that

... Azande do not perceive the contradiction as we perceive it because they do not have any theoretical interest in the subject and those situations in which they express their interest in witchcraft do not force the problem upon them (1972: 24).

This leads Winch to make a number of observations. First observation: the Azande oracular system involves a contradiction and, moreover, they make no attempt to remove it. This situation appears to provide sufficient grounds for sustaining the case of the "...superior rationality of the Europeans over the Azande thought..." (1972: 25). At this juncture Winch wonders whether Azande opinion on this matter really involves a contradiction, according to the understanding of the Azande.

Second observation: Evans-Pritchard presents the Azande case in such a way that they do not bother to stress their ways of thinking about witchcraft to the point where they would be involved in contradictions.

This situation may also present a case. It may be pointed out that

the irrationality of the Azande in relation to witchcraft shows itself in the fact that they do not press their thought about it to its logical conclusion (1972: 25).

Winch again wonders whether, in the understanding of the Azande, the conclusion that is being forced on them is indeed a logical one, or whether someone trying to impose this conclusion on the Azande is being more rational than they are.

In the final analysis, Winch points out that the scientific approach of the Europeans does not render the Azande approach of witchcraft obsolete. This is because

They have no theoretical interest in the subject. This suggests strongly that the context of our scientific culture is not on the same level as the context in which the beliefs about witchcraft operate. Zande notions of witchcraft do not constitute a theoretical system in terms of which Azande try to gain a quasi-scientific understanding of the world. This in turn suggests that it is the European, obsessed with pressing the Zande thought where it would not naturally go – to a contradiction – who is guilty of misunderstanding, not the Azande. The European is indeed committing a category mistake (1972: 26).

Winch is reminding us that the oracular approach and the scientific approach are operating at two different levels. The second approach involves a theoretical system, while the Azande system does not. The Azande system does not necessarily lead the Azande to the understanding of the world from the scientific point of view. The contexts in which the two systems are operating are entirely and clearly different. The

conclusions drawn in one context are different from the conclusions drawn in the other, so the obsession of the Europeans attempting to press the Azande thought where it would not naturally go is committing a category mistake. Instead, efforts should be made to understand how the Azande system operates.

In addition to this, Winch points out that

...the forms in which rationality expresses itself in the culture of a human society cannot be elucidated simply in terms of the logical coherences of the rules according to which activities are carried out in that society... There comes a point where we are not even in a position to determine what is and what is not coherent in such a context of rules, without raising questions about the point which following these rules has in the society (172: 27).

What Winch is saying here is that the way rationality operates in a certain society can be better elucidated, not only in terms of logical coherence of the rules governing activities in that society, but by understanding the point which following those rules has in that particular society

#### ***4.2.8 The Point in Following a Rule: Consideration of Winch's Comparative Analysis of Wittgenstein and Evans-Pritchard***

So far Winch has led us to the stage where he points out that it is not correct to use one approach such as the scientific approach a paradigm upon which to gauge the intelligibility and the intellectual respectability of other approaches such that of the Azande oracular approach. Attempting to do that would be to commit the same mistake Wittgenstein committed in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Wittgenstein presented formal logic as an ideal language that would reflect all reality in the sense of the *Tractatus*. What Winch is saying is that attempting to make the scientific approach a standard paradigm would not work, much as attempting to make formal logic an ideal language for reflecting reality in all areas could not work.

Winch shows us that Evans-Pritchard is right in recognising the two approaches – the European and the Azande – each in its own right. This is again comparable to Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. Each of the approaches is a game with its own rules. But, according to Winch, where Evans-Pritchard goes wrong is in purporting that it is the European "... concept of reality which is a correct one and the Azande are mistaken" (1972: 23).

In the subsequent discussion, Winch attempts to illuminate his objection by comparing his disagreement with Evans-Pritchard to the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* and the Wittgenstein of *Philosophical Investigations*. Winch points out that in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein sought the general form of propositions. To Wittgenstein, a proposition was an articulated model, consisting of elements standing in a definite relationship to each other. The truth of the proposition had to correspond with the arrangement of elements in reality.

The proposition was capable of saying something because of the identity of structure, of logical form, in the proposition and in reality (1972: 22).

Winch points out that Evans-Pritchard's stand is similar to that of Wittgenstein at this level. This similarity is emphasised by Wittgenstein's expression that

.... The limits of my language mean the limits of my world. Logic fills the world: the limits of the world are also its limits... (Wittgenstein in Winch, 1972: 22).

In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein looked at formal logic as the only correct language through which all reality could be reflected.

Winch reminds us that by the time Wittgenstein composed the *Philosophical Investigation* he had rejected the whole idea that there must be a standard form of proposition. He instead emphasised an infinite number of different uses that a language may have and that these uses need not have anything in common in the sense intended in the *Tractatus*. The similarity between Wittgenstein and Evans-Pritchard, which Winch wants us to see, is that at the time of the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein

... spoke of "language" as if all language was fundamentally the same kind and must have the same kind of "relationship to reality" (1972: 23).

Unlike Wittgenstein, Evans-Pritchard is confronted with two languages: the language of the Europeans and that of the Azande. To use Wittgenstein's language of the *Philosophical Investigations*, each group – the Europeans and the Azande – is playing its own language game and each game has its own rules, which are largely different from those of the other group. The Europeans are playing the scientific language-game while the Azande are playing the oracular mystic language-game. Up to this point Evans-Pritchard's thinking is closer to Wittgenstein's thinking in the *Philosophical Investigations*. But, at the same time, his thinking bends towards the *Tractatus* when



...he wants to go further and say: our concept of reality is the correct one, the Azande are mistaken (1972: 23).

This thinking is similar to Wittgenstein's thinking in the *Tractatus*, that there should be one correct language – formal logic – that would reflect all reality.

The issue which Winch is raising and wants us to see is that of the paradigm with which to establish what is “correct” and what is “mistaken.” Again, in order to establish what is correct and what is mistaken one must first of all understand the concepts in the way they are taken in a particular language in the relevant context. So it is not correct for Evans-Pritchard to say that the European approach must be used to establish what is correct and what is mistaken. But let us examine what the commentators on Winch have to say.

### **4.3 Commentators**

#### ***4.3.1 Meaning in Mystical Thinking: Barden***

Barden (1990) looks at the analysis made by Winch in his book<sup>6</sup> of Evans-Pritchard's study of the witchcraft, oracle and magic among the Azande.<sup>7</sup> The case involves a man who happens to be passing by a barn which falls on him, causing him bodily injury. Two interpretations emerge out of this happening. One interpretation from the Europeans is that the happening is merely a coincidental accident and they stop at that.

Another interpretation, from the Azande, is that there is something else beyond mere accidental coincidence. They understand that the barn falls because termites have eaten its beams, but what they do not understand is why it falls at the time the man happens to be passing. Their question is what does it all mean? They want to establish the meaning behind what the Europeans regard as mere accident, so they consult the oracle. The oracle is supposed to answer the question of meaning. Barden gives us the ideas that help us to clarify the problem of the method of intercultural learning between the Europeans and the Azande. He interprets Winch's idea about the two systems to mean that the Azande and the Europeans are simply acting within two different worlds. This creates a problem that what seems rational to the

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<sup>6</sup>Winch, P. 1958. *The Idea of a Social Science*.

<sup>7</sup>Evans-Pritchard, 1937. *Witchcraft, Oracle and Magic Among the Azande*.

Azande seems irrational to the Europeans. He projects Winch and Evans-Pritchard as showing that everyday behaviour is contextual.

People did *X* because they assumed *Y* to be the case, but people differed in their context and so produced different responses (Barden, 1990: 90).

Our interest in Barden is in his efforts to try and find a common practice beneath these contextual differences. Because of the contextual differences, the Azande are playing their own language-game and the Europeans are also playing their own language-game. But this difference notwithstanding, the two groups share the same operations that Barden calls “basic.”

When the barn falls on a passer-by, the Azande do understand the physical cause as being termites. To the Europeans this would be coincidence, but the Azande do not stop at coincidence. They ask a further question: why did the barn fall exactly at the time the man was under it? For the answer to this question, they turn to witchcraft. The Azande want to account for this coincidence. Because they ask a further question, it means that they live in the same rational world as the Europeans. (This fundamental point will be discussed further in this chapter and expanded in Chapter Five on Barden). Again we are interested in Barden, because he gives us the method that Winch failed to give to members of different contexts or traditions to use in order to extend their intelligibility to one another in the process of inter-cultural learning. This method is the basic set of operations.

#### ***4.3.2 Cross-Cultural Generalisation: MacIntyre***

In connection with the Azande practice of witchcraft, MacIntyre (1974) points out that Winch, from the point of view of scientific culture, thinks it is impossible to ask whether the Azande beliefs about witches are true. A member of the scientific culture can only get the truth of the Azande beliefs in the institution of witchcraft if she asked the question within the Zande system of beliefs. But if she asked the same question within the context of modern science, the answer would be no. At the same time, a member of the scientific culture cannot ask a question such as “which system of beliefs is the superior in respect of rationality and truth.” Asking such a question would be to invoke criteria that can be understood independently of any particular way of life. According to Winch there are no such criteria.

From MacIntyre's point of view, when it comes to cultural comparison, this is erroneous. He advances two arguments against Winch. The first is that Winch's view makes certain actual historical transition unintelligible. Here MacIntyre is referring to transitions from one system of beliefs to another that are necessarily characterised by raising questions of the kind that Winch rejects. He gives the example of seventeenth century Scotland. Then a question such as "are there witches?" could not be but raised. If, for instance, Winch asked a question such as from within which way of social life or under which system of life this question was asked, according to MacIntyre the answer would be

it was asked by men who confronted alternative systems and were able to draw out of what confronted them independent criteria of judgement.... Many Africans today are in the same situation. (MacIntyre, "The Idea of a Social Science," in Wilson: 129).

In his second argument, MacIntyre considers the expression made by a Zande theorist and a modern sceptic. Suppose the Zande theorist says "there are witches" and the modern sceptic says "There are no witches." In MacIntyre's own words, unless one of these statements denies what the other asserts, the negation of the sentence expressing the former could not be a correct translation of the sentence expressing the latter. Thus, if the Europeans could not deny from their own standpoint and in their own language what the Zande asserts in theirs, the Europeans should not be able to translate their expression into their language. From MacIntyre's point of view, cultural idiosyncrasy will have entailed linguistic idiosyncrasy and cross-cultural comparison will have been rendered logically impossible. But as MacIntyre puts it, translation is not impossible.

MacIntyre is criticising Winch's view that one society cannot go beyond another society's own self-description without first grasping the criteria embedded in that self-description. We **must** say that MacIntyre raises a very important point here, that is if the Europeans cannot deny from their own standpoint and in their own language what the Zande assert in theirs, then the Europeans should be unable to translate the Zande expression into the European language. According to MacIntyre, this is not correct, as demonstrated by the possibility of translation.

Another implication of Winch's view is that translation would be difficult in differently contingent conceptual schemes and institutional arrangements of different societies. This would also make cross-cultural generalisation difficult.

Here we have two perspectives, that of Winch, who is of the view that in order to explain social behaviour of a certain group of people, one must do so according to their own self-description. MacIntyre, representing the modern scientist, is of the view that explaining social behaviour should be based on some kind of theory. This scenario becomes relevant to our thesis in the sense that both Winch and MacIntyre are not likely to come to a compromise if each one of them maintains their present stand. We say that, though each of them may be intolerant of the other, they have something in common which can bring them to a round table and that is the basic set of operations. The basic set of operations can bring the two to a common understanding. It is a method that links all the methods, as we shall demonstrate in Chapter Five.

#### ***4.3.3 Translational Understanding and Mystical Thinking: Horton***

Horton comments on two ideas from Winch's essay, "Understanding a Primitive Society" in *Ethics and Society* (1972). These include the idea of "translational understanding" and the idea of "mystical thinking." The first idea stipulates that in order to understand utterances made in an alien culture, first find the point that these utterances have for them. This point can be discovered by placing these utterances in the context of the social life within which they arise. It is after this discovery that one will be in a position to say which utterances associated with one's own conceptual system are the appropriate translation instruments. While one is searching for translation instruments, one should be as open-minded as possible. One should not exclude, in advance, any of the previous universes of discourse available to one.

Another related point put forward by Winch is that, while trying to understand an alien culture, one should not attempt to project a point or purpose that is looming high in one's mind, but which may turn out to be peripheral or not feature at all in the minds of those whose life and thought one is trying to understand. The temptation is to try and project a preoccupation with explanation, prediction and control that is central to the sciences and technology that may have little or no importance in the life of non-Europeans. At this point Horton raises a number of problems emanating from Winch's thinking thus far.



The first problem is that of desperation. There is a possibility that different cultures may happen to be pursuing totally different goals, so that their utterances may have totally disparate points. The second problem is that of the specification of the kind in utterances that have similar points, since the understanding of an alien culture depends on this similarity.

On this matter, Horton points out that Winch's suggested procedure can only form the first phase of comprehension. It does not engross all phases. For instance, the fact that certain aims or purposes may provide the point of vast corpus of utterance in one culture, but be of peripheral importance in another, may be confronted with patterns of purpose that may happen to be irreducibly different in their phases. If one attempts to further one's understanding in these cases, one will not be able to avoid bringing in the kind of causal analysis that Winch leaves no room for.

Horton goes on to say that Winch's idea of translational understanding does not only represent the first phase of a multiphase interpretive process, but the very idea itself suffers from serious internal defects and incompleteness. For instance, Horton points out,

Winch holds an unduly restricted view of the situational and motivational common ground that makes translational understanding possible. In taking birth, sexual relations and death as the locus of universal human strivings and purposes... will be well received by those who prefer to think of man as poetic and religious rather than coldly pragmatic in his essence; for these precisely are the situations which, in western culture at least, favour *homo poetico-religiosus* as against *homo scientifico-technologicus* (Horton, 1994: 140).

Horton points out that, looking at Winch's idea more coolly, one finds that his view of the range of universal human strivings is inadequate. He proceeds to give counter strings to Winch's. These include the strivings to satisfy hunger and thirst, strivings to avoid extreme heat and cold and strivings for power. Though these strivings appear to be peculiarly tied to biological needs, these and many other unromantic and remarkable strivings are common to all human beings in all ages and all places. The inventory of strivings is longer than that what Winch offers.

Suppose we take Winch's limiting situations, that is birth, sexual relations and death, which supposedly give rise to universal attitudes, emotions and aims. These in turn form a kind of intercultural bridge that permits translation and completes the process of understanding. As a case in point, does Winch provide us with an answer

of how one cultural group can move from what others share with it to what they do not share? Winch's answer to this problem is that a human being, in co-operation with his fellows, pursues his aims, which are mediated by language, and which involves planning, foresight and the following of rules.

Horton's response is that, though Winch has put considerable stress on this point, he has not followed it to its full implications. For instance, co-operative endeavours of this kind would be impossible for the Europeans without their everyday conception of material objects which exist and persist independently of them; or without their everyday special and temporal concepts; or without their everyday differentiation between persons and non-persons; or without their everyday notion of causality; without their everyday idea of, and attitude to, contradiction and without their everyday concepts of truth, falsity and agreement with reality.

Winch, as Horton says, exposes the whole apparatus of inter-cultural concepts and attitudes as belonging to the Europeans. But Horton and other philosophers, who are critical of Winch, are of the view that it is this apparatus which provides the crucial infrastructure of all the more specialised universes of discourse and forms of life in all cultures. Horton emphasises that this conceptual apparatus is a prerequisite not only for the everyday business of staying alive, but also for the possibility of assembling at given times and places. He asserts that it is also crucial to the viability of more specialised forms of life such as the religious, the artistic and the scientific. In Horton's words,

... the universal conceptual apparatus provides... the raw materials from which all the more specialised "universe of discourse" are built up.... Thus a great deal of light can be thrown on the more esoteric features of ... modern Western Christianity, modern Western Science (not to speak of traditional African Religion) (1994: 142).

On the issue of translational understanding, Horton implies that if the apparatus of inter-cultural concepts and attitudes, and also the availability of the more specialised forms of life such as the religious, the artistic and the scientific, have been built up by an extension or an over-extension of the concepts of language, then the problem of translational understanding is solved. Otherwise the problem remains. So much for the idea of translational understanding. We now turn to the issue of mystical thinking. According to Horton, mystical thinking involves unobservable entities of spiritualistic nature, such as gods and witchcraft emanations. In considering the issue

of mystical thinking, Winch uses, as his test case, the Azande of Southern Sudan. What he says about the Azande, by implication, is applicable to some other African regions or any “primitive” people anywhere in the world. In this particular case Winch is concerned with how the European anthropologist, such as Evans-Pritchard, interprets this mystical thinking. He thinks that they tend to project on to a vast body of alien utterances, strivings and purposes which are centrally important in the culture of the interpreters, but which have little or no importance in the alien culture.

So when Evans-Pritchard and his colleagues interpret mystical utterances as statements of hypothesis, whose point lies in the area of explanation, prediction and control of everyday events are simply projecting their own obsession with the goals of science and technology on to the cultures where such goals are of peripheral importance. The situation would have been different if they had made a serious effort to discover the point of such utterances for those concerned. In other words, Winch is against the idea of the Europeans such as Evans-Pritchard developing their translation instruments from an area of Western discourse geared to explanation, prediction and control of events, that is from the language of science and technology, but not from the Azande point of view. So, as we shall discuss in this chapter, that is Winch’s point in criticising Evans-Pritchard and other European anthropologists about their interpretation of the Azande way of life. But now let us turn to Horton’s disagreement with Winch.

Looking at Winch’s ideas, Horton is of the view that it is Winch himself and not the European anthropologists such as Evans-Pritchard, MacIntyre and Horton, who is the most appropriate target for the methodological caveats of understanding a primitive society. In order to make his point clearer, he begins by giving us a compendium of the true picture of Evans-Pritchard’s ideas. Evans-Pritchard explores the Azande concept of mystical influences involving the operation of witchcraft, oracle and magic. He places mystical concepts in their full context of everyday usage. According to Horton, this makes Evans-Pritchard’s work a model of the kind of conceptual analysis that Winch and his disciples advocate. Evans Pritchard shows mystical concepts mobilised in connection with the concern to account for and remedy present misfortune and also with the concern to predict and avoid future misfortune. He portrays the Azande as people who struggle constantly, manfully, and cheerfully to overcome their troubles in this world. The Azande have little place in



their thought for serene or resigned contemplation. Their system of mystical belief, serving as a comprehensive apparatus for explanation, prediction and control, adds the principal means whereby they are able to maintain this attitude.

Horton points out that this seems to counteract Winch's interpretation of Evans-Pritchard. It does not reflect Evans-Pritchard's obsession of scientific-technological discourse distorting his report of individual instances of belief and behaviour and social context of the Azande

What we are faced with here is that all these philosophers, no matter what their orientations and trends of thought are, are looking for a method. They are looking for a method in different social set-ups, contexts and traditions. They are all looking for a method that will help them understand the ways of life, either in their own social set-ups or other peoples' ways of life. Evans-Pritchard attempts to understand what takes place in the Azande community.

Winch attacks his approach as being Western or European oriented. MacIntyre defends Evans-Pritchard by pointing out that it is difficult to understand an alien culture outside one's norms of rationality. Winch attacks MacIntyre's defence of Evans-Pritchard by pointing out that in order to understand an alien culture one has to do so from the point of view of the alien culture. What we are faced with here is a battle of thinkers or philosophers, all trying to find the best way of understanding human behaviour, either from one's point of view or from that of others. However, what has eluded them is the best way to go about this crucial business of understanding. We must say that our thesis encourages these debates, but at the same time we observe that these debates will go on and on *ad infinitum*, with one philosopher or group of philosophers attacking the other, while the other philosopher or group of philosophers goes on the defensive. Our thesis proposes that one method that can minimise or put to an end these attacks and counter-attacks, and bring these thinkers to a common understanding, is the idea of the subject-in-act. Let us precede with the examination of Winch's idea of learning from other cultures.



## 4.4 Learning from Other Cultures

### 4.4.1 Conception of a Stock of Available Descriptions

In this section Winch is analysing the standards of a primitive society – the Azande – and those of a scientific society, the Europeans. He does this through a criticism of MacIntyre's views in his two publications.<sup>8</sup>

MacIntyre points out that human action can be identified through description. He emphasises the importance of possibilities of descriptions for the conception of human action. At this stage Winch agrees with MacIntyre in a sense that descriptions do not exist in isolation. As he observes, they occur in constituents of beliefs, speculations and objects. He also agrees with him when MacIntyre points out that these are continually criticised, modified, rejected or improved. It is a fact that the stock of descriptions changes. MacIntyre explains that the changes in human action are thus intimately linked to the thread of rational criticism in human history.

MacIntyre goes on to say that the notion of rational criticism requires the notion of choice between alternatives. This is so because there is need to explain what the agent's criterion was and why he opted for that particular criterion rather than the other; and also to explain why the use of that criterion appears rational to those who invoke it. MacIntyre explains that we cannot omit reference to the rationality or otherwise of those rules and conventions in explaining action in a given social order. He adds

...the beginning of an explanation of why certain criteria *are* taken to be rational in some societies is that they are rational. And since this has to enter into our explanation we cannot explain social behaviour independently of our own norms of rationality (MacIntyre in Winch, 1972: 28-29).

It is the ideas in this quotation which create problems for Winch and hence mark a point of departure between Winch and MacIntyre.

MacIntyre points out that to identify the limits of a social action in a given period, therefore, is to identify the stock of descriptions current in that age. This is where Winch wonders how a candidate for inclusion qualifies for admission to the stock. Unless there are limits, Winch is of the view that MacIntyre's talk about

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<sup>8</sup>MacIntyre, A. "Is understanding Religion Compatible with Believing?" (1994); and "A Mistake about Causality in the Social Sciences" (1962).

possibilities of description circumscribing possibilities of action becomes nugatory. According to Winch,

...there would be nothing to stop anybody inventing some arbitrary verbal expression, applying it to some arbitrary body movement, and adding that expression to the stock of available descriptions (1972: 29).

He points out that, though the description must be intelligible, its intelligibility cannot be decided by whether or not it belongs to an existing stock of descriptions. Doing so would rule out the idea of the addition of new descriptions to the stock. Winch explains that "what can be intelligibly said" is not equivalent to "what has been intelligibly said". Admitting that is accepting that it would never be possible to say anything new, or that it would never be possible to do anything new. However Winch admits,

...the intelligibility of anything new said or done does depend in a certain way on what has already been said or done and understood (1972: 29).

Winch explains this situation to mean that, although it is the case that a new description of action must be intelligible to the members of the society into which it is introduced, as MacIntyre suggests, Winch is of the view that

... what determines this is the further development of the rules and principles already implicit in the previous ways of acting and talking. To be emphasised are not the actual members of any stock of description; but the grammar they express (1972: 30).

Winch explains that, through this, we will not only understand their structure, sense and mutual relations but also the sense of new ways of talking and acting that may be introduced. Again Winch explains that although these new ways or changes in the way of talking and acting may involve modifications in the new grammar, we can only speak thus if the new grammar is, to its users, intelligibly related to the old.

The fact which Winch is emphasising is that changes in the stock of descriptions will be made intelligible largely through the grammar of a particular culture, that is the grammar of that particular culture expresses the changes in the stock of descriptions. The stock of descriptions on its own may not help in identifying human action of that culture. Winch is saying that, instead of looking at descriptions, look at how these descriptions are expressed in the language of the people in question. That is, as we have said, when the new grammar is, to its users, related to the old one. Here we would like to add that in order to learn from another culture, our norms and stock of descriptions could be modified through other influences.

#### *4.4.2 Differences in the Criteria of Rationality and Intelligibility between the Europeans and the Azande*

MacIntyre states that intelligibility of human action in an alien culture can be sought through the agent's stock of descriptions. Winch, on the other hand, is of the view that human action in a particular culture can be identified through the expressions of grammar in that culture. In other words, action can be identified through the daily use of language, rather than through descriptions.

Another issue, which immediately follows that of intelligibility through language use, is that of rationality of actions in an alien culture. Winch presents MacIntyre's idea as follows:

The explanation of why in society certain actions are taken to be rational, has got to be an explanation for us; so it must be in terms of concepts intelligible to us. If then in the explanation, we say that in fact those criteria are rational, we must be using the word rational in our sense (1972: 31).

It is apparently clear that MacIntyre is emphasising the fact that it is difficult to explain other people's behaviour outside one's norms or rationality. Even the word "rationality" itself, for example, is defined according to one's norms, so in order to judge cultures we use our own standards of rationality.

MacIntyre adds that there is a possibility of coincidence in standards. As he puts it,

If what is seen to be the case is common to them and us, it must be referred to under the same conception for each of us (1972: 31).

Winch still finds a problem with this position. He observes that standards of rationality in different societies do not always coincide. If so, this leads to the possibility that standards in an alien culture like that of the Azande are different from those of Europeans. According to Winch, it does not make sense to assume that members of the alien culture will necessarily make discovery of something which has been discovered by the Europeans. In order for such a discovery to take place, it would presuppose initial conceptual agreement.

In making this observation, Winch is taking us back to the importance of language in a particular culture. An action will be accepted as being rational according to how members of that culture understand it in their own context. We know that contexts differ from culture to culture. This fact makes it difficult, though



not impossible, to obtain conceptual agreement. This is because standards of rationality do not always coincide. This fact leaves Winch wondering what MacIntyre means when he asserts that certain standards are taken as criteria of rationality because they *are* criteria of rationality. Winch is left wondering about *whose criteria?*

According to Winch, MacIntyre does not stop at that but extends this confusion from criteria of rationality to the standards of intelligibility. This is evident in his paper: "Is Understanding Religion Compatible with Believing?"<sup>9</sup> In this paper he argues,

...when we detect an internal coherence in the standards of intelligibility current in an alien society and try to show why this does not appear, or is made tolerable to that society's members, "we have already invoked our standards" (Quoted in Winch, 1972: 31 - 32).

Winch wonders about the sense in which this claim is true. It is not clear to him how, in order to detect and show how something is done, it is done in a sense which is intelligible to Europeans. It is the case that Europeans may be limited by what counts for them as "detecting" and "showing" something. It is also possible that the interest in showing and detecting something is peculiar to European society. Europeans may be doing something in which members of the alien society exhibit no interest simply because the institutions in which such an interest would develop are missing or lacking. It may also be the case that the pursuit of that interest in the European culture has led to the developments of techniques of inquiry and modes of argument, which may not be found in the alien culture.

So, according to Winch, it is not correct to assume that the methods and techniques which have been used in the past, for instance in elucidating the logical structure of arguments in the European language and culture, are going to bear the same fruits in the new alien context. Perhaps if they are to work they may need to be extended and modified.

Winch affirms that if these methods and techniques are to have any logical relation with the European forms of investigations, then the new techniques will have to be recognisably continuous with the previously used ones. But, above all, Winch observes, they must also extend the conception of intelligibility of the Europeans. It is

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<sup>9</sup> Referred to a moment ago.



this extension which will make it possible for the Europeans to see what intelligibility amounts to in the life of the society which is being investigated.

Winch proceeds with a criticism of MacIntyre for trying to make what is intelligible in the alien context, intelligible in the European context, that is making what is intelligible to the aliens also intelligible to the Europeans, on the basis of the European conception of intelligibility. That means creating a new unity for the concept of intelligibility, which has a certain relation to the European old one that may perhaps require a considerable realignment of the European categories.

Here Winch observes that it would not be correct to seek a state in which things will appear to the Europeans just as they do to the aliens. He expresses a feeling that perhaps such a state may not be attainable. What is being looked for, Winch points out, is a way of looking at things, which goes beyond the European previous way, in the sense that it has in some way taken an account of, and incorporated, the other way of looking at things, which members of the alien society have of looking at things. As Winch puts it,

Seriously to study another way of life is necessarily to seek to extend our own – not simply to bring the other way within the already existing boundaries of our own... (1972: 33).

MacIntyre's idea rekindles Wittgenstein's problem in the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein looks at his method of formal logic as standard, with which to reflect all reality. To echo his words, logic fills the world; the limits of the world are also its limits. The limits of my language also mean the limits of my world. The difference between Wittgenstein and MacIntyre is that for MacIntyre the European set of standards is just what he happens to have. He cannot get out of it to look at things from a "neutral" point of view. For Winch, however, in order to gain intelligibility in "another way of life" you must first of all seek to extend your own way of life and not simply to import the other way of life into the boundaries of your own.

Winch explains how the extension of the way of life from one cultural context to the other may be achieved, something that MacIntyre does not take sufficient account of. According to Winch, rationality and intelligibility are not mere concepts that must be learnt in language lessons, just like other concepts are learnt. To the contrary, rationality and intelligibility must be circumscribed by language use, a use which is established in that particular cultural context. In other words, rationality and

intelligibility are not concepts which a language may have or not have. Instead intelligibility and rationality are concepts which are necessary for the extension of a language. He informs us

...to say of a society that it has a language is to say that it has a concept of rationality (1972: 33).

Like Wittgenstein, Winch is putting across an understandable fact that rationality in an alien culture is in accord with the sense in the common use of that culture. In order to understand what is rational and what is not rational in a particular culture one cannot use one's standards that are foreign to the language in common use in the alien culture.

#### ***4.4.3 European Norms of Rationality: not a Finite Set***

Winch extends his argument on rationality to its norms. After criticising MacIntyre's view of the conception of a "stock of available descriptions", Winch extends his criticism to MacIntyre's criteria of intelligibility and rationality. Now, in order to make us see the necessity of extending one's way of life in order to gain intelligibility in "another way of life," he advances his argument to the norms of rationality of Europeans.

Winch's criticism of MacIntyre in this matter is that if MacIntyre is taking the European norms of rationality as forming a finite set then he is not correct. Winch recognises the fact that we learn to speak, think and act rationally through being trained to adhere to particular cultural norms. He emphasises that after all that learning, rationality does not consist in having been trained to follow those norms. He explains:

...we must...be open to new possibilities of what could be invoked and accepted under the rubric of "rationality" – possibilities that are perhaps suggested and limited by what we have hitherto accepted, but not uniquely determined thereby (1972: 34).

Winch advises that, instead of taking the European norms of rationality as a finite set, it would be more correct to adopt the same rubric as when one learns one's norms of rationality, instead of being limited or uniquely determined by those norms. The approach of learning how to think, speak and act rationally can be applied to the

possibilities of the European grasping forms of rationality, which are different from her own in an alien culture.

Winch admits that, though these possibilities are limited by certain formal requirements centring on the demands for consistency, the formal requirements say nothing about what in particular is to count as consistency. Winch likens this situation to the rules of propositional calculus which limit, but do not themselves determine, what are to be proper values of variables such as P, Q, R.... Just as in propositional calculus, the proper values of variables can be calculated by determining the wider context of life in which the activities in question are carried on. Winch emphasises investigating a wider context of life rather than being narrowed down by a set of finite rules.

Efforts should be made to investigate the norms of rationality in an alien culture. Specifying only the rules governing the carrying out of activities may not be enough. Europeans should endeavour to gain intelligibility of the members of an alien culture and understand their own activities according to the conception prevailing in their own language. Winch reminds us that what MacIntyre is proposing, that is making the norms of rationality in the European language the unavoidable framework, could be advanced in any language. This is because every language has criteria of rationality and concepts. These, in turn, have their history. This history is unique to that society, so using standards from a different society as a model or paradigm to expose what may appear as difficulties or incoherencies in a different society may not be very realistic.

#### ***4.4.4 European Norms of Rationality in the Classification and Evaluation of Beliefs and Practices of the Azande***

Winch has shown us that norms of rationality from one culture, like that of Europeans, may not successfully reflect what is in the beliefs and practices of another culture when used as a standard or a paradigm. He elucidates this fact through, once again, an examination of MacIntyre's views of the Azande system of magic.

MacIntyre explains:

The Azande believe that the performance of certain rites in due form affects their common welfare; this belief cannot in fact be refuted. For they also



believe that if the rites are ineffective someone present at them had evil thoughts. Since this is always possible, there is never a year when it is unavoidable for them to admit that the rites were dully performed, but they did not thrive.... The belief of the Azande is not unfalsifiable in principle... but in fact it cannot be falsified. Does this belief stand in need of rational criticism? And if so by what standards?... one can only hold the belief of the Azande rational in the *absence* of any practice of science and technology in which criteria of effectiveness, ineffectiveness and kindred notions have been built up. But to say this is to recognise the appropriateness of scientific criteria of judgement from our standpoint. The Azande do not intend their beliefs either as a piece of science or as a piece of non-science. They do not possess these categories. It is only *post eventum* in the light of later and more sophisticated understanding that their belief and concepts can be classified and evaluated at all (MacIntyre in Winch, 1972: 36).

It is on this quotation that Winch bases his criticism of MacIntyre's ideas. First of all, Winch disagrees with MacIntyre's suggestion that the Azande ways of life should be classified and evaluated in terms of certain specific ways of life to be found in the European culture, in terms of whether they do or do not measure up to what is required in the European ways of life. To do that would be, as Winch puts it, to confuse the sophistication of the interest in the classification with sophistication of the concepts employed in the classificatory work of the Europeans.

Winch suggests that it would be in the interest of the Europeans to understand how the Azande system of magic is related to science. He feels that, although the concept of such a comparison would be a very sophisticated one, it does not mean that the unsophisticated practices of the Azande have to be seen in light of the more sophisticated practices of European culture, such as science, or see the Azande practice as a more primitive form of it. It is not correct to impose the image of the European culture on a more primitive one like that of the Azande.

Winch warns that it is extremely difficult for a sophisticated person, coming from a sophisticated society, to grasp the idea of a form of life, which is simple and primitive. In a way she may have to jettison or discard her own sophistication, something that may be difficult to do. Given that background, obviously, the distinction between sophistication and simplicity becomes helpful at this point. Winch explains that there may be truth in what MacIntyre says, that the Azande do not have the categories of science and non-science. This assertion is, however, refuted by Evans-Pritchard, who states clearly that the Azande do in fact have a clear understanding of what is magical and what is practical or technical. The fact that at



one moment or another they may confuse this distinction does not mean that they are ignorant of this distinction. Such confusion should not be attributed to the Azande alone because it can be found in any culture. It is not a distinction that the Azande have developed a theory about.

On the contrary, Winch points out,

... a much more important fact to emphasise is that *we* do not initially have a category that looks at all like the Azande category of magic. Since it is *we* who want to understand the Zande category, it appears that the onus is on us to extend our understanding so as to make room for the Zande category, rather than to insist on seeing it in terms of our own ready-made distinction between science and non-science... the sort of understanding we seek requires that we see the Azande category in relation to our own already understood categories... (1972: 37).

To make his point about standards clearer, Winch extends his criticism of MacIntyre to the way he presents his case about harvests. Winch presents MacIntyre as having

...no difficulty in showing that if the rites which the Azande perform in connection with their harvests are classified and evaluated by reference to the criteria and standards of science and technology, then they are subject to serious criticism. He thinks that the Zande "belief" is a sort of hypothesis like, e.g., an Englishman's belief that all the rain we have been having is due to atomic explosions (1972: 38).

Here Winch presents MacIntyre as believing that he is applying a sort of neutral concept, such as "A affecting B", as having equal applicability to both the Azande magic and Western science. Winch points out that, in this respect, MacIntyre is using or applying the concept with which he is familiar, which draws its significance from its use in scientific and technological contexts. According to Winch, this is wrong. Winch points out that there is no reason whatsoever for anyone to suppose that the Azande magical concept of "A affecting B" has the same significance as in the European context. The Azande concept of magical influence is quite different from that of the Europeans, although in their practical affairs, they too, apply – in a primitive form – something very like the European technological concept. Their thought about and their attitude towards magical rites are very different from those concerning their technological measures. Winch believes that there is every reason to think that their concept of magical "influence" is quite different from that of the Europeans. So, again, it is not correct to think that in a society with different institutions and ways of life and standards – European standards – the means for evaluating "causal influence" should be the same.

It is very clear that a good harvest to the Azande is of significant interest to them. It is equally significant that they take all the necessary steps, technological, technical or otherwise, in their capabilities to ensure that they achieve good harvests. These steps include magical rites. But that is no reason, as Winch puts it, "...to see their magical rites as... a misguided step" (1972: 39).

Winch further states that a man's sense of the importance of something shows or reflects in all sorts of ways. These ways, such as the Azande magical procedures, are contingencies. He points out that life, whether from the European or the Azande point of view, is subject to contingencies. This fact is clearly apparent in the Azande belief and in, practise of magical rites. Winch warns that MacIntyre fails to see, or ignores, this fact and instead concentrates on the connection between magical rites and consumption and good harvest. As Winch puts it, these rites are also fundamental to social relations, a fact that is more pronounced and emphasised in the Azande notions of witchcraft.

We have a drama of resentments, evil doing, revenge, expiation, in which there are ways of dealing (symbolically) with misfortunes and their disruptive effects on a man's relations with his fellows, with the ways in which life can go on despite such disruptions (1972: 40).

Winch invites us to see the point of the rules and conventions that are followed in an alien form of life. MacIntyre reflects a view that the European's rules and conventions are some sort of paradigm of what it is for rules and conventions to have a point, so that the task which arises remains in accounting for the point of the rules and conventions in another society. Winch feels, however, that such an attitude can as well come from another society and get directed to the European forms of rules and conventions, with the danger of showing that the rules from the European society are not immune to becoming pointless. Winch warns

... an account of this matter cannot be given simply in terms of any set of rules and conventions at all: our own or anyone else's; it requires us to consider the relation of a set of rules and conventions to something else. That is, either coming from good harvest or giving meaning to life (1972: 40).

This "something else", according to Winch, could be relating, for instance, the Azande magical rites to the significance of human life. This is an indisputable factor for someone trying to learn and understand an alien culture. In an effort to expand this factor, Winch once again links us to Wittgenstein's philosophical use of language-games.

#### *4.4.5 Relating the European Conception of Reality to those of other Societies*

Winch emphasises the human potential of learning from one another, no matter where they come from or what beliefs they hold or practices they engage in. Winch introduces Rush Rhees's comment on Wittgenstein to highlight this fact. As Rhees explains in Winch's summary,

... to try to account for meaningfulness of language solely in terms of isolated language-games is to omit the important fact that ways of speaking are not insulated from one another in a mutually exclusive systems of rules. What can be said in one context by the use of a certain expression depends for its sense on the uses of other expressions in other contexts (different language-games). Language-games are played by men who have lives to live – lives involving a wide variety of different interests, which have all kinds of bearing on each other. Because of this, what a man says or does may make a difference not merely to the performance of activity upon which he is at present engaged, but to his life and to the lives of other people.... (1972: 40-41).

What Winch is emphasising, and wants us to see from this comment, is the fact that it is not very helpful for anyone to look at one's norms of rationality as a standard measure for assessing the beliefs and cultures of others. Members of a particular culture have both the potential and the ability to learn from other cultures or language-games. This is a fact which the likes of Wittgenstein, Evans-Pritchard, MacIntyre and kindred, or those with similar attitudes, should learn to see. In other words, what one person or culture does may directly or indirectly impact on others. This may be true whether they are from one's culture or an alien culture. No matter what one does one should be able to see unity in the person's multifarious interests, as well as activities and relations with other men, both in his own language game or culture and the language-games in other cultures. It is through recognising the fact that the sort of sense a man or culture sees in his or its life largely depends on the nature of this potential to learn from others. Winch tells us that by learning from other cultures we do not only acquire other possibilities or techniques of doing things; but we learn different possibilities of making sense of human life. According to Winch, this is precisely the point that MacIntyre misses in his treatment of the Azande. What he sees in the Azande is mainly a misguided technique of producing consumer goods. But Winch points out that a Zande's crops are not just a potential object of consumption

... the life he lives, his relation with his fellows, his chances for acting decently or doing evil, may all spring from his relation to his crops. Magical rites



constitute a form of expression in which these possibilities and dangers may be contemplated and reflected on – and perhaps also thereby transformed and deepened. The difficulty we find in understanding this is not merely its remoteness from science, but an aspect of the general difficulty we find, illustrated by MacIntyre's procedure, of thinking about such matters at all except in terms of "efficiency of production" – production, that is, for consumption (1972: 41 – 42).

Here Winch is warning us of a possible misrepresentation of a people's way of life, which may result from taking a casual and simplistic attitude towards them. By maintaining the scientific approach as the only possible standard through which other cultures should be evaluated, MacIntyre reduces the Azande way of life to material consumption. As a consequence of this he overlooks the sense of the human component therein, in these approaches. Winch is calling for the opening, widening and extending of the horizons of the attitude and approaches of someone trying to gain intelligibility in a foreign culture. Otherwise, Winch warns, the blindness to the point of the primitive modes of life may be a corollary of the pointlessness of much of the life of one trying to understand a foreign culture. This concludes our summary account of Winch's analysis of inter-cultural learning. We now turn to relate this to the general thesis.

#### **4.5 Relevance of Winch's Views to the General Thesis**

##### ***4.5.1 Comment on the Exclusivity of the Scientific Conception of Objective Facts, Reality and Truth***

In this section we are confronted with views mainly from two sources namely Evans-Pritchard and Peter Winch. Evans-Pritchard in his study of a primitive culture, the Azande, draws distinctions between the approaches found in his own culture, the European, which are mainly science-based, and approaches found in a primitive culture, the Azande, which are mainly non-science based.

The science-based methods, those of the Europeans, are largely empirical and operating on the principles of theory and hypothesis. The non-science based methods are not necessarily operating on the principles of theory and hypothesis. They belong to a category that reveals certain realities by mystical or oracular means.

It is against this background that Evans-Pritchard presents his submissions. The concern of this thesis is how Evans-Pritchard gains intelligibility about the



Azande. This concern makes him fall into the same category as Wittgenstein, who attempted to reach all reality through the subject-less logic. This attempt could not materialise. Upon realising this he made another attempt at reaching all reality through the language-games. His failure to accord the subject a distinctive role in the language-games made it difficult for this new approach to reach all knowledge or all reality. Here we have a similar problem presented by Evans-Pritchard, who attempts to gain intelligibility of a primitive society, the Azande. The cardinal question is how does he do it? What method(s) does he use or recommend to be used? We shall soon examine this aspect closely.

Let us first take a closer look on the problems besetting Evans-Pritchard. It is through understanding these problems that we shall be able to see why his suggestions cannot work according to how he wants them to work. The first glaring problem is that of background. Being a European, his background is largely scientific. It is a background which mainly functions on set hypotheses and theory-based experiments. This fact, in itself, makes him suffer from an attitudinal problem, as reflected through his attitude to the effect that there are no witches and his judgement of the unreason of the Azande. His scientific background and the methods that go with it made him believe that the witchcraft institution of the Azande is just imaginary or simply does not exist. Whether he is right or wrong is what we are going to demonstrate in this discussion. The fact that he uses the word “unreason” to describe the Azande is, in itself, indicative of Evans-Pritchard’s unfavourable thinking about the type of reasoning that is likely to emerge from the witchcraft institution, whose efficacy he greatly doubts.

We can see that, much as Evans-Pritchard is trying to respect both the science-based and the non-science based approaches, he is held in the tight grip of his cultural background, which is largely scientific, with little respect, if any, for other practices such as witchcraft.

We can see clearly that for Evans-Pritchard to gain intelligibility or all knowledge, he definitely needs more than the ordinary science-based methods, which go beyond the horizons of cause and effect in the empirical sense and whose criteria of rationality does not disrespect the efficacy of oracular revelations of witches.

With such an attitude, Evans-Pritchard's attempt to get to grips with the Zande reality through a science-based set of rules may not work. The scientific approach can only succeed in exposing certain realities such as the empirical ones and leaving out other realities, for example, the concern of human value, which may be central in the Azande way of life but may not, strictly speaking, be revealed through the cause effect approach. As we shall demonstrate in Chapter Five, Evans-Pritchard may have to adopt Barden's approach of the set of operations and not the set of rules. The set of rules – like the laboratory hypothesis-based rules - manifests the danger of leading to the exposition of empirical reality, while the set of operations include the revelation of abstract realities such as the revelation of the capacity to reason.

In the previous section, Evans-Pritchard makes an exposition on the aspect of logic. He agrees that both cultures, the European's and the Azande's, are both rational and logical, but he does not mince words when he comes to the notion of objective facts, reality and truth. To him it is the Europeans' science-based approach which is in accord with objective facts, reality and truth.

It is at this juncture that Winch joins the debate. He regards this position as a biased one and one with which he does not agree. We must mention that our thesis joins hands with Winch on this matter. First of all, objective facts, reality and truth cannot be reached through a set of rules from one culture, for instance the European culture, alone. To use Wittgenstein's expression, the two cultures are playing two different language-games. Each game has its rules, which are different from those of the other. That being the case, there is need for the two cultures to first of all agree on the meanings of those different concepts. Given the different language-games, it is very unlikely that both the Europeans and the Azande will reach a common definition of those terms. This is because the Europeans will insist on using the version of the science-based set of rules, something that may not yield immediate mutual comprehension by the Azande. These terms may be in existence in the Azande category, but understood by following the rules of their own language-games. This will still not yield mutual comprehension between the Europeans and the Azande.

This is where our thesis becomes significant. We are hypothesising a foundation which is basic to us all. We cannot have a foundation which is basic to us all when we have some sections of us who hold and maintain that it is only their approach which can lead us to objective facts, reality and truth. This thesis is not

denying that this goal of objectivity cannot be attained. What it is protesting are the methods used and the attitudes held by those who are using them. If one side insists on applying the rules which are operational in its own language-game without a deliberate and conscious efforts to explore the meanings of the rules applicable to the other language games, then we shall continue to operate like the railway lines which continue to run side by side and serve the same purpose, but without any possibility of ever meeting.

Here we join hands with Winch, who advocates for an open policy in an attempt to establish what is truly foundational to us all. It is this open policy that will facilitate and open up opportunities, as we shall show in Chapter Five, for us to engage the set of operations in a manner that will lead to an understanding of both the object of commonsense and of scientific method. Otherwise attempting to reach all reality from a set of rules from one particular culture will not work.

Instead of being fanatic about the scientific method, we could begin by applying definition as an operation. This definition could be within the language discourse in which we are seeking to establish the notions of objective facts, reality and truth. Instead of trying to understand the concepts from the point of view of our own culture, for example the European culture, we could begin with an open mind, somehow free from our own cultural influences and try to understand concepts from the already-established concept of a foreign culture.

In this respect, Winch helps us with an example of the notion of God. He tells us that the notion of God can best be understood in religious discourse. This is because God is eternal but the outcomes of science are contingent, so attempting to understand the concept of God through scientific discourse will lead to nothing more than confusion. From there we can say that, much as we cannot gain the intelligibility of the notion of God fully through the scientific discourse, it is equally difficult to try to understand the notion of God through witchcraft. This is because the outcomes of the practice of witchcraft are not only contingent but also culture bound, so in an attempt to seek the reality of God, in the Christian sense, through oracular means, will be nothing more than illusory. What we are learning from these cases is that it is first of all better, in an effort to understand reality, to try and grasp it in the relevant discourse in the culture in which we are trying to grasp it. In this case the reality of God can only be sought more relevantly in the religious discourse. Even at this stage,



a non-religious person seeking the intelligibility of God still has to be careful because religious discourses differ from religion to religion. The Islamic discourse differs from the Christian discourse. Someone who is neither a Christian nor a Moslem seeking intelligibility in the notion of God may get conflicting definitions. That is why Winch's idea of the sense of reality being given by language in the respective culture or the relevant discourse is not, in our case, satisfactory.

In our case we argue that the best alternative approach for bringing out all reality is that of the set of operations. This is because the set of operations examines all aspects of the relevant language, from the definitions to the propositions and the validity of the arguments. It is a comprehensive approach, which leaves no stone unturned, but seeking reality through the relevant discourse may degenerate from the sense or meaning, which the discourse gives to the reality in question, into a standard. For instance, it may be the case that Moslems believe that the reality of God can only be reached through the Islamic discourse. This situation takes us back to the standards of Wittgenstein and formal logic and Evans-Pritchard with his scientific approach. This is something similar to a vicious circle. In this respect none of these approaches becomes fundamental. Wittgenstein's standard is that intelligibility of reality in all circles can be reached through understanding the concepts in daily language use or discourse of a particular culture. Evans-Pritchard's standard would be that intelligibility of all reality could be reached through the scientific discourse. In this respect, while Winch would agree with Wittgenstein to a certain extent, he would definitely not agree with Evans-Pritchard. Agreeing with Evans-Pritchard would mean accepting the application of one model as standard.

Lonergan, on the other hand, with his pattern of operations, would neither agree with Wittgenstein's standard nor Evans-Pritchard's standard. He would only accept what these two call complete standards of intelligibility, steps among the many steps of the pattern of operations that would be required to gain intelligibility of all knowledge. Intelligibility of reality would be reached only after the other elements of the pattern of operations have been applied.

In our case, we purport that Lonergan's method is superior to that of Wittgenstein's, because Wittgenstein's method is not comprehensive enough when gauged against that of Lonergan. Lonergan would rank Wittgenstein's attempt to gain intelligibility of reality in its entirety simply by observing what takes place in the



daily use of a language only as a beginning of the task that eventually leads to the understanding of all reality. What one gets at this preliminary stage is only data. This data should be subjected to the court of intelligence and analysed before it is judged as true or not. Wittgenstein, in his submissions, does not go that far. This fact makes his approach, to some extent, inadequate as a means of enabling us to reach all reality. Evans-Pritchard, on the other hand, simply prescribes a perfect model for the Azande to adopt since, according to his understanding, it will lead to objective facts, reality and truth.

#### ***4.5.2 Looking for Meaning: the non-Scientific Approach***

Winch at this stage would come in with a question such as whose reality or whose truth? He is of the view that the oracular method in the context of the Azande leads to reality that is understandable to them. Here we would be reminded that magic forms the foundation of the whole of the Azande social life. It is their mainstay, a web in which they are entangled and from which they cannot easily extricate themselves. This case is different from that of a foreigner like Evans-Pritchard attempting to gain intelligibility in their affairs.

To illuminate this fact further we can use the analogy of a Hindu and a cow. To the European a cow is nothing more than a piece of property, which he can sell for cash to take his sick child to hospital. He sees a cow as nothing more than a complex element comprising meat for consumption, a hide for bags and shoes and bones for fertilizers. In other words a cow, is a commercial object. But to a Hindu and in the Hindu context the situation is actually the reverse. A cow is sacred and not merely a piece of property like any other. It is possible that a Hindu, in the true sense of the word, would be more willing to sacrifice his child for the cow. He would rather see a cow being given a decent “burial” instead of being made merchandise for cash. So, to a Hindu, his feelings for a cow are deep and more involved, while to the European they may remain at the surface.

Winch seems to be warning us that the European attempting to gain intelligibility of the reality in the Hindu culture is likely to employ his own method – the scientific – which in this respect would be misallocated. This is because the overall consequence of his approach may not be in accord with his set hypothesis.

We could also use the analogy of the European, who may be conversant with the chemical composition of milk, and the illiterate Azande. To the European, milk can be separated out into powder and water. To the Azande it is one element, milk. It would be very difficult for the European to convince the illiterate Azande that milk is composed of powder and water and these are different elements which are totally unrelated. Even if Evans-Pritchard attempted to separate them in the presence of the Azande, it would not be in their interest to separate them. This is because the Azande category lacks the theoretical base which explains chemical composition. To the contrary, the Azande watching the European in his laboratory separating milk from water are likely to regard him as a witch instead. In fact, during the colonisation of Africa Europeans using guns were regarded by Africans as witches. In their experience, war was fought with arrows and spears. Europeans were using loud noise from “sticks” to kill people. So Europeans were witches practising magic.

This is precisely the problem which Winch is highlighting. Evans-Pritchard needs to explain what he means by objective reality. He still needs to explain whether different people, according to their understanding in their own contexts, would regard the scientific approach as objective, for instance to people like the Azande, who may be lacking a scientific theoretical base with which to explain objectivity.

As we saw in the previous sections, it is clear to someone well versed in the theoretical workings of the slide rule how the strength of a bridge relates to the sketches of the engineer. This approach is objective, according to Winch, only to those in the scientific discourse.

It is equally clear to somebody well versed with oracular experience how the directions of shells could reveal the presence or absence of a witch. These are two different experiences, however, which are totally unrelated, but nevertheless understood by members of each respective discourse.

Evans-Pritchard would reject outright the outcome of the oracular revelation, because it would not be in accord with objective reality in his sense. Winch, on the other hand, would tolerate that outcome because he recognises the fact that the Azande have cognisance of cause and effect. As mentioned in the previous section, the Azande see an elephant chasing a man and not a witch. The granary falls because termites are gnawing its beams and not because a witch is pushing it over.

In this respect Winch invites Evans-Pritchard to try and see sense in the Azande discourse instead of attempting to impose his own discourse on them. The reason is that the Azande discourse presents another dimension, which seems to be absent in the European discourse which is reflected in the question “why”, which the European discourse does not overtly bring out. The European discourse seems to stop at empirical evidence or coincidence. This is what seems to come out when a granary falls on a passing man or the elephant charges a man. But the Azande discourse seems to move from the question “how”, where Evans-Pritchard stops, and goes beyond and reaches the question “why”.

Here Winch makes a point by projecting the Azande’s discourse – in their sense – going beyond the scientific discourse. They are trying to transcend the notion of mere cause and effect. The granary falls because the termites have attacked its beams. By asking the question “why”, the Azande are looking for reasons beyond mere accidents and coincidences. The scientific approach seems to be concerned more with empirical causes.

The Azande appear to be looking for a way of elevating human life above that of a mere object like any other which is exposed to unexplained accidental happenings. They are obviously looking for meaning. For instance, a granary has fallen. What is the cause? Termites have eaten its beams. Someone is injured; cause? the granary has fallen on him. The Azande, in their approach, are attempting to go beyond the ordinary visible causes to what the whole experience means to human life. In so doing, according to their own context, they are according a human being a special position, as opposed to the position accorded to any other object in nature.

To the Azande, as it is to the European, the falling of the granary is a normal natural phenomenon. But the question of the granary falling on a particular man and not on any other, and falling at the exact time that a particular man is passing, calls for more investigation, which is clearly missing in the European or scientific approach. The scientific approach cannot give a satisfactory answer to the Azande fundamental question of meaning.

Winch here calls upon Evans-Pritchard to reconsider his conviction as regards the method, which is rooted in his own cultural background as a model for all contexts. By being open to methods in other contexts with which he is not familiar

may widen the horizon of his intelligibility to what exists in other cultures, which may be genuinely lacking in his own culture.

We must say, at this juncture, that our interest in this aspect is not very much in the outcome of the question “why”, as asked by the Azande. We give the Azande credit for the initiative of asking that question in the first place. We think that Lonergan and Barden would agree with us that in asking a further question from “how” to “why” the Azande have gone beyond the prescriptive approach of Evans-Pritchard, of prescribing the scientific method as a model for all contexts.

By asking a further question, the Azande have made a further step towards the framework of the subject-in-act. The Azande’s situation of not being at the theoretical level in the scientific sense is understandable because this is a step outside their discourse, but due to the fact that they are able to ask a further question means that they can get there step by step. Asking a further question opens their intellectual gate wider. Here Winch would agree with us, because if the intellect is widened it would be a lot easier to lead the Azande into the scientific discourse, this time on conviction rather than imposition.

Inter-cultural learning would be possible. We say this because, as we have discussed in Lonergan’s sense in the previous chapter, and as we are about to discuss in Barden’s sense in the next chapter, both the Europeans and the Azande are endowed with the basic set of operations. This set of operations, in Lonergan’s sense, can lead anyone from the level of commonsense to that of theory and finally to judgement.

Evans-Pritchard also deserves credit. He has reached a stage where reality in the scientific sense can be explained through theory. However, his approach is far from perfect because there are still other operations in the offing, which he has to effect before recommending his method as the ideal one for other cultures to emulate. These include assessing whether the non-empirical data, as found in witchcraft, can be explained through theory. All we are saying is that the scientific approach may be a distance ahead of the oracular approach, but below the level of being ideal to establish all reality in all contexts. That is a methodology that can coordinate all other methods in different discourses leading to all kinds of knowing.



We say that it would not be appropriate for Evans-Pritchard to say at this level that the Europeans are right and the Azande are wrong. We feel it is too early to make such a judgement. This is because the notion of theory – in the scientific sense – is still missing in the oracular approach. It is why the Azande do not recognise the contradictions in the oracular revelations, so saying that the Azande approach is wrong because of what is appropriate in the scientific method, but is not called for in the non-scientific method, will be right only in the scientific sense but not in the non-scientific sense. The situation would be similar to imposing what is demanded by the context of science on what is not demanded by the context of non-science. Given the differences in contexts, that is those of the European and the Azande, it would be unfair to use what is demanded in one context to pass judgement of right and wrong, because a different context demands differently.

In the previous section, Winch linked us to Wittgenstein in a bid to make us see clearly that it would not be appropriate to use a method from one culture to gain intelligibility of correctness and incorrectness in different cultures. Wittgenstein attempted this and it could not work. The language of formal logic could not be basic or foundational to all languages. He failed to demonstrate that it is only through the discourse of formal logic that reality in all aspects could be reflected.

Similarly, though Evans-Pritchard had introduced two language-games, it is not proper for him to say that the Europeans are correct and the Azande are mistaken. There will be no game to talk of if the Azande attempted to play the European game, whose rules they are ignorant of.

In Chapter Two, Wittgenstein fails to make formal logic foundational. The question is, why? In the same chapter he introduces the idea of language-games. Winch helps us to see that, though language-games may be introduced, all reality may not be captured by following rules when, at times, we may not see the point in following these rules. Still the question remains, why did Wittgenstein fail to see the possibility of inter-relatedness in languages and the problems that were likely to emerge out of following the rules of each game?

This is where Lonergan's idea of the subject – as discussed in Chapter Three and Barden's idea of the set of operations, to be discussed in chapter five – comes in. As mentioned in the previous section, picturing reality by formal logic would be

described by Lonergan as a step among the many. The subject-less picturing would not be adequate to capture reality in all spheres. Logical reasoning, through elementary or atomic propositions, extends logic to the theoretical level. As Winch has clearly demonstrated, however, reality in all circles cannot be reflected through theory *per se*. So Wittgenstein's approach of formal logic could not work because it was not comprehensive enough as to include other operations such as the judgement of whether what he was advocating for could truly be reflected in his method.

The same can be said in his approach to the language-games, much as it can be said of Evans-Pritchard's science game. Lonergan and Barden would still say that what can reflect reality in its entirety and eventually lead to objective truth – if that is attainable – is not following rules *per se* as Wittgenstein puts it or prescribing the science discourse as being the correct one as Evans-Pritchard states, but applying the pattern or set of operations.

For our concern and purpose it is these operations which constitute the subject, hence making the subject foundational to all theories, all rules and all prescriptions.

#### ***4.5.3 Comment on Learning from other Cultures: MacIntyre***

In this section we shall look closely at MacIntyre's view, that it is the norms of rationality from the science culture or context of the Europeans which cannot but act as a model to other cultures, such as the non-science culture or context of the Azande. MacIntyre begins his exposition with the example of the stock of descriptions. He stipulates that a social anthropologist – the European – attempting to gain intelligibility in a non-science culture such as that of the Azande may begin by looking at the stock of descriptions in that culture. He proceeds as follows: one can look at the constituents of their beliefs, speculations and objects. Winch may be agreeing with MacIntyre in many respects, except when it comes to the means of gaining intelligibility. MacIntyre explains that the Europeans will gain intelligibility in the Azande stock of descriptions through the European norms of rationality, as he puts it, "our own norms of rationality".

Winch strongly believes that MacIntyre cannot gain intelligibility of the Azande ways of life by using the scientific norms of rationality. Instead, the European can gain this intelligibility by looking at the sense that the Azande language gives this

stock of descriptions, which is rooted in the history of the Azande and not in that of the Europeans so it would be more appropriate to use Rhees' idea of looking at the Azande language and seeing how it reflects their beliefs and practices.

We would agree with Rhees and say that looking at the stock of descriptions of the Azande's way of life would only be the beginning of gaining knowledge about Azande beliefs and practices. Inevitably, the European may have to look at the sense which the Azande language reflects in these descriptions. As we know, every language has the surface and deep semantic structures, or the literal and the literary meanings. The literal structures give meanings according to the letters of the propositions. For instance, the expression "A cup of tea" in the literal sense means an object ("cup") with tea in it, while the same expression in a certain culture may mean a bribe. When MacIntyre talks of gaining intelligibility of the stock of descriptions of the Azande using the scientific norms of rationality, this falls short of the literary meanings in these descriptions. Depending on the culture in question, it may be the literary semantics which are more respected than the literal semantics. This may be the case, especially in primitive cultures, where proverbial language, for instance, is respected more than literal meanings.

This is where Rhees' criticism of Wittgenstein becomes relevant. Meanings happen to be interdependent. Following rules of a particular language-game may not bring out all reality in a particular culture. In this case a stock of descriptions, in Lonergan's sense, would be merely preliminary data, which would lead to intelligibility only after other operations had been engaged.

Regarding the stock of a particular culture, we do not agree with MacIntyre that one gains intelligibility in this stock by using the scientific norms of rationality. We do agree with Winch, up to a point, where one needs to examine the sense that the Azande language gives these descriptions, bearing in mind that language gives both literal and literary meanings. We agree entirely with Lonergan's position, that the stock of descriptions can only serve as data that would serve as a starting point towards gaining intelligibility in the Azande stock of descriptions.

From identifying action through a stock of descriptions MacIntyre moves to the distinction of the criteria of rationality between the Europeans and the Azande. MacIntyre's view is that if something is explained as rational in a certain society then

that explanation has to be rational in the European sense, and if the criteria used are rational at all then they have to be rational in the European sense. According to him, the case holds also for intelligibility. If something is intelligible then it has to be intelligible in the European sense.

Winch does not accept this position. The Azande and the Europeans operate in different categories. For instance the category of the oracle is different from the category of the laboratory. In this respect, the category of the oracle and that of the laboratory are seen as designating the distinction between what is science and what is non-science. One can not use the criteria of the laboratory in the oracle. It simply cannot work. In addition to that, the European may want to base his actions on scientific theory and hypothesis. This may be absent in the category of the Azande. So how is the European standard going to determine rationality in this respect? MacIntyre is not being realistic when he says that for any action to be rational it must be so in the European sense. If that were to be the case, then whatever other communities like the Azande are doing which are not in consonance with the European standards of rationality, according to the norms of Europeans, would be irrational. Would that be a realistic assertion to make? It may be so, but only as far as Europeans are concerned.

If a European is seeking intelligibility in a foreign culture and uses her own standards of rationality to determine what is rational and what is irrational, and what is intelligible or not, then whatever results she will get will reflect reality in a manner in which she wants it to be and not what it is in the real sense. In other words, it will be in her interest, dictated by her method, which may not be applicable in that particular context, or right according to the one applying it in a wrong context. MacIntyre's point here is that the European does not have any standard of rationality other than his own. This is where the set of operations appears in a timely manner. The two categories, that is the Europeans and the Azande, share this endowment of the set of operations. It is through this set of operations that the two communities can learn from one another.

The categories' institution and interest are different. Consequently, the norms of rationality should equally be different. That being the case, the standards of rationality in a scientific culture will not reveal realities in a non-scientific culture.



For the purpose of this thesis we agree with Winch that a European seeking to understand what transpires in a foreign culture should not impose his own standards of rationality and intelligibility on that culture. In other words, she should not import the stock of descriptions of a primitive culture into her own and begin to analyse them using standards which have no relationship whatsoever with what she is analysing. As Winch suggests, she should seek to extend her own intelligibility in the foreign culture which she is analysing. She should examine the sense which the language in a foreign culture gives to these descriptions. She should go beyond the boundaries of her own culture. This can be achieved through the set of operations.

In restricting the concept of rationality to science, one may be daring enough to say that, MacIntyre's case becomes worse than Wittgenstein's. At least Wittgenstein suggests following rules of a particular game; the right rules and the right game. MacIntyre, however, is faced with two games, his own game and that of the Azande. In the Wittgenstein case, his own game has its own rules, which are unique to that game. The Azande, on the other hand, have their own rules, which are equally unique to their game. MacIntyre is faced with the scientific game, whose rules he knows very well, and the Azande game, whose rules he is ignorant of. In other words, he is suggesting the use of different rules to play a different game. However, we need to clarify that we are using the concept "rationality" not to mean a rule among rules or a game among games. Rationality is the way we think about everything. It is a potential that is common to both the Azande and the Europeans. So instead of confining himself to his own norms of rationality, MacIntyre may seek to extend this potential to the Azande context. What we would suggest is for him, first of all, to follow Winch's advice of extending his own intelligibility into the Azande way of life. He can do this by imitating Lonergan and applying his pattern of operations into the Azande culture. That is the only way he can learn from the Azande. For instance, he could begin by seeking intelligibility in the literal and literary interpretations of their language aiming at gaining the sense which their language gives to their beliefs and practices and then proceed, in the Lonergan sense, with the basic set of operations of being alert, intelligent and reasonable in all the beliefs and practices of the Azande. Through that procedure he may gain knowledge of the Azande way of life. He should not continue to be limited to the scientific approach.

This is because, it is the Lonergan approach that co-ordinates and unifies all the other approaches. It thus remains a powerful tool for inter-cultural learning.

In his argument, which to a large extent we agree with, Winch implies that the European norms of rationality are not a finite set, complete in itself and ready to be applied to all contexts. He advances a very important point in his submission that all of us, irrespective of culture of origin, learn to speak, think and act rationally through being trained to adhere to particular cultural norms. But that in itself does not mean that we have attained a complete finite package applicable to all contexts.

Winch explains that we should remain open to new possibilities of what could be invoked and accepted under the rubric of rationality. In other words, we should not remain locked up in our own cocoons and contexts but remain completely open-minded.

We cannot agree more with Winch in his message that the approach of learning how to think, speak and act rationally can be applied to the European and enable her to grasp other forms of rationality, which may be different from those in her own culture. This is a process that takes place in a particular culture or a particular context, but due the fact that we learn them in a particular culture or context does not localise them. For example, if we learn how to speak English and how to think in English, it does not mean that it is the end of the matter. We can apply these skills similarly to any other language, culture or context.

These skills - in our case operations, though not in the Lonergan sense of being integrated and complete in themselves – are common to all of us irrespective of the languages we speak and the cultural backgrounds we happen to come from. All of us can speak, think and act rationally. In using the sense which our languages give to meanings we can distinguish what is rational and what is irrational. We can extend this capacity – and not necessarily the mode – to other languages and cultures.

This is precisely what Winch is inviting MacIntyre to do. He should extend his capacity to learn from the mode of the Azande and not prescribe his own mode to the Azande culture. In other words – to use Lonergan's expression – MacIntyre should extend his "pattern of operations" to the Azande language, categories and institutions; and consciously apply these operations if he wants to gain intelligibility in the cultural matters of the Azande.

For our part it should be rationality, rather than the norms of rationality, which should be emphasised. Norms of rationality, like the rules of logic, can be subjected to the set of operations, that is they can be reflected upon and, if necessary, changed. Norms or rules are simply a guide and not a finite determinant. What is rational can change if circumstances demand it. Among some cultures, such as the primitive cultures, it was irrational for a woman to speak in public. But today we have women members of parliament, so what is rational today can be irrational tomorrow and *vice versa*, or what is considered rational in culture “x” may turn out to be irrational in culture “y”.

To use logic as an example, the rules of logic can determine what is rational, but circumstances can lead to the changing of these rules, and that will necessarily change the status of what they determine as rational. MacIntyre’s position cannot survive this reality. His norms of rationality can change. If that turns out to be the case, then in what sense can these norms be taken as a model for other cultures to emulate? Worse still, they may not necessarily be applicable to the beliefs and practices of a particular culture.

According to our thesis, what is really fundamental are not the norms of rationality either in the Azande or the European contexts, but rationality itself. What is similar to all of us is not the norms but rationality. Because rationality is similar to all of us, that makes it fundamental or foundational to us all.

In this chapter, Winch succeeds in pointing out problems posed by Evans-Pritchard. Evans-Pritchard more specifically raises the issues of objective facts, reality and truth. Though he recognises and respects the non-science or common sense method, such as the oracular one practised by the Azande to deal with witchcraft, this method is not in accord with objective facts reality and truth. Winch does not agree with this position. He feels that these issues need to be defined within the relevant context in which they are operating. It would not be appropriate to define objective facts and reality within the non-science context of the Azande using the scientific theory-based mode of the Europeans.

He uses Wittgenstein’s ideas to try to explain this scenario. Wittgenstein used the approach of formal logic to attempt to establish a foundation that would reflect all reality. This is equivalent to Evans-Pritchard’s idea of using the scientific approach to

reach objective facts, reality and truth. Wittgenstein himself realised that this could not work. Winch is using this example to explain away Evans-Pritchard's idea that you cannot use one approach in one context to gain all knowledge in the cultural contexts, for example, which are not scientific. Winch instead opts for the approach of the language-games. In the process he ends up creating an even bigger problem. He points out that in order for the European to gain intelligibility of the Azande culture she should not use her own approach as standard but should instead seek to extend her own interest, unreservedly, into the Azande way of life and try to follow their own language-game. Language is rooted in a people's cultural history. This means that even its rules are rooted in that history. Therefore what success does the European have of attaining intelligibility of a foreign culture playing a language-game whose rules are rooted in history which is alien to her? Here we are trying to emphasise Winch's problem of extending intelligibility inter-culturally. He creates a problem that he does not help us to solve. For instance, what happens when it comes to reaching reality through proverbial language whose meanings are rooted in a people's experiences which are absent in the European culture? Which rules is she going to follow and, since she lacks the self-correcting method because she is not a native, how is she going to know that she is following the right rules? While it remains a good idea for the European to learn from the Azande, there is also the danger of that learning giving the European superficial knowledge. We see that even following the rules of different language-games is not a solution for gaining intelligibility of reality in all circles. In the next chapter we will discuss how the problem of inter-cultural learning is solved through the set of operations.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

We are still perusing the problem of a foundation to all knowledge. We started with Wittgenstein, in Chapter Two, attempting to establish a foundation for knowledge in formal logic. In our case we argued that that was erroneous, since Wittgenstein did not give the subject-in-act a functional role and only designated the subject a metaphysical position of being the limit of the world. We saw that even in the *Philosophical Investigations* the subject-in-act does not play a foundational but a social role. The subject is to learn and follow the rule in the language-game as it functions in society. We argued that the subject-in-act should be ultimate to the rule



as it functions in the language-game. In Chapter Three, Cronin, following Lonergan, helps us to find a foundation to knowledge. This foundation comes as a result of “interiority” or self-appropriation, in our case the subject-in-act. In Chapter Four we have seen a case in point that helps us to discuss the inevitability of the subject-in-act in all situations, this time in society.

We are using Winch’s ideas in this discussion. He presents two societies: the scientific and the non-scientific. The scientific is represented by Europeans and the non-scientific by the Azande, who represent a primitive society. In order to get to knowledge, the scientific society uses the science-based theory and hypothesis, while the non-scientific consults with the oracle. Two points of view emerge out of this scenario. Evans-Pritchard and MacIntyre, who represent the scientific society, represent the first view. The second view is represented by Winch, who critiques the first view. The crux of the matter in Evans-Pritchard’s argument is that it is the scientific approach that leads to objective reality and truth. MacIntyre argues that it is difficult for anyone to explain the social behaviour of a particular society or community outside ones norms of rationality. This implies that it would be difficult for the scientific society of Evans-Pritchard and MacIntyre to gain intelligibility in the primitive community of the Azande and *vice versa*.

Winch opposes this view. For him it is possible for the scientific culture to extend its own intelligibility into the Azande culture. Winch, perhaps without realising it, creates a problem that he does not solve. He does not tell us how the Europeans can extend their own intelligibility into the Azande way of life. Extending intelligibility from one culture to another means that it is possible for one culture to learn from the other, but each culture is playing its own language-game and following its own rules. How are these societies going to learn from one another? This is the problem that Winch presents to us.

In the next chapter, Barden talks of “Traditions” and “Operations”. In his argument he shows how the basic set of operations is foundational to any tradition. Barden, in addition to helping us find a solution to Winch’s problem of a method that is common to both the Europeans and the Azande, namely engaging the basic set of operations, helps us to show that the subject-in-act is foundational to all methods in all societies or communities and all disciplines.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## FOUNDATION FOR KNOWING, A CROSS-CULTURAL CONCEPT: BARDEN'S IDEA OF THE SET OF OPERATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

In Chapter Three we discussed Lonergan's idea of the subject and the basic pattern of operations. It is this pattern which forms a foundation or the transcendental method. Barden picks it up from there and goes a step further and introduces the idea of systems in contexts or traditions. He argues that Lonergan's basic pattern of operations, which he calls the set of operations in their operation, begins from a particular context or a tradition. As we argued in Chapter Three, transcendental method is a method that is poised to function in all traditions. The point here is that it is not advisable for us to begin to look for knowledge in all traditions, as Winch suggests (see Chapter Four), without a firm grasp of the context in which we find ourselves. It is advisable, therefore, to begin in a particular tradition, our tradition, and expand from there to other traditions. Our own tradition is the ideal starting point for the actualisation of the transcendental method, because it is the tradition which is rich with data with which we are familiar.

This is necessary, because beginning from a standpoint above all traditions may result in undesirable consequences of committing errors that are commonplace in philosophy. The case in point, for example, is in Chapter Two, where we see Wittgenstein making the context of formal logic foundational to all contexts. This venture does not work; he moves to following a rule in the language-games, but this does not work either. It would not be ideal for transcendental method to begin either in an alien tradition or in a vacuum. It needs data of the senses, that is the context in which the propositions of a particular culture are fairly well known to the inquiring subject. From there the subject-in-act can expand her horizon to any context whatsoever.

In Chapter Five we tie the loose ends of our thesis in order to project its complete edifice. The chapter helps us to address and answer questions raised by Wittgenstein, Lonergan and Winch. We must point out, however, that Barden's book

*After Principles* (1990)<sup>10</sup> – which is the main text for this chapter – chiefly focuses on ethics. But, as we know, ethics is a context like any other such as formal logic, mathematics and science. We recall that, in Chapter Three, we argued that our method, the transcendental method, does fit all contexts. Here we are using Barden's ideas, because he helps us to actualise transcendental method. Although he is mainly addressing ethical issues for us, we are taking ethics as a case in point or a context like any other. He presents the case for the operations of the subject in a manner that solves the problem of the foundation to knowledge, in particular as the question is posed in cross-cultural contexts, which is our concern in this thesis.

### **5.1.1 Résumé**

Barden presents two broad ideas, namely the idea of traditions, systems, cultures and their coherence and the idea of how we arrive at truth in inter-cultural debates. In other words, it puts across the fact that knowing is always knowing against a horizon. Therefore one culture can broaden its horizon by learning from another culture. In this chapter most of the answers raised to questions in Chapters Two, Three and Four of our thesis are found. In Chapter Five Barden discusses various cases, including traditions, as exemplified in the comparison between the Azande and the European traditions. This is an aspect which is discussed in detail in Chapter Four, with reference to Winch. In Chapter Five we shall find the answer to the problem raised by Winch concerning how to gain knowledge in different contexts such as those of the Europeans and the Azande. We now proceed with an exposition of the main issues in *After Principles*.

#### **5.1.1.1 We are Born in a Particular Culture or Horizon**

Barden begins his exposition by placing us within the context of a tradition. He is of the opinion that a person does not choose where to be born. She finds herself in a particular tradition. In this particular tradition she finds rules, principles and laws already in place. She finds herself placed against the background of the history of her

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<sup>10</sup> Hereafter, *AP*

ancestors. She does not participate in the formulation of this arrangement and it does not become the ultimate for her. It only serves as a launch pad to propel her to greater horizons. It is a catalyst to provoke her into further innovations for the transformation of her cultural practices and even her tradition. A person is born with the potential to grasp the linguistic structure of the cultural set-up she finds in place and whatever values are involved therein.

Barden argues, though, that neither propositions/principles nor contexts are ultimately basic. Basic propositions are what are taken as given, or even innate presuppositions, principles or general guidelines that are basic or underlie or determine everything else in a cultural set up or a social group. But a person is not limited by the basic propositions of a tradition. She is born with the creative potential to influence change in whatever set- up she finds herself in. Although she does not choose the tradition in which to be born, where she ends is her personal responsibility.

Barden provides various examples of what is generally considered basic in a cross-section of different traditions. He gives the example of St. Thomas Aquinas. For him the basic proposition was that God commanded only the good. God could not command anything whatsoever but only what was good. For Occam, the basic proposition was that God commanded everything but the contradictory. For Occam, God's command became the criterion for all action. For Hobbes, it is the sovereign that is basic. It even replaces the command of God. It is also imagined that statements expressing God's law such as "Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not commit adultery" (*AP*: 24) are basic propositions. Natural law theorists believe that natural laws are not only basic but also innate. Barden talks also of Collingwood's approach in his essay, "An Essay on Metaphysics" (Oxford, 1940), as suggestive of the fact that "...the basic premises are culturally given...as absolute presuppositions". Barden puts it clearly that traditions do make sets of propositions basic. The case he is putting forward holds even for other systems in other fields such as logic and science.

Barden not only rejects cultures and systems that put forward sets of propositions as basic, he also rejects the very notion of natural propositions. To him there is no such a thing as natural propositions. Propositions are neither innate nor natural. Propositions have to be learnt. It is what is contained in the proposition that could be natural. Much as he does not accept the notion of propositions as basic, equally he does not entertain the possibility of contexts being basic. Contexts may be



relative. For him it is possible, for purposes of expanding the horizons of knowledge, to use one context as one's standpoint, but seek answers in another context, which may happen to have the needed answer, which is absent in one's own context. We discuss this in 5.2.7.2

#### ***5.1.1.2 Criteria for Judgement***

While moving from context to context in search of answers that may be inadequately or not properly answered in the previous narrower context, a very important question arises. That is the question of criteria for judgement. Barden introduces a discussion on criteria using the theory of naïve correspondence. Having criteria is not only a necessary condition for navigating within contexts but for handling judgements as well. According to Barden, the theory of correspondence is, itself, not basic, even though it is useful in providing the method for the subject to link propositions to reality. In using the theory of correspondence, Barden is still emphasising the fact that it is the subject that handles this theory. He explains his stand with three examples. These are: using images such as a photograph to establish reality; using mechanical logic, such as the case in computer calculus; and using sentences and propositions to establish truth. We discuss these aspects in 5.3.1.

#### ***5.1.1.3 Moving from the Purely Cognitive to the Realm of Behaviour***

In Chapter Five Barden recaptures Winch's comparative exposition of the Azande and the scientific traditions. He then moves to our problem, raised by Winch, of the method that can enable us learn from all contexts. He proceeds by making a comparative analysis of the beliefs and the judicial systems of the Azande and the European traditions. He points out that at times beliefs within traditions are accepted without criticism. While to some European traditions beliefs may be based on reason, to the Azande certain beliefs are accepted without criticism. For instance, there are situations where they believe that certain members within their society have innate powers or influences that can cause harm to others. In order to reveal who this is, the oracle is consulted. The difference between the two systems is that in the European system cases are referred to the courts of law in their grades, from the magistrate's courts to the highest court of appeal depending on the gravity of the case. In the

Azande tradition, different oracles are consulted according to hierarchy, again depending on the nature and weight of the case.

He points out that, in the European tradition, the intention of the jury is not to find out the guilty or the innocent but to establish what is due to whom. The process of establishing the guilty and the innocent works only as a means to that objective. When this situation is put in practice the parallel between the two traditions becomes apparent. Taking the institution of justice as a case in point, in both traditions, before the issue of reparation or reconciliation is addressed, for example, there is need to find the guilty party. On this particular issue, Barden shows that though the Azande and the Europeans are addressing different content, they both have a structure or a framework of procedure from which each culture can learn something. We discuss this in sub-section 5.3.4.

Though Barden's ideas focus mainly on ethics, they play a dual function, in a sense that section five of *AP* on traditions and operations deals more specifically with practical reasoning. However, this must not be understood in the narrower sense – but rather in all practical reasoning – for example, in traditions and other systems. In all these cases Barden is demonstrating the fact that it is the subject-based set of operations that is basic in the sense of providing a foundation for establishing further knowledge and understanding in each particular case.

A foundation would need to provide standards for distinguishing myth and science, for example, or science and philosophy, or even between ethics and mere prejudice, such as “white” being superior to “black.” That is, the subject can explain or give reliable knowledge in all these cases. Ideas in this particular section are homogeneous with our case, which defines the subject-in-act functioning as the set of operations.

## **5.2 Analysis of Ideas on Traditions and Operations**

### ***5.2.1 Subject-in-Act: Operational in Traditions***

The main objective of Chapter Five is to address and resolve the issues raised by Wittgenstein in Chapter Two, to actualise the subject presented by Lonergan in Chapter Three and to answer the problem of the intercultural method raised by Winch in Chapter Four. We have discussed the ideas of these philosophers; it is now time to

concretise them into a foundation that can be used inter-culturally. We need to repeat that, while in Chapter Three Lonergan gives us a foundation, it is Barden in Chapter Five who helps us to apply it to these issues of cross-cultural problems.

We reiterate that the overall objective of this thesis is to establish a foundation that would co-ordinate all other methods in different disciplines that lead us to the understanding, explaining and knowing of all reality cross-culturally. With that objective in mind we are immediately faced with a question and that is where do we begin to look for our foundation? Let us examine the possible answer below.

In practical affairs, no less than in science, we begin from our tradition since our tradition is not only where but also more profoundly, what we are (*AP*: 51). In this assertion Barden is emphasising the fact that a tradition is not only a collection of beliefs and practices, languages, attitudes, values and artefacts over there and the subject right here and the two mutually interacting because they happen to be found in the same environment, that is a situation that is tantamount to having an individual and her tradition as separate entities with an individual drawing or searching for her identity in her tradition. This is not necessarily the case. Barden further emphasises this point in the above expression, "... but, more profoundly, what we are." The subject and her tradition seem to be woven into a fine mesh or system. The construction of this edifice commences at her birth right up to the present time. That said, however, in this edifice there is a set of operations in the idea of the subject-in-act. It is the subject-in-act who is foundational and not the tradition itself. As he confirms,

Real ethical traditions are rarely totally systematic. They are collections of accumulated wisdom. It is, on the other hand, possible to make attempt to systematise a tradition: the codification of law is an example of such an attempt (*AP*: 55).

(We are using the expression "ethical traditions" as a case in point. This could be any tradition.)

In the above quotation, Barden reminds us of a very important fact. That is, though we are a tradition, this tradition is not totally systematic, but nevertheless a tradition can be systematised. He has given us the example of the codification of law. The point here is that though we are a tradition, we are, at the same time, the set of operations or the subject-in-act who is capable of codifying the law. The accumulated

wisdom is expressed in propositions or postulates or axioms. These may be in the form of principles, general guidelines or rules. Whatever form they may take, however, they can only serve as data. There still remains the need for the systematising criterion and that is the subject-in-act. It is the systematising criterion – the subject-in-act – that will codify the law and totally systematise the tradition. Right from the beginning Barden is thus putting the subject-in-act in a foundation position. So let us now proceed with the actualisation of the subject.

### ***5.2.2 Problem of Relativism and Traditions***

We begin this actualisation with an exploration of a problem. We have just said that we are not only located in a tradition but we are also defined by a tradition. In Chapter Four we had said that traditions or systems are different. A very good example is that of Evans-Pritchard's science or the European system and the non-science or the Azande system. The discovery of this difference

... assumes that there are logically incompatible systems and that actors are in principle confined within one of them (*AP*: 56-57).

Barden compares this situation to geometry. He says that different geometries with mutually incompatible postulates are incompatible. This case is comparable to different traditions. As he puts it, different traditions with different and incompatible postulates will be incompatible. He also stipulates that if human responsibility is confined within a logical system, then in, as far as there are incompatible logical systems, there will be radical relativism of traditions.

What would the implication of this state of affairs be? Barden gives us the likelihood of what is likely to happen by comparing traditions A and B. He proceeds as follows: suppose the two traditions are both logical systems, each with its own postulates, definitions and conclusions. If actors perform wholly within their respective traditions, there might arise a situation where A as a tradition may have a postulate that there can be no circumstances in which it would be good for an ethical actor to state what he or she knew to be untrue and suppose that B as a tradition also has a postulate that there may be circumstances in which an ethical actor can state what he or she knew to be untrue. Given this situation, it is clear that an actor from tradition A who tells the truth and an actor from tradition B who tells a lie under the



same circumstances will act correctly, as long as they operate within the confines of their respective traditions. However, the question still remains, is there a meeting point between actors from tradition A and actors from tradition B? So the implication here is that the two traditions are simply incommensurable. Actors are confined within the respective logical systems of their traditions. There can be no possibility for the two traditions to engage in a logical argument. Even if there were a possibility of an argument between the two traditions, the conclusions derived by the two traditions would still be incompatible. Does this state of affairs signal an impasse? Barden says no. Proponents of modern radical relativism are generally agreed that

...ethical actors are already fundamentally confined within an already given horizon, or worldview, or episteme, or paradigm, or a set of presuppositions or postulates... (AP: 56).

An impasse, according to Braden, would arise if the ethical actors were confined within their mutually incompatible traditions in principle. This problem is allayed by the fact that ethical actors are largely confined within an already given horizon, or worldview or episteme, as stipulated above. In other words, they are confined in these spheres mainly in practice. That leaves an opening. This opening lies in recognising the difference between being confined in principle and being confined in practice. To illustrate this point, Barden uses Collingwood's example of the logic of question and answer. According to this logic,

...Propositions were answers to questions; questions emerged from presuppositions; these presuppositions were either relative or absolute; relative presuppositions were themselves answers to earlier questions and so were also propositions; absolute presuppositions were not answers to earlier questions but formed the intellectual context within which the questions arose. Intellectual contexts with different and mutually incompatible absolute presuppositions were incommensurable. Enquirers operated within these intellectual contexts (Collingwood, *Essay on Metaphysics*, in AP: 57).

The question that we have to answer is whether Collingwood's views do aggregate to what may be called radical relativism. Barden redirects this position by saying that if Collingwood had stopped there then this view would have aggregated to what may be called radical relativism. But Collingwood avoids this position by recognising the fact that it is possible for an enquirer or a group of enquirers to shift from one set of absolute propositions to another, in other words, to shift from one basic intellectual context to another. This implies that those enquirers and the community of inquirers,

in principle, are not confined to the intellectual context or tradition in which they are born or find themselves.

Given this development, Barden is repudiating or avoiding altogether the notion of radical relativism, that is, he is avoiding the assertion that within a tradition there are postulates that everyone must accept. Accepting such a position would be tantamount to accepting the notion that there are incontrovertible truths that must be accepted by everyone in all traditions. Barden reminds us that the search for incontrovertible truths has occupied the minds of philosophers for centuries. He asserts that

... that may have been tried for several centuries for both judgements of fact and judgements of value. Underlying the real and important differences between empiricists and rationalists, between modern natural lawyers and command theorists, is the shared concern to discover incontrovertible truths. The empiricists and rationalists looked for these truths in different places, but they were looking for the same thing and both conspicuously failed to find it (*AP*: 58).

He proceeds to cite some of the prominent philosophers who have engaged in the search but failed. These include Pierce, Dewey, the early Wittgenstein and Heidegger, to mention a few. He proceeds to draw a conclusion: "I am convinced that these fundamentally incontrovertible given truths simply do not exist" (*AP*: 58). He observes that the common concern occupying the minds of philosophers from different schools of thought is how to account for human knowing and valuing in the full realisation that there are no given incontrovertible truths, either of fact or of value.

Some of the philosophers who recognise this fact include Collingwood, who recognises the fact that the enquirer or the community of enquirers is not radically confined within a traditional intellectual context. So what is Barden's advice on this matter? He suggests the repudiation of radical confinement. Barden proceeds to say that, although philosophers like Collingwood recognized this fact, what they failed to advance was either a theory or a method to account for this repudiation. In search of a method, efforts should be concentrated on liberating us from logical, contextual or traditional confinement and instead re-orient us towards human responsibility. Barden reminds us that philosophers, including Davidson, Sartre and Lonergan, have demonstrated that

There is concern to show how the efforts to come to judgements of fact and value is not confined, in principle, to the traditional intellectual context of the

enquirers although it is from within the context, tradition or horizon that the enquirer begins, and must begin, for that is where the enquirer is (*AP*: 59).

It is perfectly legitimate for the enquirer to begin from his context, tradition or horizon. The fact remains that he is inquiring, so it is perfectly normal for him to begin from the propositions, conclusions and postulates or axioms with which he is familiar.

### ***5.2.3 Propositional Coherence and Radical Revisions***

The first question to be asked is how do we escape the confines of these contexts, traditions, horizons and the logical systems? Barden gives us the example of late nineteenth century physics. One of the strains that led Einstein to relative mechanics was the fact that the propositions of electromagnetics were not perfectly consistent with the propositions of mechanics. When Einstein undertook this endeavour one of his main objectives was to dispel the conflict between mechanics and the electromagnetic theory of Maxwell. He warned us that human knowing is not modelled as a logical system or ethics or a science. As he put it, it is true that the conclusions of any modern science may be expressed in postulates, but the problem is that these propositions may or may not be coherent with each other.

The concern here is that if these propositions have turned out to be incoherent with one another, they may not lead to the understanding of the logical system or the tradition or the horizon in which they are functioning. If that turns out to be the case, how can they lead to reliable knowing? It therefore remains clear that propositions or postulates or axioms on their own cannot lead us to the understanding of human knowing. In other words, they cannot form a foundation that would lead to reliable knowing. Below Barden leads us in the exploration of this problem. As we said above, the conclusions of any modern science may be expressed in propositions, which may or may not be coherent with each other.

Barden reminds us that the logical analysis of any science has, as one of its functions, the discovery of coherencies and incoherencies; and that it is the discovery of the latter which incites further discovery and invention. In this enterprise we experience both coherence and incoherence, with incoherence leading to further action and therefore progression. The point here is that there is no foundation that can



be based on the possibilities of the proposition being coherent and incoherent within systems. The main problem remains the fact that this is how systems and traditions operate. To consolidate this, Barden gives us a further example of Hegel's theory of "thesis and antithesis" (AP: 59). In this theory the synthesis is not a consequence of coherence but of conflict between thesis and antithesis.

#### **5.2.4 "Structure of Scientific Revolutions"**

Barden cites the problem of "radical revisions" discovered by Thomas Kuhn (AP: 59). This problem comes about as a consequence of the reality that, in any modern science, there exist elements that are merely supposed to exist and are therefore radically hypothetical. He brings it to our attention that it is the presence of these radically hypothetical elements that led Kuhn to the discovery of radical revisions.

The first radical revision was the one between the pre-Newtonian before Newtonian mechanics. The question that faced the pre-Newtonian scientists before Newtonian mechanics is that it had been assumed that there was no need to explain matter at rest. What needed explanation was the transition from rest to motion. Within Newtonian mechanics, however, what needs explanation is the divergence from uniform motion or acceleration. In other words, uniform motion requires no explanation. Another case that required radical revision was that between Newtonian and relativity mechanics. The question again is what had transpired before relativity mechanics. In Newtonian mechanics it was assumed that what formed the framework against which movement was to be measured was absolute space and absolute time. Relativity mechanics, however, does not respect this position. In the schema of relativity mechanics the assumption of absolute space and time is dropped and instead what is advocated is a multiplicity of frameworks, with transformation equations between them.

What emerges from this drama? In the previous paragraphs we have looked at propositions within a system. Propositions within a system sometimes do not seem to provide us with a perfect internal consistency. Because of the possibility of a lack of a perfect internal consistency within a system it may be difficult to establish a foundation within the system. This is because the system is developing along a direction not predictable from the foundational propositions.



We are confronted with the systems themselves, leading us to radical revisions. We have seen that the two systems, namely the pre-Newtonian mechanics and the Newtonian mechanics, as systems, are incompatible. We have also seen that relativity mechanics as a system are also incompatible with Newtonian mechanics as a system. It is therefore not only propositions within systems which are incommensurate, leading to incompatible and different conclusions, but systems are also incommensurable with systems leading to incompatible conclusions, as exemplified by the pre-Newtonian and the Newtonian mechanics as systems. Perhaps we could call this scenario an extreme case of radical relativism.

To emphasise our fears, Barden gives us an example of a passenger bouncing a ball in a moving train. How would a question such as “what is the real trajectory of the ball?” be answered, according to the interpretation of these different systems? According to Newtonian mechanics, the real trajectory of the ball would be the movement of the ball relative to the framework of absolute space. Relativity mechanics, on the other hand, comes up with a more radical answer. According to this system, there is no single real trajectory of the ball. The ball is simply moving up and down relative to the carriage. That being the case, and assuming that the earth is stationary, what will the answer be to someone who is standing on the side of the track? To this person the ball is simply moving in a parabola. The situation is such that relative to the rotation of the earth the ball will follow a different course and relative to the rotating earth circling the sun the trajectory will be different again.

Using this notion we must draw a distinction between compatibility and incompatibility regarding the scientific system and the ordinary common sense experience. For example, is ordinary common sense experience and science incompatible? In this case, the man standing on the ground is in the realm of ordinary day-to-day experience. The way he perceives the trajectory of the ball is not the same as that of the scientist, because the perception of the scientist is based on a scientifically provable assumption or hypothesis.

The scientist and the common sense man are faced with two different questions on which they base their hypotheses. The question of the common sense man is “How do things relate to us?” In this case, how does the bouncing ball in a moving train relate to the man who is standing on the seemingly stationary earth? The scientist, however, is faced with a different question altogether. His question is “how

does the sun relate to the moving planets”, in this case the earth? The two are therefore not addressing the same question. Because of this, their hypotheses are equally different. The hypothesis of the common sense man is, “The sun rises and sets”. His judgement is based on the common sense evidence. The hypothesis of a scientist is, “The earth moves around the sun”. His judgement is based on the scientifically provable assumption that “The sun is still and it is the planets that move around it”. This scenario looks like a case of incompatibility but, in fact, it is not. It only *appears* to be incompatible. This is because the scenario of the scientist can be scientifically proved, something that can be clearly demonstrated to the common sense man. He can be shown that, relative to the rotation of the earth, the trajectory will appear different; relative to the rotating earth circling the sun the trajectory will appear different again. These different trajectories are not real, but only appear to be real. It can be equated to someone seeing a mirage in the distance. The scenario of the scientist and that of a common sense man are therefore not incompatible, but the problem is that the common sense man lacks adequate knowledge of the relationship between the sun and the planets.

Let us extend this analysis to two people, one of whom thinks along the lines of pre-relativity mechanics and the other along the lines of a radical relativist. The pre-relativity mechanic asks the radical relativist, the one real or the one true trajectory of the ball. The response of the radical relativist will be that the one real or the one true trajectory of the ball is not only unknown but there is no single real trajectory. That is, the question simply does not arise. It remains clear that a radical relativist cannot draw conclusions from the premises of a pre-relativity mechanic and *vice versa*. At this juncture, Barden takes us back to the original question of the source of ultimate hypothetical elements. If human knowing and (valuing) is understood as a logical system, then according to Barden we have reached an impasse. This is because, in the logical system itself, there is no source of these ultimates. Barden expands by informing us that, for example, the postulates and axioms in the Euclidean geometry cannot be derived within the Euclidean system. From this exposition we can see that a logical system cannot be a solution to our problem of a foundation. This leaves us with no alternative but the subject-in-act.

### ***5.2.5 Logical System Compared with a Set of Operations***

Barden has made it clear to us that, whether we like it or not, we belong to systems, horizons and traditions. He advises us to begin searching for a foundation from these systems. This is because, though we may be confined to these systems or traditions practically, we are certainly not confined to them intellectually. Systems may yield incompatible and incommensurable propositions, definitions, postulates or axioms and, at the same time, the systems themselves or traditions may be incompatible or incommensurable. However, that is not the end of the matter. We ask ourselves, again, where do we find a foundation that will lead us to the understanding and knowing of all reality? The answer to this question provides the beginning of the solution to all the problems raised in Chapters Two to Four. So what is the answer? Barden suggests...

that more ultimate than logical systems, more ultimate than the ultimate concepts of any system, is the set of operations that generates all understanding, all knowledge, all systems (*AP*: 61).

It is in this suggestion that we find our answer. What Barden refers to as a “set of operations” Lonergan, in Chapter Three, refers to as the “basic pattern of operations”, or “transcendental method”, and that is what we call the “subject-in-act.” It is the subject-in-act who is foundational and therefore the answer to the problems related to the understanding and knowing reality in the final analysis.

### ***5.2.6 The Principle of Non-Contradiction as Foundational***

According to Barden, propositions are not naturally known. If propositions were to be naturally known, then there would probably be a possibility of seeking a foundation in them. This is not possible, however, as an examination of the example below shows.

“Nothing can both be and not be at the same time and in the same respect.”

“We cannot assert that something both is and is not at the same time and in the same respect.”

“ $\sim (p \ \& \ \sim p)$ ”

“ $\sim (p \ . \ \sim p)$ ”

“ $\text{N K } p \ \text{N } p$ ”

“ $\text{D } p \ \text{N } p$ ”            (*AP*: 62).

Here we have six sentences, but, in fact, only one proposition. It is this one proposition that is expressing the concept of the principle of non-contradiction. The proposition itself is not the principle of non-contradiction. It is only *expressing* the principle of non-contradiction. It is this proposition that, in turn, can be expressed in a variety and a multiplicity of sentences.

Here the question is, what is Barden's objective in giving us the six sentences and what sense does he want us to make of them? We can interpret Barden's six sentences as follows. First of all, we are able to recognise the first two sentences because we are English-speakers and because we learnt the characters which make up those sentences. The point is that, we do not understand them naturally, but we do understand them because we have learnt them. For similar reasons, we are able to recognise the third and fourth sentences because we have learnt symbolic logic, and again, it is because of that that we are able to recognise and make sense out of those symbols and not because we know them naturally.

In fact, some of the textbooks of formal logic give the version of the third sentence, while other textbooks give the version of the fourth sentence. It is possible that a logician who is trained in the first version will not make sense of the symbols in the second version and *vice versa*. It might be that we are unable to make sense out of sentences five and six, which are picked from the Lukasiewicz or Polish Logic, because we are neither speakers of that language nor have we learnt that notation. In fact, Barden challenges us with the case that, suppose a student of logic who has not been taught the principle of non-contradiction was asked whether he knew the principle of non-contradiction, it is very likely that he would not be able to answer the question.

But suppose, to the same student, without mentioning the principle of non-contradiction at all, one uttered a proposition such as, "Ireland is an island and Ireland is not an island" (*AP*: 64). The student or the listener would resist such an expression. Here we ask ourselves why this is the case. It will not be because the student knows the principle of non-contradiction in the ordinary sense of knowing and is applying this ordinary knowledge to the proposition, but because, as Barden puts it, the listener, understood in our terms as the subject-in-act, "is the principle of non-contradiction." He explains that the subject-in-act has the ability to detect and reject a contradiction.



This realisation again takes us back to Wittgenstein's problem of a functionless metaphysical subject. We said it then and we are saying it now, that the subject is not a functionless metaphysical being. We join hands with Barden in saying that

The principle of non-contradiction is not the object of a person's knowing; it is an element in the person's knowing; it is a fact that the person tends to coherence and consistence. A principle is a source from which something flows; from the principle of contradiction flows coherence. The activity that reveals the principle is the tendency toward coherence (*AP*: 65).

Here we must say that, when seeking a foundation, we must proceed from coherence and not from propositions, atomic or elementary, as Wittgenstein suggested. What Barden is trying to say by "the principle of contradiction is not the object of a person's knowing" is that this principle is not intended by the subject. It is not something that is out there detached from the subject and which comes to the subject empirically, or it is not something that one learns first and, because of the knowledge and skills one has acquired, one gets to apply it to a practical situation. We must say that the principle is the source from which learning flows and not the consequence of knowing. As Barden says, "the activity that reveals the principle is the tendency towards coherence" (*AP*: 65). In other words, it is the operation and not the proposition that reveals the principle and it is this principle that leads to coherence.

Barden explains that this realisation that the principle of contradiction is not revealed by a proposition but by an operation helps to portray a shortcoming that is put in place by those he terms "propositionalists." "Propositionalists", in discovering the principle of non-contradiction, first make the practice of knowing the object of their inquiry. The problem with this belief is that, once the principle of non-contradiction has been discovered in this way, it will be expressed in a proposition. To a "propositionalist" the proposition and the principle become one and the same thing. If this proposition is placed in a deductive system, for example, then it could become an axiom within that deductive system. If it became an axiom in that system, then it cannot be deduced within the same system. Within that system it becomes basic, that is neither derived nor derivable.

In our discussion we have reached a stage where it is apparently clear that a proposition cannot become ultimately basic. If at this juncture we allow a proposition to be ultimately basic, then we go back to the problem of incompatibility and

incommensurability within the systems of logic and science. With this trend we end up right at the root of this thesis, where Wittgenstein attempts to make atomic or elementary propositions basic.

Barden helps us to rescue the situation, by pointing out that the principle of non-contradiction is known in two distinct ways. It is known in the practice of knowing. In this respect it is not the object of knowledge, but it may also be known as an object of knowledge, or as what the enquirer is attending to. With this clarification, Barden presents to us with two scenarios. One is the mistaken scenario of the “propositionalist”. This is where the principle of contradiction is regarded as the object of knowledge or what the inquirer is attending to. In this respect, the inquirer will arrive at the principle of non-contradiction through propositions, namely premises and conclusion. From our knowledge of formal logic we know that conclusions are demonstrable. If this is the case, then the situation becomes problematic. We have just seen that an axiom that may be a proposition within a deductive system may not be deduced within that system. This is because, within that system, it happens to be basic, so the effort of the “propositionalist”, of attempting to make the principle of contradiction basic is in vain. The other scenario, which is in consonance with our thesis, is where the principle of contradiction is known in the practice of knowing. In this respect it is neither derived nor derivable. It is known by itself, that is nothing else is used in coming to know it. It flows spontaneously from the subject and is not demonstrated through propositions as an object of knowledge. From our exploration we can see that there are two ways of coming to know the principle of non-contradiction. One of these is to make it the intended object of knowledge and the other is through the operation of the subject. Barden suggests that we may consider ourselves as coherently present to ourselves in the activity of knowing. In other words, we can consciously and spontaneously repudiate a contradiction when we are confronted with it.

The proposition such as “Ireland is both an island and not an island”, for example, is spontaneously rejected by the subject-in-act, as himself or herself intelligently and rationally at work. That makes the subject at work or the subject-in-act, and not the proposition “Ireland is an island and not an island”, the principle of non-contradiction. As Barden states,

...what is ultimate is a set of operations in their operation and not a set of propositions as known and as expressed in sentences. What is ultimate are operations, not propositions. The principle of contradiction is an operation through which we attain coherence; it is ourselves intellectually and rationally operating coherently. It is that operation that is ultimate. The sentence that expresses the proposition, that expresses the concept of the principle of non-contradiction, as an object of knowledge, is not ultimate (*AP*: 66).

### ***5.2.7 Application of Our Ideas to the Inter-Cultural Context***

We now apply these ideas to the inter-cultural context. We need to clarify the grounds for arriving at truth in general, along the lines we have been suggesting. First we focus on the proposition. Later, in section 5.3, we mainly focus on the criteria for arriving at the truth.

#### ***5.2.7.1 Truth of a Proposition and the Subject-in-Act***

We must clarify that when we talk of truth being determined by the subject-in-act we do not in any way imply absence of inter-subjective truth. We are not looking at truth in the Cartesian sense where truth exists in an individual's mind in disregard of what may be existing in other minds. Our contention is that if the precepts of the subject-in-act are followed, by no matter who, it will lead to truth; hence the idea of inter-subjective truth.

With that clarification made we precede to ask the question, "How do we get to the truth of a proposition?" Barden gives us three scenarios that are involved in this task. In the first scenario, we have to establish the fact that propositions can be both true and false. In the second scenario, we have to establish the fact that a proposition can be true whether any one knows it or not. In the third scenario, we have to establish the fact that a proposition can be known to be true.

We now proceed to illustrate these scenarios, using Barden's examples. In the first scenario Barden gives us the example, "Pegasus is a flying horse" (*AP*: 76). This proposition could be true if Pegasus was a character in a myth. It could be false if Pegasus is a real horse that can fly. We illustrate the second scenario with the example, "Atahualpa was the last emperor of the Incas" (*AP*: 76). According to Barden, this proposition will be true if, and only if, Atahualpa was the last emperor of the Incas.

This exposition takes us back to our original question, posed at the beginning of this sub-section, of how to get to the truth of a proposition. There are three ways in which this can be done. The first one is through the naïve correspondence theory, which claims that truth can be obtained from a proposition by comparing it with reality. Barden is of the view that this cannot be done and, where it could be possible, it would be redundant.

The second approach is through Tarski's principle, which states that the proposition P is true if, and only if, the state of affairs P obtains. This principle helps to explain Barden's second example, that is "Atahualpa was the last emperor of the Incas". According to Barden, Tarski's principle is applicable to any proposition. In other words, a proposition is true if, and only if, the state of affairs it asserts obtains. Anything contrary to this is unacceptable. He illustrates this point with the following examples (*AP*: 77):

- i. Atahualpa was the last emperor of the Incas, but the proposition "Atahualpa was the last emperor of the Incas" is false.
- ii. Atahualpa was not the last emperor of the Incas, but the proposition "Atahualpa was the last emperor of the Incas" is true.
- iii. Atahualpa was the last emperor of the Incas, but the proposition "Atahualpa was the last emperor of the Incas" is neither true nor false.
- iv. Atahualpa was not the last emperor of the Incas, but the proposition "Atahualpa was the last emperor of the Incas" is neither true nor false.
- v. Atahualpa both was and was not the last emperor of the Incas.

Propositions one to four clearly support Tarski's principle and, if one accepts proposition five, then one is repudiating the principle of non-contradiction. The relevance of Tarski's approach to truth lies in the fact that generally, in all traditions, a contradiction is unacceptable. Secondly, in almost every culture or tradition, a proposition is acceptable not only because it is true but also because it is known to be true. That is, when the state of affairs obtains.

The third approach by which the truth can be obtained from a proposition is through Barden's approach of the subject-in-act. As he puts it:

A proposition is known to be true if the judging subject has sufficient evidence to come to the judgement, such and such is the case. Accordingly for me to know that Atahualpa was the last emperor of the Incas requires that I (not somebody else, but I) have sufficient evidence (*AP*: 78).



He emphasises that the evidence must be sufficient for him. It is him and not anybody else who must know, so the evidence must be sufficient for him. It is him who must be convinced, again not anybody else. This stage is reached when there are no further relevant questions to ask.

Barden introduces a very interesting notion, which distinguishes his case from the position of the naïve correspondence theory. He shows this in the following:

When I grasp that the evidence is sufficient and judge that something is the case, then I claim that it is the case independent of my judging. That is I claim that the fact that I am convinced is not part of the evidence for the thing's being the case (*AP*: 79).

In this particular case, Barden is trying to differentiate two different things; one is the evidence itself, which must be sufficient and two, the operation of judging. What this means is that what leads to truth of the proposition is the operation of judging; as he confirms it:

Most fundamentally, the criterion of the true judgement of fact is not reality that may be compared with the proposition; it is rather the enquiring and reasonable subject (*AP*: 79)

### ***5.2.7.2 Problem of Objective Knowledge in an Inter-Cultural Context***

At this juncture, let us recall Winch's argument in Chapter Four. Winch projects MacIntyre as suggesting that one cannot explain social behaviour independently of one's norms of rationality. This is reminiscent of Evans-Pritchard's idea that it is the scientific method which leads to objective truth and reality. Using examples from Wittgenstein's theory of following a rule, Winch points out that it is difficult to draw conclusions in one context from premises drawn in another context. In other words, for MacIntyre to suggest that the Azande common sense practice of witchcraft cannot be explained by the European outside his norms of rationality, reflects that he is playing the European language-game. Also, Evans-Pritchard's claim, that using premises from the scientific method leads to objective truth, is also playing the scientific language-game. Both MacIntyre and Evans-Pritchard are playing their own language-game and following their own rule. The Azande, in consulting their oracle, are also playing their own language-game and following their own rule.

Winch's idea is that before one makes a judgement about the correctness or incorrectness of a method within a system or a tradition, one must understand the

definitions, the propositions, the postulates and axioms which define, explain and project the true identity of that particular system or tradition. Winch is influenced here by Wittgenstein's idea of the language-game, where a player follows a rule as it is applied in common use in that particular context. By understanding the mechanisms and functions of how the game is played in that particular context one can learn something in that particular context or tradition. In a way, one will be expanding one's context or horizon or tradition, without leaving it altogether. For us, or for the purposes of this thesis, Winch makes a very positive development, which helps to overcome Evans-Pritchard's tendencies of relativism, in the sense that Evans-Pritchard regards the scientific method as the only method that can lead to objective truth and reality, while MacIntyre seems to be confined within the scientific tradition.

Winch makes this point and stops at that. He does not tell us in precise terms how someone from the scientific tradition can learn how to play the common sense game like that of the Azande and how someone from the common sense tradition can learn how to play the scientific game, especially when the background of the two communities are diverse and far apart.

In any case, we shall return to the Azande and the European traditions in a moment, but now let us see how Barden addresses this problem. First of all he agrees that contexts as systems may be incompatible or even incommensurable, with no means of deriving the second context from the first without introducing new postulates. But it might be the case that these new postulates may not fit into either context as a system. If the definitions, propositions and postulates are different in either of the two contexts as systems then it is impossible to move from one context to another. Or if one attempts to do that then that contextual shift would be unintelligent and irrational.

In this case how does a contextual shift get effected? Barden gives us the answer. We begin by rejecting any position that suggests the idea that a contextual shift must be logical. And what would be the justification for that? Barden has emphasised the fact that it is not the postulates of a system which are ultimate, but the activities of the inquirers. Concretely, Barden puts it as follows:

The source, then, of shifting from one system to another is the enquiring subject who is the set of ultimate operations, that is, the enquiring subject who experiences, who asks about what is experienced, who understands what is

experienced, who asks whether the understanding is correct, who judges that it is or it is not, who asks what it is or what it is not, who asks what is to be done, who suggests possible courses of action, who wonders whether the possible courses of action are truly worthwhile and who decides to realise one of them (*AP*: 67).

Here Barden solves the problem which Winch posed, which is how to shift from context to context. What does he say about this matter?

... one is inclined to shift from one context to another because questions have occurred within one's present context that cannot be answered within it. The questions are present. The solutions not only are not present; they are known not to be available within the context... (*AP*: 67).

What we are about to discuss is a demonstration which will help us understand Winch's idea of finding a common ground in different contexts, That is someone from one context learning something from another context.

Before we see how Barden executes the approach of the contextual shift, we wish to remark that, in a way, the illustration that we are about to see helps to address the problem of following a rule in a particular language-game. Following a rule in one particular game may keep someone in a state of confinement. Something may be lacking in one game, which may be available in another game.

In any case, let us see how Barden executes the approach of contextual shift. He explains this situation by using the analogy of the enlargement of sets of numbers in elementary mathematics. He proceeds as follows: A student may have knowledge of the basic operations of arithmetic. Namely, "+", "~", "="... on top of that she may also know a set of numbers such as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8... (*AP*: 68). The student may have learnt that if any number in the set is added to another number the result will be another number in the same set. For instance,  $3 + 5 = 8$ . The same process may be repeated for multiplication, subtraction and division.

What Barden is telling us is that the set of numbers is comparable to a system or a horizon or a tradition, as in the case of Winch. The figures or numbers are comparable to propositions, postulates, or axioms. As long as these figures – or for that matter propositions – can be manipulated and they yield the results which are within the confines of the set or a tradition, that tradition will continue to exist and function in its limited state.

Comparatively, the same can be said about following a rule, as in the case of Wittgenstein. As long as one follows the rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication

and division to the letter, and as long as the numbers to be added, subtracted, multiplied, and divided are there, then the system will function normally.

That said, however, there a situation might arise where a question may emerge whose answer cannot be found in that particular set, or for that matter, horizon or tradition or language-game. For instance, if a student is faced with solving a problem such as  $5-5=?$  Or  $4-5=?$  Here questions have emerged whose answers are not in the set 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.... Here it is not only that the student cannot find the answers in this set, but also that the answers cannot be found in that set.

This is precisely the situation which may emerge in a tradition or a language-game. In a tradition, one may need to use different propositions or postulates, which may not be available in one's own tradition. In a language-game, if one is to answer a question which cannot be answered by following the rules that are currently in use, then one may have to extend one's operations to another language-game that contains the rules, which may help to answer the new question. For instance, the student may shift to a less restricted set such as 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.... In this new set the student will discover that there is now an answer to his new question  $5-5=?$  This becomes  $5-5=0$ .

What is important here is that the student would not have solved the problem of  $5-5=?$  if she had maintained a relativist attitude of incompatibility. Here we again note that the student has been able to solve her new problem by extending her interest to another set, without abandoning her old set of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8... altogether. What Barden is suggesting, which is tantamount to what Winch suggested in Chapter Four, is that a student can grow intelligently in a tradition. We see her starting from a set whose members are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8... She shifts to another set whose members are 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8... Here she has learnt something new from the new set, as we said, without abandoning her old set. As she grows intelligently in a tradition, however, she continues to be confronted with new problems, which cannot be solved within her own tradition if the tradition is thought of as being defined by, or restricted to, a finite set of axioms or basic propositions.

There comes a time when yet new problems do emerge, even in the expanded new tradition, where she has learnt something whose answers cannot be found in that new tradition. Here the student will look to yet another tradition, which is still less



restricted. For instance, a student is confronted with a strange question or problem such as  $4 - 5 = ?$

This is a new problem, or a new and strange question, which happens to be absent in the student's experience. The answer to this problem cannot be found in any one of the traditions she has encountered thus far. It is absent in the student's original set and it is absent in the less restricted set where the student happens to be at the moment. The student has to shift to yet another, less restricted, set compared to the previous one. This new set will be: -4, -3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.... Again, what is important to note is that, though this new set solves the new problem which the student has encountered, it takes cognisance of the entire stock of the student's knowledge since she started her enquiry. This, in a way, undermines the position of radical relativism.

Barden emphasises the fact that the present wealth of knowledge that is currently prevailing is a consequence of the immense intellectual efforts of others. In this case, radical relativism turns out to be more of a hindrance than a way forward. For instance, Barden explains, intellectual development is not fragmented; it is all-embracing. We see a student shifting from context to context, but within the realm of the already-known sets of elementary mathematics.

This endeavour of exploring within the already-known or within the present contexts, Barden continues to inform us, is equivalent to Kuhn's idea of "normal science". However, at times there emerges a need to invent new ideas altogether; this requires a contextual shift. This corresponds to Kuhn's idea of "revolutionary science." The message we are receiving from Barden is the same message we picked up from Winch; and that is the open door policy. Contextual or traditional confinement tends towards radical relativism. Radical relativism seems to have no place in the contemporary world, which is full of traditions which are rich in ideas and which can fertilize and enrich one another. However, that said, we mentioned that the place of Barden's ideas in this thesis is to help us solve the problems which were raised in the previous chapters.

At the moment we are trying to address the problems raised by Winch in Chapter Four, namely of how members from one context or tradition can learn from members of another context, like the Europeans. It appears that what we have done so

far is to give further elaborations of what Winch said in Chapter Four. We seem not to concretely have given the actual method of how one tradition can learn from the other.

Let us now explore, in concrete terms, what Barden's reaction to this observation would be. He is using an ethical actor who represents anyone in any context or horizon or tradition. He has the following to say: The ethical actor is brought up and lives within a tradition. At any moment the ethical actor is in their tradition. Because tradition is often thought of as simply something outside us

...one's tradition is oneself situated in the world. One may question one's tradition; that is one may ask about the adequacy of one's present context. One may agree or disagree. But what is ultimate in action is not the set or collection of more rather than less collection of ultimate propositions; what is ultimate is the spontaneous and unavoidable orientation toward responsible action (*AP*: 69).

Barden told us right from the beginning that all of us originate and belong to one or the other tradition. Indeed, at any particular moment, we are in our tradition. He reminds us that, contrary to popular thought, tradition is not outside us, our concrete tradition is ourselves situated in the world. When we talk of us, we are not presenting ourselves as objects, which form part of the features that constitute a tradition, but we present ourselves as a set of operations. In fact, we are the subject-in-act, a basic pattern of operations or a transcendental method that handles the definitions, propositions, conclusions, postulates of our tradition, beginning from the self as aware, conscious and present to ourselves and then proceeding to other notions such as beliefs, practices, values and artefacts, to the attentiveness of the senses, to the questions of intelligence, to reasonableness of judgement and to the choice of responsibility.

As we saw in Chapter Three, this is the method which works in all contexts and traditions, so when Winch talks of one tradition attempting to understand and learning from another tradition, this is the method to use. We can begin from ourselves as subjects and check ourselves and then proceed to our own traditions and check our definitions, assumptions, propositions, postulates and axioms and thereafter proceed to other traditions without necessarily abandoning our own, just as in the case of the third set of the mathematical example, which is: -4, -3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.... This is a set reflecting our development from the first set: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,

8... to the second set, which is: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8... and finally to the current set. The third set solves all the questions which have been asked, but could not be found in the previous two.

When it comes to traditions we can do the same thing. The method for knowing all reality or all traditions is not rooted in atomic or elementary propositions, as Wittgenstein had suggested in Chapter Two, or any other proposition from any walk of life or tradition, but it is rooted in the subject-based operations.

So far we have seen that the subject-in-act, or transcendental method, can lead us to knowledge of ourselves as consciously aware selves and to ourselves as traditions and also to all paraphernalia of our traditions and also to all those different systems, contexts, horizons other than our own. The problem that we are faced with at this stage is that of criteria for the understanding and the knowing of reality in its ultimate nature. It is to these criteria that we now turn.

### **5.3 Knowing and the Idea of a Horizon**

We can now expand our discussion by introducing the idea of a “horizon.” This notion will allow us to see how one culture can learn from another. Within a horizon there will always be questions that arise, but seem answered beyond that particular horizon (which we can not see to carry on the metaphor). This will indicate that one culture will normally be open to learning. It would be natural to expand one’s horizon, but first we need to clarify that objectivity cannot be reached by the subject positioned outside the object (“taking a look”) – as per naïve correspondence theory – nor can objectivity be reached by rule following.

However we must add that common-sense people do not hold to “naïve realism” because they do not have any distinction between “taking a look”, and other approaches to knowledge, in other words they just do what they do – which only a later, more developed culture can then turn around and say, oh you are a naïve realist.

#### ***5.3.1 Subject-in-Act: Criteria for Knowing***

There is a tendency towards regarding what is looked at or perceived as real. That is what transpires in the functioning of the naïve version of correspondence theory, or

naïve realism. Naïve realism that is commonplace among people operating largely at common sense level, like the Azande, seems to be the channel through which the understanding and knowing of all reality is attempted. This tendency to think of knowing as “taking a good look” is linked to empiricism and Wittgenstein’s positivism (the picture theory of knowledge).

In the “picture theory of knowledge”, held by the early Wittgenstein, the role of the subject-in-act is hidden. The basic propositions are known to be true because they picture reality. Later, Wittgenstein repudiates this approach. There are many kinds of truth, he now says, each truth taking its value from what is meant in the context: is what is in front of me, for example, solid and smooth (the table) or is it a bumpy, moving collection of molecules with large empty spaces between them? Wittgenstein’s answer to this question is that it depends on your language-game, which may be a common sense game or physics game or the Azande game?” The question that emerges here is: are there criteria of truth that apply in both cases and contexts?

In this thesis we feel that attempting to know or to reach truth through the naïve version of correspondence theory or naïve realism, without a criterion, cannot work. So the question that we are now to address is: “what is this criterion?” In this section we shall explore the notion of the subject-in-act or transcendental method, as criterion for explaining, understanding and knowing in the realms of the naïve version of correspondence theory or naïve realism. We shall use Barden’s ideas in this exploration.

Barden tells us that

.... In the naïve version of correspondence theory there lurks a beguiling image. The image has several variants, but one of the most immediate appealing is the activity of comparing a pictorial representation, drawing, painting or photograph with its subject, in order to discover whether the representation looks like the original (*AP*: 73).

He employs the example of the passport controller, who uses the photograph as the criterion against which to judge the identity of the real person being represented.

The passport controller is faced with the question of whether the person standing in front of her is the same person whose photograph appears in the passport. The photograph is supposed to portray the truth about the person, to confirm whether



that person is the real one or not. The controller is confronted with two relevant images; namely, the image of the real physical person, on one hand, and the image of the photograph representing that person, on the other.

The image of the person is obtained by looking at her directly and the second by looking at the photograph. Here we are assuming that the controller is an expert in photograph interpretation. Given this expertise, we assume that the controller does discern a similarity which is common to the two images. Does this discernment satisfy her curiosity? Does it give her the answer she is looking for? Would this serve as a basis for her to stamp the passport and clear the person, or does it present the contrary to what she expected?

At this stage the controller has not yet got the answer. Instead she is faced with another operative question of whether the perceived similarity constitutes enough evidence for the controller to make the judgement that the person now presenting the passport is the same person represented in the passport photograph, basing herself on the two pieces of evidence: namely, the image of the person and the image of the photograph in the passport.

Barden reminds us of the crucial point here, which is in consonance with our thesis, and that is "...neither image can be the criterion for the judgement, for images are simply images" (*AP*: 74). What the controller perceives is the similarity. This similarity is neither image. It is outside the two images. The similarity occurs within the controller. The controller uses this similarity to ascertain whether or not it constitutes enough evidence for her judgement. Now if we take the image of the person as data and the image of the photograph also as data, this perceived similarity becomes the third piece of data, but this third piece of data is distinct from the first two. The first two are external to the controller. The third is internal to the controller. Even though this third piece of data is distinct and internal to the perceiver, it still does not constitute the criterion for judgement. This is because, even with the third piece of evidence at his disposal, the controller will still ask whether it constitutes enough evidence for the judgement that the person presented in the photograph is the same person as the one who is now presenting the passport. So where does all this leave us?

We say that the answer to the problem, as to the criterion for judgement, is, contrary to common belief, that it is not the person presenting the passport, it is not the photograph in the passport, and it is not the images of the person and the photograph, neither is it the similarity between the person and the photograph; the criterion is the subject-in-act who grasps the sufficiency of the evidence.

The notion of grasping the sufficiency of the evidence goes a long way to weaken Wittgenstein's notion of a functionless metaphysical subject. Barden shows us how this is the case. First he points out that the case of perceiving similarity between the photograph and the person it projects is more complex than merely taking a look. Using the example of the passport controller, Barden informs us that, in his culture, the skill of photograph interpretation and other visual images is learnt. The skill that is acquired helps to make the perception of similarities rapid and habitual. In other words, photograph interpretation is a culturally learnt skill. The expertise of the controller becomes a further development and specialisation of this skill. Barden challenges any one from her own culture who doubts this fact to compare two Chinese photographs. At times the perception between the original and photograph does not come out at once. This necessitates the perceiver to work her way bit by bit towards a hypothesis of similarity.

Wittgenstein's idea of a functionless metaphysical subject is thus greatly undermined by Barden's revelation that the ability to interpret photographs and other visual images is acquired through conscious learning. Barden's idea of conscious learning is reminiscent of Lonergan's point – discussed in Chapter Three – of being attentive to the data of the senses. Being attentive to the data of the senses prepares one for the grasping of the sufficiency of the evidence. It is a deliberate function or an operation, therefore the subject is not functionless. This is because she is capable of working her way bit by bit towards a hypothesis of similarity in the case of comparing the photograph and the original.

Again the practice of working one's way bit by bit towards a hypothesis is an operation, which is tantamount to Lonergan's idea of being intelligent. Here someone is subjecting the data of the senses to the intellect. The operations of being attentive to the data of the sense of sight, of subjecting this data to the intellect through working out a hypothesis bit by bit, of finally grasping the sufficiency of the evidence through reasonableness, exonerates the subject completely from being a functionless

metaphysical being in favour of being a set of dynamic operations. That means it is the subject who is the criterion for explaining, understanding and knowing and not the individual senses operating outside the metaphysical subject, as Wittgenstein's picture theory advocate.

In the above example, which involves the grasping of the sufficiency of the evidence by the set of operations, we have tried to use the case of Barden's objections to the stipulations of naïve realism, or the naïve version of correspondence theory, to interpret Wittgenstein's position of the functionless metaphysical subject. We are doing this in favour of the subject-in-act or a set of operations in operation. This example has shown us that it is the subject-in-act who is the criterion and not the intended object, as in the case of the original person and her photograph, and not the perceived similarity. The criterion is the grasper of the sufficiency of the evidence, who is the subject-in-act.

In order to concretise the inevitability of the subject-in-act as basic to all contexts of knowing, Barden gives us another example, in the context of the correspondence theory, of how we cannot come to genuine truth or reality without involving the subject-in-act. In this example an institution compares the examination result to a set condition or a grade. In this case, entry to the university degree is determined by comparing the student's score to the set condition in the computer. The deciding subject-in-act is excluded. Instead, admission is done by the computer. The set condition is the score of a B grade in mathematics. A logical structure is designed and fed into the computer and the process proceeds as follows: "Entry iff B in mathematics in the examination... Enter if B; reject if  $\neg B$ " (AP: 75). Of course "B" is the minimum mark and does not preclude "A" and "A+".

Here Barden seems to be taking us back to the place of propositions within a context or a system. We know that propositions within a system include postulates and axioms. We also know that these propositions within a context or a system can sometimes lead us into incompatible and incommensurate situations. Similarly, a proposition such as: "Enter iff B in mathematics in the examination" that is, admit the student if and only if he scored a B in the mathematics examination simply cannot be justified within the system. This is because it is the grade which is being used as a criterion to judge the potential and ability of the student to cope with the demands of mathematics. The B grade is just data, which should not only be fed into the computer

to decide on its own the potential and ability of the student, but should also be subjected to the operation of intelligence. This is because the grade only satisfies the condition set by the institution but on its own it says little, if anything, about the student who is being admitted to the mathematics class. In fact, this situation raises a number of questions, which cannot be answered by the computer. These include the genuineness of the grade. For instance, “Does the student actually qualify?” or “Did she score the grade all by herself?” Is there no possibility that the student may have got the answers to the examination questions in advance? Is there no possibility that the student may have impersonated another student who actually scored the grade? There is a host of possibilities that this grade may not be accruing to the student who is claiming to have earned it.

If that happens to be the case, the grade only remains a condition, and not the criterion, for admitting the student to the mathematics class. The computer which admits the student, because it is programmed to do so, cannot be the criterion either. This is because it cannot answer any of the simple questions asked above. In the previous example involving the controller, the traveller and the photograph in the passport, we established that the criterion for exposing the similarity between the photograph in the passport and the original owner of the photograph was the grasp of the sufficiency of the evidence. Prior to this, in the previous example, we had seen that the subject-in-act is actually the principle of non-contradiction. In this case, if the grade and the computer are not the criteria, then what is the criterion? In our case the criterion is the operation, which moves us from the grade to the questioning of that grade.

Lonergan – as discussed in Chapter Three – would not admit the student to the mathematics class, a position we entirely agree with, simply because she has satisfied the condition set by the institution of scoring B grade in the examination. The mere grade would only be data that would serve as a starting point for the process that would eventually lead to a judgement that would finally bring the student to the mathematics class. This grade would be subjected to the intellect in order to answer the questions about the grade before the final decision to admit or not to admit, or to admit after a qualifying entry examination has confirmed that the grade matches the potential and ability of the student.



For our purposes, we say that we should not take conditions as criteria for the truth or the reality. For instance, the proposition “Entry if and only if B in the mathematics examination”, as a minimum requirement, could lead to incompatibility if that condition was contradicted by the outcome of any or all of the questions about the genuineness of the grade, or if the outcome of the qualifying examination suggested otherwise. The computer cannot be the arbiter either, because it will admit the candidate on the basis of the formula that has been fed into it. Needless to say, a computer cannot account for that formula and its outcome in case of incompatibility that may surface at the levels of intelligence, reasonableness or judgement. It remains a fact that it is the subject-in-act who is the criterion for the admission of the student to the mathematics class.

### ***5.3.2 Subject-in-Act in the Provisional Horizons***

We have discussed how an individual or a system can expand from a more restricted to a less restricted context. We discussed this through examples picked from elementary mathematics. In this sub-section we introduce the idea of horizon and we shall look more closely at how the subject-in-act can lead to knowledge where horizons are provisional. We recall that Winch thought that we should try to understand and learn from one another. He raised the question of one tradition learning from another. Here Barden introduces the notion of a “provisional horizon”, enabling us to explain this question better.

Barden provides us with a method to solve this problem by suggesting a set of operations (the subject-in-act). In order to understand how positive development can be realised in the situation where horizons are provisional, let us recapture the experience where positive development, which is one tradition learning from a less restricted horizon, is achieved. Barden reminds us that in the Western ethical theory the criterion has been thought to be a set of principles conceived as propositions. He makes a correction here, that that is not the case. On the contrary, the criterion is not a proposition but a set of operations. It is the subject who asks what is to be done. It is the subject who moves from horizon to horizon. In the process he raises questions in a more restricted horizon in which answers are not found. In the end he may construct new horizons in which they are answered. This may go on and on making the newly

constructed horizons, as Barden says, only provisional. This is because, with time, new challenges do emerge, prompting new questions which, in turn, demand new horizons and the process goes on and on. This happens because the subject is programmed not to be confined to a particular provisional horizon. If the subject were to be confined to a particular provisional horizon, his movements would be greatly impeded, if not stopped. If her movements from one horizon to another, for one reason or another, were to be possible, in the absence of a criterion or a set of operations, her movements in the final analysis would be arbitrary and random.

Barden calls a horizon provisional. Why? There might be situations where certain questions may not be answered in a particular horizon leading to searching for the answers in another horizon. That may not be the end of the matter. Further questions may still be raised in the new horizon, and so on. This situation leads to yet another question and this is, is the shifting of horizons *ad infinitum*, or is there such a thing as a perfect horizon, which is beyond criticism? Here we may dare to say that the answer is both yes and no. However, we are not getting trapped in a contradiction but are preparing ourselves for a possibility of shifting from a less restricted horizon to a more restricted one. The horizon can reach perfection. This is not, as Barden says, when asking further questions is prohibited but when there are no further relevant questions to ask.

We may also be tempted to state that the situation may arise where the subject may shift from a less restricted horizon to a more restricted horizon. Concerning this, Barden says.

As there can be development of horizons, so also can there be a restriction from a less to a more encompassing horizon within which questions that arose in the former horizon no longer appear. This decline can come about through a refusal to act in accord with the demands within the larger horizon, followed by a subsequent rationalisation until the good as specified within the larger horizon no longer seems good. The decline can occur within the ethical biography of a single person, but decline, as much as development, can be social, so that the next generation of children are educated within the more restricted horizon that their parents have adopted, rather than within the larger horizon within which their parents were brought up but that they have abandoned (*AP*: 88).

We can see, therefore, that questions do not only arise in a more restricted horizon demanding answers in a less restricted horizon, but the reverse is also true. In this case, knowing is not only a consequence of searching for answers in a less

restricted horizon but, a situation can arise where answers may be sought in a more restricted horizon. We recall, in Chapter Four, MacIntyre's notion that we cannot explain social behaviour independently of our own norms of rationality. We also recall, in the same chapter, Evans-Pritchard's notion of the scientific method being the only method that leads to objective truth and reality. Winch objected to the two notions and instead advanced the idea of the possibility of one culture learning from another. As we have repeatedly said, however, Winch lacked the method of how his idea could be implemented.

In sub-section 5.2.7.2, we put emphasis on how the subject can lead to searching for answers in a less restricted tradition. In this sub-section we have discovered that, with the possibility of horizons being provisional, the less restricted tradition can also seek answers in a more restricted tradition. We can say that because the scientific method encompasses both the notions of common sense and theory, it is less restricted than the Azande's, that is operating mainly at the level of common sense. By science, we mean an approach that is controlled by theory and formula. Of course such an approach would be improbable in a situation which relies on witchcraft.

We saw, however, that when it comes to the issue of a human being compared with the rest of the other creations or objects, the Azande ask a further question demanding an answer which goes beyond mere cause and effect. This is something worth noting by the scientific tradition. The scientific tradition, with the aid of transcendental method, could pick up the issue from here and try to explore whether or not there is any explanation beyond mere coincidence or unwelcome accident, as far as a human being is concerned. As we end this sub-section, we wish to reiterate our claim that the place of Chapter Five in this thesis is in providing solutions to issues raised in the previous chapters. The solution to all those issues is in the presence of the subject-in-act, whom we have regarded as foundational. It is to that aspect that we now turn.

### ***5.3.3 Criterion for Questioning: Foundational to all Human Beings***

In this sub-section Barden helps us to provide an answer to Winch's problem concerning the foundation that underlies all traditions. In Chapter Four, when

comparing the Azande and the European traditions, we discussed how Winch raised the point that every tradition is different from every other tradition. He makes it clear that it is not appropriate to impose one tradition on another. It was instead appropriate to extend one's tradition by learning what is taking place in the other tradition. He uses Wittgenstein's idea of the language-games to explain this point convincingly.

What Winch did not give us, however – and without which the extension of one's standpoint from one horizon to another in order to learn what transpires there would be impossible – is the basic element which is common to all human beings, irrespective of tradition, that would facilitate these trans-cultural or trans-traditional movements. It is this basic element which Barden is helping us to establish in this sub-section.

Barden begins by recapturing Winch's submissions on the Azande practice of witchcraft, which we discussed in Chapter Four. Winch uses Wittgenstein's idea of the language-game, discussed in Chapter Two, to show clearly that the Azande practice of witchcraft means that they live in a context that is incompatible with the European context. Barden recaptures the Azande notion of witchcraft and compares it not with science but with the European judicial system. In doing so he is attempting to provide this common element that is missing in Winch's submissions. This element would enable us to oscillate from context to context, horizon to horizon, system to system or tradition to tradition. Barden explains that Winch analysed Evans-Pritchard's study of the Azande witchcraft oracle and magic in order to illustrate one interpretation and possible application of Wittgenstein's theory of the language-game. Winch's analysis revealed that the Azande and the Europeans were acting in two different worlds. The consequence of this was that what seemed rational to the Azande was completely irrational to the Europeans. This revealed that everyday reasonable behaviour was contextual. The study revealed, as Barden puts it, that people's conclusions are based on certain premises, but because they act or function in different contexts, their conclusions or actions produce different responses.

According to Barden, this fact is now so clear that it needs no further emphasis and could be recorded as an important contribution of Evans-Pritchard's study and Winch's analysis of this study. But for us the question still remains, if we are to extend our standpoint from one context to another, what is it that should enable us to do so? As we have said, this is what Winch fails to give us. Yet it is so vital and



fundamental that without it Winch's idea of one context extending its standpoint into another context cannot simply be implemented.

In order to bring out this element succinctly, Barden once again uses the example of the Azande case of witchcraft. Returning to the example we discussed in Chapter Four, suppose a man was walking under his barn and it fell upon him causing him some bodily injury, he would immediately attribute that to witchcraft. What is interesting and needs our careful attention is the fact that he is not ignorant about the fact that the beams, which were supporting the barn, had been eaten by termites. He knows very well that this was the cause of the collapse of the barn. He is probably not bothered by this fact. The crucial question, however, which is of great concern to him, is the barn falls at the exact time he is walking under it. Whilst Europeans would attribute this happening to coincidence or unwelcome chance, the Azande would attribute it to witchcraft. To the Azande, what witchcraft explains is why the barn fell exactly at the time that the man was passing under it. This explanation is incompatible with the European belief and Europeans would immediately dismiss it as irrational. To the Azande, on the other hand, the interpretation accruing to that explanation is perfectly rational. Here we may say that this is one good example of contextual incompatibility.

Although this is an apparent incompatibility, there is an element that is basic to the two contexts, that is the context of the Europeans and that of the Azande. Before we expose this basic element, however, let us make it clear that this unpleasant coincidence is a very important happening in the Azande context, irrational or mistaken as it may appear to Europeans. To the Azande, it is not irrational to think that the man had been bewitched, neither is it irrational for him to try and explain it using witchcraft. On the contrary, what is irrational to the Azande is to think that he had been bewitched and at the same time fail to explain that he had been bewitched.

This is where Barden wonders whether this situation is any different from what happens in the European context. What happens, for example, when one fails to understand a particular event? Is it not attributed to an omnipotent and omniscient providence? How would this explanation be interpreted, as rational or irrational? Probably, according to Barden, what the Europeans have not taken seriously is the fact that the aspect of how to account for unpleasant coincidence is the question that occurs to Europeans, too. It is only the answers which are different. He points out

...there is not now, in any event, a single culturally accepted answer in Western culture; our answers range from providence, to astrological accounts of the influence of the stars, to unexplained and unexplainable chance... (AP: 91-92).

This exposition reflects the position of the Europeans in their context and the Azande in their context. Now what is it that is common and therefore basic to the two contexts? And what is it that is different and therefore keeps these contexts apart? And what is it that can enable one context to extend its horizon into the other context to learn and know what is happening there and benefit from it?

It is the answer to the issue raised by these questions which will solve Winch's problem of how one can extend one's standpoint into another context and learn from them. According to Barden, what keeps these contexts separate, and apart from each other, is the answer to the question they ask. By now we know that answers to questions are contingent. They are also transitional. They are perpetually changing as new enquiries, researches and discoveries are made. So answers *per se* cannot be regarded as fundamental or foundational. According to Barden, it is the answers that make the Europeans and the Azande live in different worlds.

That said about the answers, what about the question itself? Barden states:

By their question they live in the same world. Since their question is a specification of questioning, by their question they reveal themselves to share the same operations that I have called basic (AP: 92).

At this juncture could we say that we have finally found the answer to Winch's problem? We have seen that an answer or answers are contingent. Could we say that a question or questions are fundamental or foundational? Before we establish what is really foundational in this respect, we need to make this aspect clear. If an answer or answers are contingent, what about a question or questions?

We know that answers emerge out of questions. If answers are contingent is it not possible that questions are also contingent? We should clarify, here, that in our discussion we are not talking about answers or questions as being foundational. What is foundational and therefore a solution to Winch's problem is the operation of asking questions or the operation of giving answers. This is what is common to all humanity. This is the only element which can make us oscillate from context to context, horizon to horizon or tradition to tradition.

What follows from this fact is the question on how this foundation enables us to make the oscillations. Let us now turn our attention to how this task is accomplished, but before that let us first go back to the issue of contexts. According to the Azande context it is witchcraft which accounts for unwelcome coincidences. We can say that this is a basic proposition to the Azande. Because it is basic it generates further questions. Again, we know that questions do emerge out of suppositions. Because of the contextual differences between the Europeans and the Azande, their suppositions are also different. This fact makes their further questions different, as well. The process of asking further questions is cumulative because it continues to yield further answers, which, in turn, yield further questions. This results in an edifice of an elaborate culture which is, according to Barden, increasingly alien to someone to whom the initial conditions are alien.

This observation redirects us to our foundation. It is a fact that the Azande live in a different world from that of the Europeans. Because of this they play a different game from that of the Europeans. Although this is true, still a question does emerge, which is, does this fact make the Azande fundamentally different from the Europeans? Barden points out that this would be the case if the Azande were by nature confined to their answers. But it appears that there are no grounds for making such an assertion. Another question that arises is whether or not the Azande are confined within their conceptual scheme? This also seems not to be the case. If it were to be the case, there would be no intelligibility among conceptual schemes. Moreover, Winch's suggestion or idea of oscillating from one context to the other would simply be impossible.

From this we conclude that there is no such a thing as being confined by nature and, in principle, to answers within a particular context and there is no such a thing as being confined within a conceptual scheme. This point is proved by the fact that the operation of questioning and challenging presuppositions, propositions, postulates, and axioms is common to all of us. It is the operation that would facilitate intercultural learning, understanding and knowing what transpires in different contexts.

We have to reiterate the sense in which the operation of questioning is common to us all. On this Barden explains that



... questions have two sources: an empirical source and an intellectual source. The experiential source is our living in the world; the intellectual source is that we are beings who ask questions. Everyone in nature wonders and what is wondered about is experience. So Azande ask about unwelcome coincidence because unwelcome coincidence is an important feature in their lives and because they are human (AP: 93).

We know that experiences are rooted in contexts. We have seen that all of us live in one context or other. We also know that contexts are different, but *within* these contexts there are differences, as each and every one of them is based on presuppositions, assumptions and axioms.

Needless to say, questions arise in each and every context, prompted and motivated by changes and an ever-increasing realisation of inadequacies in these contexts. So all of us, no matter in which context we happen to be, ask questions. Living in these differentiated contexts is experiential, but the aspect of asking questions is intellectual. Being intellectual enables all human beings to ask questions, irrespective of the context in which we are based. We can therefore say that contexts are variables. It is the intellect – the criterion for asking questions – that is a constant. Because it is a constant to all human beings, therefore it is foundational to all of us.

In this sub-section we have seen how the operation of questioning is foundational to all traditions. In the following sub-section we make a comparative enquiry in the Azande practice of witchcraft vis-à-vis the European judicial system. Is there anything common to the two systems and, if so, what is it?

#### ***5.3.4 Inter-Cultural Enrichment: Azande Witchcraft vis-à-vis the European Judicial System***

This subsection deals with Winch's suggestion of inter-cultural enrichment. Winch made this suggestion without an accompanying method to actualise it. Is there anything which the Azande practice of witchcraft can offer to the European context and is there anything which the European system can offer to the Azande context? Let us explore these notions.

The first question which the Azande asks after he has been hit by the barn is who has done this? Is it for certain that it could be coincidence? Barden gives the example of the farmer (AP: 93) who, after comparing her harvest with his neighbours, suspects foul play. There could be two possible reasons for the farmer's poor harvest.



One is that the farmer could have used inappropriate methods. If that is the case, then it accounts for her poor harvest and the farmer has no cause for complaint or simply has no case. There could be another possibility for the farmer's poor harvest, however, and this could be witchcraft. If it turns out to be so, then the farmer has a case. Someone, somewhere must be responsible; the culprit must be found.

As we saw in Chapter Four, the approach that will finally lead to the discovery of the culprit is consultation with the oracle. The system of the oracle is stratified into three categories: the rubbing board oracle, the chicken oracle and the prince's chicken oracle. As in any culture, individuals have enemies. Some of these enemies are staunch enemies, while others are mild enemies. So the selection of the suspect or suspects is not random. The farmer selects the *prima facie* suspect from her staunch enemies. At times it might be necessary to go through all the three stages before the culprit is found.

The function of the consultation with the oracle leads only to the *discovery* of the culprit. It is when the question of the identity of the culprit has been sufficiently answered that the proper judicial question arises and that is what is owed to the afflicted. Generally what is owed, according to the Azande context, is not material. The culprit may be required to repent or effect some reconciliation with the injured party and perhaps make some redress. The issue of redress is less significant compared to the first two.

As we saw in Chapter Four, Evans-Pritchard is of the view that it is only the European approach which leads to objective truth and reality. It is likely that the Europeans will be at least disconcerted by the oracular approach of the Azande. It may be possible for them to accept the fact that a tort has been committed, but it is likely that they would not accept the method of trial by oracle. This is especially so after they have extended their horizon from their earlier methods, such as trial by ordeal, to trial by courts of law. However, we still reiterate the fact that, as Barden puts it,

... the Europeans... and the Azande are in different worlds, different horizons, paradigms, perspectives, conceptual schemes, language games... (AP: 94).

What Barden is saying is that Europeans and the Azande contextually are different. However, their operational framework is the same. It is the content which they handle that is different, as he confirms,

...structurally what the Azande try to do by their system is what we try to do by our system of courts. In both cases a tort gives rise to the question as to who is liable and, when this has been settled, to the question of what is due. In both cases there is a system of appeal from lower to higher adjunction and to an adjunction of final appeal (*AP*: 94).

Barden is reiterating the fact that what the Azande do with their oracle is what the Europeans do with their courts of law. They may be living in different contexts – which contexts are determined by influences. These could be their histories, exposure, levels of education or even psychological complexes – but the fact remains that they have something in common. As we have said, no matter in what context they may be, they are both human beings who both ask questions and both seek answers. We must point out that we are not turning a blind eye to the problem that they may be asking questions or seeking answers *badly*. But that is a matter to be determined by something else. In our case this something else is the subject-in-act. She determines this correctness or wrongness through the elaborate precepts of transcendental method, that is attending to data, subjecting it to intelligence and through reasonableness establishing the truth in it. In the next chapter we shall flesh out the frameworks of common sense, theory and interiority in the realm of culture.

Winch talked of inter-cultural learning, which we are calling inter-cultural fertilisation. For purposes of emphasis, we still ask the same question: is there anything which the European tradition could learn from the Azande? Here we can say that once the European court has passed judgement or established who is guilty, what follows immediately is the issue of compensation. The court determines what is due and the matter ends there.

But given the understanding of human nature, does the matter really end there? This is where the Europeans may have to learn something from the Azande. For the Azande what is more crucial is reconciliation. To them, reconciliation is more important than the mere paying of damages. The real issue is the enmity between the culprit and the afflicted. As far as possible, this is what must be overcome. The two affected parties must participate in a reconciliation ritual, whatever form it might take. The culprit must repudiate his offence and repent and the afflicted must accept the culprit's repentance.

In this particular respect, the Azande do show a greater understanding of human relations, compared with Europeans. Paying damages or compensation in itself

will not remove the injury, especially if the injury is a social or a psychological one. Compensation will not remove the guilt from the culprit if the afflicted does not genuinely forgive her. The European context in emphasising damages overlooks a very important element in human relationships. For instance, if what is given as compensation is material, it will either be consumed and be finished or it will perish with time. With enmity, if it is not genuinely and sincerely removed it will last as long as the two parties last. Worse still, it might be passed on to the next generation. It is genuine and sincere forgiveness that will cement human relationships.

What the Europeans could learn from the Azande is the notion of looking for meaning beyond accident or coincidence in respect to a human person. As we recall, the Europeans look at the falling barn causing bodily injury as mere accident or coincidence. The barn falls simply because the termites have eaten its beams. They stop at that. While the Azande do recognise all these facts, they try to go beyond them to the question of meaning.

The Azande do believe that questions of meaning can be answered and the method to answer them does exist. After the Azande has been hit and injured by the barn she does not just shrug her shoulders and proclaim that it was merely accidental and that it was coincidental that it fell at the moment when the Azande was passing under it and then stop at that. After the ordeal, to the Azande, the question, “what does all this mean?”, will arise. This question of meaning will not concern her alone as an individual but her family and her clan as well and it may even extend to humanity as a whole. That is not the end of the matter, the Azande have a method for answering questions of meaning. This method is the oracle.

We may question the merits of this method, but that is something else, to be handled by the subject-in-act. The fact remains that there is a method. This method is parallel to the European judicial system. Here we have two methods, as manifested in the European judicial system and the Azande oracular system. The crucial question to be answered now is that of the meeting ground between the two cultures. How can the two cultures learn from each other? Can the two cultures engage in a dialogue? Can there be inter-cultural communication between and among cultures? These are the issues that we discuss in the next chapter.

We shall tackle these issues by examining the framework of “common sense”, manifested in traditional wisdom, the framework of theory, manifested in science, and the framework for interiority, manifested in the subject-in-act. We show that the method that can effectively facilitate and finally bring about inter-cultural learning is to be found in the idea of the subject-in-act or interiority. We show that interiority is the method that is foundational to all the rest.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

After seeing who the subject is and his nature in Chapter Three, we proceeded to examine how the subject-in-act operationalises or actualises the functional operations that lead to the understanding, the explaining and the knowing of all reality. We have seen how Lonergan presents his basic idea that in order to understand, explain and know the world in which we are living, we have first to grasp our own self-understanding. It is our own self-understanding which provides us with a master key and which opens all the doors to the strong-rooms of knowledge in all aspects. The set of operations is the method for all methods. It is the transcendental method. This is only possible, however, or it can achieve this status, after undergoing the process of self-appropriation.

One of the main objectives of Chapter Five has been to emphasise the inevitability of self-appropriation. As we saw in our discussion, a self-appropriated subject helped to solve Wittgenstein’s problem, that the subject is not a functionless metaphysical subject. Again, a self-appropriated subject helped to solve the problem raised by Winch of a method that would facilitate inter-cultural learning. We conclude this chapter by elucidating Lonergan’s journey to self-appropriation. He helps us to conclude this chapter by giving us the wisdom in the “ideal detective story.” The detective is given all the clues about the criminal, but he cannot spot the criminal. From that experience Lonergan concludes,

...reaching the solution is not the mere apprehension of any clues not the mere memory of all, but a quite distinctive activity of organising intelligence that places the full set of clues in a unique explanatory perspective (Lonergan, 1970: ix).

What Lonergan is advancing, and which underlies the inevitability of the subject-in-act having all the clues and the facts which we need, will in itself neither



lead us to the understanding nor the knowledge of the case, which we might be pursuing. For instance, if we happen to belong to the empirical school, all we can do is to jumble out all these clues and facts, which we may happen to have at our disposal at the empirical level. This will not lead us to the knowledge which we want. On the other hand, if we happen to belong to the rational school then our clues and facts will be handled at rational level. The case holds for any school that we happen to belong to. In order to get to the authentic knowledge that we want, we have to follow the precepts of transcendental method. Lonergan's aim all along has been, as he puts it, to convey an insight into insight. He reminds us that, for example, mathematicians seek insight into sets of elements, while scientists seek insight into ranges of phenomena and a man of commonsense seeks insight into concrete situations and practical affairs. For Lonergan, the concern is focused on reaching the act of organising intelligence. That act brings within a single perspective knowing mathematics, science and any other field of knowledge. That act is the transcendental method. As we can see, the basic concern of the transcendental method is not learning mathematics as mathematicians do, or science as scientists do, or even the concrete and practical situations, as envisaged in commonsense.

Here we ask ourselves a question: if that is not the concern of trans-cultural method, then what is its concern? As we may have gathered throughout the thesis, the concern of transcendental method is with the acts or operations of understanding or knowing mathematics, science and any other aspect of knowledge. In order to understand, explain and know all reality we have to begin with self-understanding, that is understanding of the subject-based operations or understanding ourselves as the basic set of operations. How do we achieve this? We achieve it through self-appropriation. Once we understand and know the basic set of operations we will be led to all knowledge in the universe, together with all its contents. This includes knowledge of all phenomena and noumena.

Here we reiterate our stand at the beginning of this thesis, namely that formal logic, language-games, scientific method, or any other approach, or even a system or a tradition, cannot be ultimately basic or foundational for knowing reality in all circles. It is the subject-in-act who is the foundation and not anything else. By foundation we mean that while all these aspects are contingencies, it is only the subject-in-act who is a constant. That is to say, for example, that while the questions

and the answers to these questions are changing all the time, the operation of questioning remains a constant and therefore ultimately basic or foundational to all human beings.

To crown it all, let us remind ourselves of how Barden's contribution, discussed in this chapter, provides us with solutions to the problems or issues raised in Chapters Two, Three and Four. Barden reminds us that we all belong to a tradition. A tradition is made up of presuppositions, assumptions, postulates or axioms. But all these are simply propositions. Propositions cannot be basic. What is basic is the principle which they express. Barden uses the example of the principle of non-contradiction to emphasise this point. We learn from him that the subject-in-act is the principle and not the linguistically formulated propositions. This is why Wittgenstein's efforts to make propositions basic without the subject-in-act could not work.

In this Chapter Five, Barden helps us to clarify the fact that although all of us begin within traditions they cannot be basic or foundational to the subject-in-act. Barden calls them provisional, that is they can be cross-fertilised and enriched by ideas from other traditions. It is because of this changing nature that they cannot be basic. The subject-in-act is foundational because he has the potential or capacity, which is unchanging, to study, revise and change any tradition, any system of logic or any language-game.

In Chapter Three, Lonergan offers us the transcendental method as the method for all methods. He offers us the self-appropriated subject as the criterion to all understanding and all knowing. Once again it is the subject-in-act who helps us to actualise the subject in the traditions, or contexts or horizons. Winch, in Chapter Four, in his criticism of Evans-Pritchard and McIntyre, offers inter-cultural learning as an alternative to the glorifying of one method at the expense of other methods. In the process, he does not tell us how inter-cultural learning can be achieved, however. Barden offers us the subject-in-act as a method with which to achieve inter-cultural learning, or any other type of learning.



# CHAPTER SIX

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Introduction

In the final chapter we attempt to draw together our argument about finding a suitable framework for inter-cultural learning. In other words, the general epistemological theory outlined in Chapter Three is applied to the inter-cultural context as discussed in Chapters Four and Five. We begin with a summary account of common sense knowledge as explained by Cronin. This is illustrated with the help of Cisternino's analysis of traditional African proverbs and finally with views from Masolo, Mbiti and other African philosophers. In order to understand the place of common sense knowledge in relation to science we need to look at the history in Europe of how philosophy of knowledge developed. But it is Lonergan's concept of self-appropriation which can supply what is needed. Finally the chapter ends with an overview of the whole thesis.

### 6.2 Framework of Common Sense and African Traditional Wisdom

#### 6.2.1 *General Exposition: Cronin*

Cronin informs us that every person and every culture starts with the mentality of common sense. Sometimes this person or this culture remains at that level. In common sense there are inadequacies and it is these inadequacies that call forth theory. Theory attempts to solve problems of common sense. However, sooner or later, theory itself reveals its own inadequacies. This necessitates the intervention of interiority, in our terms the subject-in-act. In the usual context, "common sense" refers to a down-to-earth, practical, sensible attitude, or as Cronin defines it, an undifferentiated, practical, short-term mentality (Cronin, 1999: 25).

Cronin gives us the characteristics of common sense in traditional cultures. These cultures are simple and undifferentiated or compact. Political, social, religious, moral, economic and practical affairs tend to intermingle and overlap. Specialised institutions are not yet needed. Education and socialisation are informally passed on in songs, ceremonies and prescribed rituals. Economic institutions comprise



cultivation and survival skills. Oral cultures develop languages that are rich in proverbs, nuance, personal relations and attention to practical details of food and work. However, the problem is that they lack in precision, definition, distinction and mathematical terms of reference or abstraction.

In these cultures the predominant reality is personal relations, that is, the primacy of the community, belonging to the group and identifying with the clan. Another characteristic is that the wider cosmos tends to be identified along the lines of the family, that is, the sun as the father, the moon as the mother and the stars as the children. Symbols and myths appeal to feelings, as they are easy to remember and pass on. It is these symbols and myth that provide the answer to global questions about God, life, death, sickness, origins and destiny.

This compactness in all areas of life does not allow clear differentiation. Dangerous confusions result, for example between the symbol and the symbolised, the image and the real, dreams and the waking consciousness, desire and fulfilment.

In these cultures the rhythms of nature are mostly cyclical. The day, the month, the year, the seasons, birth and death are cyclical and one generation succeeds the previous generation. In these communities, life is lived harmoniously, with these recurrent cycles. A linear historical idea of progress is alien. The gods, the divine, the spirits of the ancestors, spirits of places, earth and river, all inhabit a spiritual universe which is very close to the physical one. Cronin informs us that religion, superstition and empirical thinking overlap and intermingle. He points out that a failure of a crop might be attributed to bad farming methods, anger of an ancestor, witchcraft of a jealous neighbour, punishment from God or any combination of these.

Cronin also points out that the languages of these cultures are poor in expressions concerning conscience, consciousness, intention, feeling, psychic tension, soul, intellect and will, freedom and responsibility. The internal states are usually alluded to by using symbols of inference such as head, heart, breath and bowels. He explains that the internal tends to be projected into theophanies, conversations with gods, divine signs and commandments on stone. Freedom is usually understood as submission to fate. Their beliefs are expressed in myth and ritual and handed on from generation to generation. He states that these cultures were practical in a sense that the struggle for survival was the first priority. The environment in which they live is often

quite hostile. Their technologies are primitive and challenges are many (Cronin, 1999: 26).

However, Cronin cautions, common sense does not exclude the distinction between true and false, right and wrong, good and bad. These criteria are operating, but only implicitly, and cannot be made explicit. The criteria are operating, but not in all areas and not at all times.

Cronin is of the opinion that this inadequate distinction between image and idea, dream and reality, the symbol and the real, results in permanent confusion. For example, disasters were sometimes attributed to natural causes, and at other times to sorcery or divine punishment. It is these inadequacies that eventually call forth the realm of theory.

At this juncture we must note that science is multi-definitional. In our discussion we are talking about the scientific method which is characterised by clear definition of compact and undifferentiated cases, theory that is based on laboratory provable results and formulae that leads to the proving of tentative hypotheses. We are not in anyway saying that the scientific method is a monopoly of the West (Europe). The scientific approach manifests itself all over the globe as long as its criteria are fulfilled. We are not saying that the subject-in-act is a Western creation. The subject-in-act is an idea which manifests in its precepts. It is an approach that is inter-cultural as will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

### ***6.2.2 Bantu Proverbs: Cisternino***

Among the Bantu, who use proverbs, and we believe even in other social groups all over the world, the main function of proverbs and other genres found in folklore is teaching and learning. Folklore, in general, and proverbs, in particular, preserve the wealth of wisdom of a particular social group in a particular region or adjacent or related regions. This wisdom is standardised and memorised through the literary forms of proverbs. In the majority of cases, proverbs teach about the behavioural values and standards of a people in a particular region. The potency of proverbs cuts across all ages and social classes. Proverbs are structured aesthetically in order to assist the memory, but their chief function is to provide wisdom. For pedagogical reasons, proverbs are structured in propositions. These propositions are, however, not

atomic as in Wittgenstein's case, because one proverb may be employed for many objectives or purposes.

We are introducing proverbs into our discussion because they constitute a rich pedagogical reservoir in the common sense framework of learning and knowing. We feel that their pedagogical richness is not exploited to the full, due to the lack of a comprehensive learning method. In that respect the wisdom in them remains largely unexploited. Due to the lack of a comprehensive method of extracting the rich wisdom in them, they remain undefined, undifferentiated and lacking in logic and mathematical control. So this not only limits the learning of indigenous people, but may also affect foreigners who may not be familiar with the social experiences of the community. Here we are talking about inter-cultural learning and knowing. Proverbs are one genre that can teach a cross-section of people from many unrelated social strata. Proverbs might be based on the experiences of a particular social group.

While that may be true, however, today it is difficult to keep social groups in strict confinement. Every day we experience cross-border and cross-continent movements. These movements entail the notion of inter-cultural learning. It is the case that in order to fit into a particular social group, we must respect the social behaviour and values of that group. Proverbs are a rich reservoir of norms of behaviour and values. If that is the case, we feel that mere tossing of proverbs to people whose experiences are alien to one's own experiences may not answer effectively the quest for learning and knowing. For pedagogical purposes there is a method which is much more involved and thorough. We propose interiority or the subject-in-act as that method. This is a method which is more involved and more comprehensive for this purpose. Before we see how this method can accomplish this mission, however, let us discuss the potency of the proverbs in their teaching mission.

In this endeavour we are assisted by ideas from Cisternino. In his book, *The Proverbs of Kigezi and Ankole* (1980), (these are some of the Bantu regions in South Western Uganda), Cisternino groups the proverbs of this region into thematic categories. Following his index, these categories are ranked. The first category focuses exclusively on human behaviour. He does this probably because behaviour among the Bantu as in any other cultural group that is still functioning largely on the common sense framework of knowing, is of paramount importance.



The second category of proverbs focuses mainly on human life and nature. The first category teaches about the self, work, foresight, courage, selfishness, laziness, incompetence, despair, prudence, patience, anti-social feelings and behaviour, humility, truth, friendship, co-operation, kinship, pride, faults of the tongue, rivalling, disobedience, justice, negligence, theft, debts, drunkenness and stubbornness.

In the second category he includes proverbs that teach about the pleasant side of life such, as marriage, children, well-being, riches, heredity and so on. Along these, he also introduces proverbs that teach about the bad side of life such as fate, poverty, illness, illusions and death. He also introduces a category on the human being and nature.

We are mentioning these categories in order to show the extent and diversity of knowledge available in the genre of proverbs. At the level of common sense framework of knowing, there is almost no area which they leave out. Proverbs are thus a huge reservoir for knowledge worth benefiting from, by those interested in inter-cultural learning. Proverbs contain substantial wisdom to benefit anyone, indigenous or alien.

Cisternino, interpreting the proverbs of Banyankole and Bakiga (related tribes in South Western Uganda), says a proverb may be understood as “a soothing sentence” or a “medicine phrase.” In fact, among the Banyankole and Bakiga, and related Bantu tribes, the word “proverb” means “orufumu”, which is derived from “omufumu” or “medicine man.” So a proverb, apart from its teaching role, is in fact a healing proposition. He goes ahead to define the proverb as follows.

Proverbs are standardised, short, witty, humorous statements meant to comment on a situation or to give light to summarise it;... a proverb aims at shedding light onto today’s fact by relating it to a broader, deeper and traditionally accepted experience. This light is rather dim and uncertain and therefore embodies a halo of mystery around it... (Cisternino, 1980: 8).

In this respect, the problem with proverbs that needs to be tackled is the dimness, the uncertainty and the halo of mystery that surround them. This problem is there because proverbs are lacking in definition, differentiation and logical and mathematical control. The effect of this shortcoming is largely the blocking of the impact of the rich wisdom that they contain. They lack in logical and mathematical control because they are not a codified set of laws or rules or counsels.



These shortcomings are evident, even in many other aspects within the framework of common sense knowing. We can cite Mbiti's example of the concept of time in the traditional set-up, in his book, *African Religions and Philosophy* (1969). Before we come to that in the spirit of inter-cultural knowing, however, let us see whether there is anything which Europeans can learn from the genre of proverbs.

It is very likely that proverbs are used more within rural set-ups, where people are operating mainly within the common sense framework of knowing, than with those operating mainly within the framework of the scientific theory of knowing, such as adopted by the Europeans. Because of this imbalance it is likely that there are more proverbs for each topic, with a greater variety of meaning and social and psychological analysis in them within the framework of common sense, compared to the framework of scientific theory.

This does not mean, however, that it is only those within the framework of common sense who should continue to learn from the rich wisdom of the proverbs. Cisternino observes that proverbs in the rural set-up have a much more developed social dimension, as compared to those of the Europeans. For instance, proverbs in the European context may be due to a predominantly urban set-up, where everyone is on their own, and tend to target individuals. Take the case of proverbs on "greed." These will teach the individual that the vice might harm you personally. On the contrary, Bantu proverbs do not only target the individuals but the whole community or society through the individual. In this case, the teaching from the same proverbs on "greed," might teach the individual that, through her, "greed" might be harmful to the community. In other words, they focus on the general welfare of the whole community. Maybe this is because of the compactness of these communities. This scenario provides a very good lesson for Europeans, that is while teaching about behaviour or morality it is better to target the community rather than the individuals within the community.

Another lesson that might be learnt is that Bantu proverbs never tell you directly what to do or what to avoid. They almost never use the imperative form. They simply tell you that "this is what happens" and leave you to draw your own conclusion. This is a very important trait that probably should be learnt by everybody. Bantu proverbs give the premises and leave you to apply your operation of reason. We can see that there is a lot to learn from the proverb genre, but the problem remains

and that is how to go about it. As we mentioned a moment ago, this problem remains, even in many other aspects within the common sense framework. We mentioned Mbiti's problem of the concept of time. We now turn to this aspect.

### ***6.2.3 African Concepts of Religion and Time in the Common Sense Framework: Mbiti***

On the problem of compactness, lack of definition and differentiation, we look briefly at two examples presented by Mbiti (1969). The first example concerns the religious consciousness of common sense culture. On the relationship between the human person and religion, Mbiti says that the individual is always immersed in religious participation. It is an experience which starts from birth and continues until death. Therefore, for the human being to live is to be caught up in the religious drama. The human person lives in a religious universe. As Mbiti explains:

Both that world and practically all his activities in it are seen and experienced through religious understanding and meaning. Names of people have religious meanings in them. Rocks and boulders are not just empty objects but religious objects; the eclipse of the sun or moon is not simply a silent phenomenon of nature, but one which speaks to the community that observes it, often warning of an impending catastrophe. There are countless examples of this kind (Mbiti, 1969: 15).

This quotation is a good summary of the lack of definition and differentiation characteristic of the common sense framework of knowing. As we can see, the world of religion is one, all-embracing phenomenon, into which everything else is compacted. There is no clear definition of what this world is. A physical rock is not just a rock but also a religious one. The religious component in the rock is not properly defined and its nature is not given. An eclipse is a warning sign of danger. The proper identity of material things and abstract things is not given. A name does not only identify a person, but it carries a religious connotation. As Mbiti says, examples are countless. This world is a world with no clear boundaries, if it is undefined and undifferentiated to people who live in it, and definitely there is no way inter-cultural learning and knowing can be possible.

We consider briefly another example from Mbiti regarding time. Mbiti tell us that time is of little or no academic significance to African peoples in their traditional life. Time for them is simply, a composition of events which have occurred that is

events which have taken place in the past are occurring now or are to occur in the very near future. Events which have not taken place now, and those which are not likely to occur immediately, fall in the category of “no-time”. The consequence of this as Mbiti explains, is that

... according to traditional concepts, time is a two dimensional phenomena, with a long *past*, a *present* and virtually *no future*. The linear concept of time in Western thought, with an infinite past, present and future, is practically foreign to African thinking (1969: 16-17).

As the saying goes, we are now living in a global village, where control of events would be impossible without a clear concept of time. Inter-cultural communication about happenings, harmonising of activities and proper planning would be impossible without the mathematical divisions of the clock. No one can afford to live only in the past, the immediate present or the near future. There is need to have a clear concept of the distant future, for the purposes of long-term planning. For proper inter-cultural learning the concept of time has to be clearly defined, and activities and events differentiated according to standardised modes of time. These two brief examples from Mbiti serve to confirm Cronin’s description of the typical scenario of the compact nature of the common sense framework of knowing. We extend these observations to Masolo’s expositions of the same framework.

#### ***6.2.4 Traditional Africa in the Common Sense Framework: Masolo***

Masolo, in his book, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* (1994), gives two sides of Africa that is Africa before colonialism and Africa after colonialism. He projects the views of scholars such as Hountondji, Wiredu and Odera Oruka, among others, as they discuss this dichotomy. Masolo points out that, in the twentieth century, a revolution in many Africans’ conception of the universe has been produced. This new view of the universe in some case has led to complete repudiation of traditional beliefs, systems and, in some other case, to a sharp modification of them. He points out that now some African thinkers claim, in his words:

That traditional reasoning was often inexact; that its physics was moral rather than scientific, that is, that it was divided into good motions and bad motions, good causes and bad causes; that its classifications were static and were based on supposedly unchanging forms and essences; and finally, that its formulations were useless, for they gave to people no control over natural forces (Masolo, 1994: 194).



The thinking in this quotation projects the exact picture of events in the common sense framework of knowing. Masolo points out that the thinking in this extract can be traced in the ideas of Hountondji, Wiredu, and Odera Oruka. He quotes Hountondji in his essay, "Le probleme actuel de la philosophie africaine," as saying that

Africa is rich in its products of language (proverbs, stories, dynamic poems and the whole of oral literature); but this language...is not philosophical. "Scientific rigor" requires that no philosophical meaning be read into such linguistic forms beyond what they express or are meant to serve. Although they are important, many such proverbs, stories, epics, and dynamic poems do not necessarily have a philosophical agenda (Hountondji, in Masolo 1994: 197).

Hountondji introduces a very interesting idea and that is that traditional folklore only projects what is meant in the genre. He says that, in its theoretical implications, a philosophical practice supposes, above all, and by all evidence, a responsible thought, a theoretical effort of an individual subject and excludes by this fact any reduction to philosophy of a collective thought. This is a debatable position held by Hountondji. For our purposes, however, it still reflects the compactness of ideas within the common sense framework of knowing.

Another philosopher who falls within the framework of our discussion is Wiredu. Masolo presents Wiredu as a more moderate thinker, compared to Hountondji. In Wiredu's thinking, the European or Western scientific forms of knowledge, and the knowledge that is prevalent in the traditional societies, can be modified and reconciled. Masolo presents Wiredu, in his book, *Philosophy and an African Culture*, thinking as follows:

For him, ethno-philosophy is essentially a system of pre-scientific or pre-industrial folk philosophies that have no direct relevance for the modern African who has adopted modern patterns of living.... Living by integrating not only the use of modern machinery into one's life, but also the methods and techniques of acquiring knowledge so characteristic of modern disciplines of study, including philosophy. Both are important ways of living in a modern world (Wiredu in Masolo, 1994: 204-205).

What we read in Wiredu is that he does not completely reject the idea of ethno-philosophy, but for him it is a philosophy of the past. Though that is the case, it can be modified in order for it to fit into the modern patterns of living. Here we can say that even in Wiredu we still see the problem of compactness in the common sense



framework of knowing. This time it is expressed through ethnophilosophy. Our problem with Wiredu is that he also does not tell us how the modification in ethnophilosophy can be effectively carried out in order for it to fit into the modern patterns of living.

Odera Oruka is one of the philosophers whose views, for instance on the *African philosophic sagacity*, falls within the scope of the common sense framework of knowing. Masolo presents Odera Oruka, in his essay, "Sagacity in African Philosophy," as belonging to a group of those who think that

...in Africa, contemporary or traditional, there were, and must still be, wise men and women who, despite their lack of modern and formal education, convey critical thinking that is essentially philosophical and distinct from the type of general narrative description of cultural traditions, customs and laws, as portrayed by the old sage... ( Oruka in Masolo, 1994: 234).

Odera Oruka presents something new on the debate concerning Africa philosophy. He sees something else which is above the wisdom in the propositions and the narrative in the folklore, that is the men or women who may be illiterate but are capable of conveying critical thinking that is essentially philosophical. He is of the view that *philosophic sagacity* should go beyond the ability to recite the lore. He suggests a method of how this could be achieved and that is being rationally critical. However, in our opinion, good as this method might be, it is not comprehensive enough, as we shall demonstrate in the next subsection.

Odera Oruka defines *philosophic sagacity* as the reflection of a person who is a sage and a thinker. A sage is a person who is well versed in the wisdom and traditions of his people. A thinker is a person who is rationally critical and who opts for, or recommends, only those aspects of the beliefs and wisdom that satisfy her rational scrutiny.

As we have said, we find Odera Oruka's approach not sufficiently comprehensive. For instance, he does not tell us how one goes about the task of being rationally critical as one navigates through the lores. He says that a *philosophic sage* recommends only those beliefs and wisdoms which satisfy her rational scrutiny. Do traditions comprise only beliefs and wisdom? What about practices? How does he go about scrutinising these beliefs and wisdoms? His approach falls short of the set of operations.

Our main aim in this subsection on the framework of knowing is not to critique the ideas of the authors who are helping us in our arguments, but to use their ideas in order to show the general trend running through the common sense framework of knowing. Cronin presents this framework as compact and lacking in definition, differentiation and control. Cisternino, in his presentation of the Bantu proverbs, summarises this scenario as follows:

Why do people suffer so much at times, if they have such wealth of human wisdom codified in proverbs? But then I look at the Bible and at the people who have had it for thousands of years!... Both people of the Bible and Bantu of the proverbs share at least one thing in common: that of disregarding in practice the wisdom they possess in theory... (Cisternino, 1987: 5).

Cisternino is calling our attention to failure to apply the subject-based set of operations as effectively as we should. In this case all the wisdom that we have remains a sealed possession.

From Mbiti's ideas we again see the problem of lack of definition, differentiation and control. The world of religion, spirits or superstition in general are not properly defined and differentiated from the physical world. Time is compacted into the past, the present and the immediate future. This situation calls for a comprehensive method that would help to unveil this compacted knowledge and wisdom so that they benefit not only those in the common sense framework, but through inter-cultural dialogue and other cultures as well. Before we look at how our method of the subject-in-act can lead to inter-cultural knowing, let us give a brief summary of those frameworks which seek to solve the problems of the inadequacies of the common sense approach, namely the framework of theory and the framework of interiority.

### **6.3 The Framework of Theory: the European Development**

#### ***6.3.1 Need for Theory in the Clarification of Meaning***

As we have just seen in the section above, the compactness and the undifferentiatedness that characterise common sense cultures tend to breed confusion and ambiguity. Theory comes in here in order to attend to the problems of common sense. These problems include lack of clarity, distinction and control. Cronin proceeds with showing us how different traditional cultures, individuals and groups

experienced a breakthrough to theory. We begin with how the Greeks experienced a breakthrough to logical and metaphysical thinking, then we shall explore what Cronin calls the threefold philosophical breakthrough to modern epistemological theory and thereafter we shall explore theory in the scientific revolution.

### ***6.3.2 Greek Breakthrough to Metaphysical Theory***

Cronin (1999: 27) reminds us that the early Greeks had a rich mythology. At first critical questions were therefore directed to these myths, for instance to the gods and their intervention in human affairs. It did not seem reasonable and fitting for gods to get drunk, marry and have children. A crop of thinkers emerged who tried to find alternative explanations to why in the universe things happen the way they do, for instance, the movement of heavenly bodies, why things change to other things, how an element can change into another, what everything is made of. These questions demanded different answers which were discussed and refined and resulted in philosophy becoming fully theoretical at the time of Aristotle. A new culture of defining words and meanings in grammar, rhetorics, the logic of propositions and arguments emerged. In these endeavours, principles, definitions and distinctions were clearly drawn and laid down, which later were expanded into a system of interrelated terms and relations.

Cronin cites the development of geometry as a good example of shifting from common sense to systematic theory. This development theoretically enabled Euclid to apply definitions, axioms and principles to straight lines, triangles, circles and other plane figures and later to three-dimensional figures. Euclid proceeded by applying his principles, developing, expanding, exploring, deducing, testing, proving, until he arrived at the required conclusion.

A question emerges here: how do all these solve the problem of common sense? Cronin points out that at this stage a new control of meaning emerges and becomes explicit, words acquire precise meanings, arguments get formulated, systems are set up, deductions are made, politics are differentiated from ethics, logic from grammar, and the practical from the theoretical. It is at this stage at which many of the confusions of the common sense stage are cleared up. It is now possible for one to say

what one means and mean what one says. It is now possible to clear up arguments by appealing to forms of correct argument rather than just repeating traditional beliefs.

### ***6.3.3 Threefold Breakthrough to Epistemological Theory***

Cronin tells us that during the period of modern philosophy, philosophers began by rejecting the confused Scholasticism that emerged from the Middle Ages. It set up a system of philosophy that was independent of theology or the authority of the church. The three thinkers who spearheaded this move were Descartes, Hume and Kant. The systems of philosophy that they founded were self-sufficient, theoretical and critical and needed no religious beliefs but reason and sensation. The focus of their systems was the limits and power of human knowing. The whole of philosophy became confined in epistemology.

The first thinker in the picture was Descartes, who is regarded as the father of modern philosophy. He believed in the power of human reason alone. He believed that, using reason, one could arrive at clear and certain conclusions about man, God and everything else. Through his methodic doubt, he eliminated all presuppositions and established his philosophy on indubitable foundations. He established the fact that the one thing which one cannot doubt is one's existence, hence his dictum "I think therefore I am." From there he moved to the existence of God and the rest of the universe. Cronin tells us,

Descartes aimed at a single integrated system incorporating philosophy, the empirical sciences, mathematics and medicine. He produced the theory of rationalism (1999: 30).

The second in line was David Hume. He typified the theory of empiricism. He comes in opposition to Descartes. His stand is that all knowledge is sense knowledge. He is of the view that there will be more certainty and less disagreement if we stick to the obvious observable evidence of the senses. This stand led him to the abandoning of metaphysics, theology and ethics. According to him, the human mind is limited in its capacity to acquire truth. He believed that whatever ideas we have are derived from sensation and are put together by laws of imagination rather than intelligence.

The third in line was Immanuel Kant. He was of the view that both Descartes' and Hume's theories were extreme. He instead set to establish a synthesis of the two. He accepted Hume's view that our contact with the world is through sensation. It is



through sensation that we know phenomena. But this was not the whole of knowing. He thought that the mind had a contribution to make. The mind constructs or imposes forms on reality. He showed how sensation and the mind combine in the knowing of sensibility, understanding and reason. He established the theory of “subjective idealism.” This theory incorporates elements of rationalism and empiricism. Cronin impresses upon us that each of these positions is a theory because it is systematic and there are principles from which it starts, it follows certain methods and observes certain rules of logic.

For our purposes, the problem here, as Cronin puts it, is that each theory claims to be true, to be the one and only truth and is incompatible with the others. Though each theory manifests the advantages of the theoretical mode in having the coherent, systematic, precise principles and methods, according to Cronin, each shows the disadvantage of the theoretical in that it cannot account for itself, cannot deal with contrary theories, and is subject to constant revisions and changes (1999: 31).

In our sense theory, because of its weaknesses, cannot provide a foundation for the knowing of all reality, much as common sense cannot provide a foundation because of its ambiguities and confusions. So far we have looked at the establishment of theory in terms of philosophy we shall now look at the establishment of theory in terms of science.

#### ***6.3.4 Theory in the Scientific Revolution***

According to Cronin, it is during the period of the scientific revolution that theories rather than common sense ideas concerning the physical world emerged. Generally, these theories manifested five particular characteristics, namely induction, mathematics, measurement, technology and method Cronin (1999: 31).

**Induction.** In order to produce significant data, the first scientists appealed to sensation and experimentation. They stopped appealing to authority figures such as the Church or Aristotle. These endeavours involved inductive methods of moving from particular observable cases to generalisations about all cases. A case in point is that of astronomy, where precise and long-term observations helped to establish the heliocentric, as opposed to geocentric, systems.

Mathematics. There was a remarkable development and application of mathematics. Geometry expanded to trigonometry, algebra and calculus. Pythagoras' dream of reading the world in terms of mathematics seemed possible. Now mathematical correlation seemed to unlock the mysteries of how matter behaves, as opposed to Aristotle's schema of four causes.

Measurement. Although the Greeks had made tremendous breakthroughs in producing profound geometrical systems that were coherent, systematic, rigorous, deductive and brilliant, they had shown little interest in the actual measurements. It would not strike them to solve a problem by actually measuring or counting. So measuring became important for accurate observations and precise experiments and for useful application of inventions. A case in point is that of Galileo, in his attempt to measure the distance and the time traversed by falling bodies.

Technology. It was at this time when many scientific discoveries had many practical applications in the making of instruments, in aiding navigation, in building pumps, weapons, houses and roads, to mention a few. A technology that changed the way people lived evolved together with the principle of verification and progress; in a sense that every time a new machine worked it proved the theory on which it was designed. At the same time it produced new situations and new data for further improvement. The history of the motorcar is a case in point.

Method. According to Cronin, the early scientists attempted to solve problems by trial and error. They rejected philosophy and Aristotle and had no one to tell them what to do. Science evolved its own form of theories and methods, verified by observation and experiment.

We have seen a movement from common sense to theory. We have also seen that common sense has its own problems that seem to be solved by theory. But theory also has its own problems, in the sense that it cannot account for itself, it cannot deal with contrary theories and it is subject to constant revision and change. This situation calls for the third framework and that is interiority. Before we look at interiority, let us revisit the notion of the relationship between the framework of common sense and that of theory, by asking: "Does theory really solve the problems of common sense?" Here we again draw on Cronin. He summarises the answer as follows (Cronin 1999: 32). The mentality of common sense continues with its emphasis on the practical, the

short-term and the lack of clear definitions and distinctions. The undifferentiated nature of common sense remains with its confusions where images may be more important than verified facts, where the way a politician presents herself on television may be more important than what she is in actuality, where no difference may be seen between a psychiatrist and a witchdoctor or the astrologer and the diviner, where belief in alien abductions is on a par with belief in witches changing to animals, where the traditional medicine man is compared to a conventional medical doctor. This exposition shows that theory has not adequately tackled problems of the common sense framework. Now we turn to our method of interiority and ask the same question, does interiority – subject-in-act – solve the problems of the common sense and theory frameworks? Our contention is that it does. But before we look at how it does it, let us present its summary account. We discussed interiority to some extent in Chapter Three, but because of its importance in this section let us briefly recapture it here.

#### **6.4 The Framework of Interiority**

Cronin, following Lonergan, defines interiority as follows (Cronin 1999: 36). Interiority is not just another theory, but a theory about theories; it is not more of the same, but is rather a shift to a new perspective, a different approach, a total appraisal. It is a going beyond common sense and theory, not in the sense of negating their value and leaving them behind, but in the sense of appreciating their specific but limited contributions.

Interiority has four characteristics. Firstly, it is characterised by awareness of the actual process of human intellectual knowing. It is also characterised by reflection on the multitude of mental activities that together constitute human knowing. Interiority calls for a self-knowledge, not just of our feelings and dreams, our motivations and character, but of the very process by which we see, hear, think, imagine, remember, criticise, evaluate, conclude, and judge. The main characteristic of interiority is to grasp the activity of human understanding; not as it happens in others but as it happens in oneself. Interiority is not another theory about human knowing; rather, it is judging of all theories about human knowing in the light of the data of consciousness.

The second characteristic of interiority is that if we grasp the activity of human intelligence then we understand the source of all languages, cultures, common sense conclusions, philosophical systems, empirical science, historical knowledge, mathematics and the multitude of products of human intelligence. If we can grasp the source of this infinite variety of products it means that we can see that they have something in common, they conform to a common structure, that even though they seem to be contradictory they can also contribute to a single goal of comprehensive understanding of all things in the unity of a single perspective. Nothing is beyond the intention of understanding; nothing can be excluded in principle. Though we cannot fully understand everything we can intend, desire, name, point at, move towards an understanding; we can grasp our desires to know and compare it with the limits of achievement.

The third characteristic of interiority is awareness of how understanding unfolds. It reveals that there are norms that are immanent in intelligence. This is how the mind is designed and works. When we have reached the right conclusion we can know. We do not need somebody to tell us. Ultimately we do not need to depend on an authority, a teacher or a tradition. This is because we can attend to the data; think the matter through; assess the relationship between the conclusion and the evidence of the conclusion; ask all relevant questions; exclude all alternatives; and posit the conclusion as certain, highly probable or just probable. Conclusions are reasonable, defensible and demonstrable; they are not the result of an arbitrary choice, or of blindly following a tradition. We have the criteria for being authentic in our common sense, our theory and our interiority.

The fourth characteristic of interiority is in the recognition that we do make mistakes, but we can reflect further and discover our own mistakes. Systematically we can investigate the typical source of misunderstandings and false judgements. We can notice that we did not attend to all the data. For instance, we did not read all the reports or we jumped to conclusions on insufficient evidence. We can recognise that we did not think the matter through, or realise the implications of a statement, clarify precisely what we meant, or delimit clearly the limits of our competence. We can also recognise when temperament interfered either rashly, in pushing us into premature conclusions, or timidly, in unreasonable hesitation in positing a conclusion. We can also recognise many biases, prejudices, ulterior motives, much twisted affectivity,



which interferes with the proper unfolding of the process of knowing. Going to the basic root of all misunderstanding in philosophy and science, we can recognise the dialectic operating in our knowing between elementary animal knowing, with its criteria of the real in sense, and proper human knowing, with its criteria of the real in correct understanding and affirmation.

We now have the three frameworks of understanding and knowing. We have seen that the common sense framework has problems and so does the theory framework. Cronin reminds us that the advantage of theory over common sense is to be found in the clarity, the precision, the control that it confers through mathematics or logic over the field covered by its principles and method. However, the problem with theory is that it cannot account for itself. It also cannot account for a succession of theories. Again, it cannot identify the criteria for choosing between conflicting theories. It cannot account for its own origins or compare itself with common sense. This scenario calls for something more and that is interiority.

On the urgent need for interiority Cronin summarises as follows:

In the mentality of common sense there is a process of discernment between what is true and false, what is moral and immoral, what works and what does not work. But the process is implicit. It is difficult to put it into words, to check on how it operates, to objectify the procedures to be followed; hence the application of this common sense discernment is haphazard and uneven. In the mentality of theory the procedures of discernment are stated explicitly either in logic or in mathematics. Enormous clarity and rigor can be attained within the scope of its principles, procedures and conclusions. But...theory is nevertheless incapable of giving an account of its own limitations, its relation to common sense, and the criteria by which we discriminate between conflicting theories. The crisis in classicism, contemporary philosophy and contemporary science seems to be rooted in the intrinsic limitations of the theoretical mentality. The crisis of contemporary times seems to cry out for a further perspective, a third stage of meaning, the realm of interiority (1999: 36).

In this quotation Cronin has not minced his words in giving the summary of the solution to our problem of inter-cultural understanding. It is clear that we can learn and know within the framework of common sense. We can also learn and know within the framework of theory. We can learn and know within a combination of the two frameworks, but the confusion in our knowing remains enormous. It is not until we have moved into the framework of interiority, in our case that of the subject-in-act,

that we have genuinely learnt or known. We now turn to how interiority can lead to inter-cultural knowing.

#### ***6.4.1 Subject-in-Act Facilitates Inter-cultural Knowing***

We now have the three frameworks of knowing. The pre-modern period framework of knowing whose centre of meaning is in the common sense framework. We also have the modern period framework of knowing whose centre of meaning is in scientific theory and, finally, we have what we would like to call the present-day framework, whose centre of meaning is in interiority or the subject-in-act. Our task now is to show how a debate or a dialogue can be conducted effectively in these frameworks leading to inter-cultural knowing. We would like to propose the subject-in-act as a way forward in this development. The question that we are addressing is how do we get to the truth in any of these frameworks and how can someone who has been predominantly influenced by what takes place in one framework get to the truth in an alien framework? While searching for truth in a tradition or a context or a horizon, among other things, we mainly look at peoples' principles, beliefs, practices and wisdoms. The approach that we propose, which we think cuts across all frameworks and which we think is a way forward in this endeavour, is to be found in the idea of Lonergan's slogan of "Be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable and be responsible." We feel that this method can work effectively in any framework one may care to investigate. It is comprehensive because it touches all aspects in any framework. This is because it invites us to be attentive or alert to data of the senses and of our imaginations. If we are not satisfied with the truth in them then we move to the level of intelligence. Here we raise and attend to the questions that have led to our dissatisfaction. We also look at the alternative and competing data. At this level we isolate all those elements which have led to our dissatisfaction and make corrections where we can, or call upon assistance from experts. Then we move to the level of reasonableness, where we establish the truth in our data, that is whether this data meets our expectations before we finally move to the level of responsibility, where we make a personal decision to take a stand. In case we make mistakes along the way questions will arise which will direct us to where the problem is and then we make further investigations. As we can see, this approach creates room for open-mindedness and keeps prejudice and bias in the background. This is a trait that is

needed in inter-cultural debates or dialogues. This approach is thorough and comprehensive because it can be applied to all frameworks. This means, for instance, one can be attentive at a common sense framework, intelligent at a common sense framework, reasonable at a common sense framework and responsible at a common sense framework. It is also the case that one can be alert or attentive at the theory framework, intelligent at the theory framework reasonable at the theory framework and responsible at the theory framework. Of course one can be attentive at the interiority framework, intelligent at the interiority framework, reasonable at the interiority framework and responsible at the interiority framework. That said, we are now faced with the problem of how our method actually works. When we settle for the task of understanding and knowing in any tradition, context, system, or horizon, as Cronin puts it, we need to understand something. That is, understanding presupposes something that is to be understood, no matter what it is. This could be a principle, a belief, a practice or wisdom. And this could be at any framework of knowing. The task of knowing presumes a level of presentations, of data, or of the given. It presupposes the level of experience, where data are given but are not yet understood. There must be a content to the act of understanding. We cannot talk of understanding unless there is something to understand. The matter to understand comes to us either through the medium of the senses or through our memory or through our imagination. Cronin calls this the first level and it is the level of direct understanding. For our purposes, this is the level of being alert or attentive to the data, no matter at which framework we may happen to be operating. This level is characterised by activities or a set of cognitional operations, as Cronin puts it,

... the activities of defining, distinguishing, considering, forming hypotheses, classifying, identifying, explaining, relating, correlating, counting, measuring, calculating, supposing, conceiving....(1999: 206).

Needless to say, all of us possess these operations, no matter the framework at which we are operating. These operations can bring members from all traditions and cultures to a round table and get them engaged in a dialogue or a debate. Understandably, there may be differences emanating from our frameworks but we can go around them through, for example, the operation of definition, differentiating, distinguishing, classifying, explaining, relating and so on. Surely any normal human being should be able to participate in such a dialogue. This is because all those operations are common to all of us. Of course, some people may not agree with

others, but this will be the case not because they have failed to see the truth but because they have chosen not to see it.

Again, no matter at what framework we may be operating, all of us can move to the second level of cognitional process. The first level gives us a possible relevant hypothesis or a bright idea, or a set of concepts or definitions which may or may not be correct. At the second level of cognitional processes we are at the level of being intelligent. We are weighing the evidence, checking the results, studying the link between the conclusion and the premises, examining reasoning and so on.

Of course here we are likely to face a challenge concerning how people from the common sense framework can sit at a round table with people from the theory framework and learn from one another. The solution here lies in the definition and differentiation and not necessarily in content. For example, theory understood in the scientific context connotes coherence, systematicity, precise principles and methods. This mode is not a monopoly for the Europeans. It can be learnt by anyone from any framework. Similarly, people from the common sense framework do formulate theories and hypotheses in the form of ideas. Although we can add that these theories are still in their rudimentary form and are not yet well developed as a system in these cultures, they still work for them. For instance, the Azande, in their practice of witchcraft, do reflect tendencies of theory and hypothesis. They accept that witches are capable of causing harm to others. That is their theory, which is in the form of a belief. They also ask the question who is responsible? This leads to hypotheses. Finally, they ask the question is it true? They then proceed to establish the aspect of truth through consulting with the oracles. Whether the outcome of this process is acceptable or not is a matter which can lead the two opposed members to a debate. Since the two groups have the criterion of intelligence, this debate should lead to some form of understanding from both sides.

It is this process of looking at all aspects, examining them, comparing them, differentiating them, associating them and harmonising them that ensures a reasonable conclusion. This is the level that culminates in judgement, whether the aspect is true or not, and finally leads to a personal stand being taken.

As we saw in the previous sub-sections, Cisternino gives the genre of proverbs as the source of wisdom and knowing, but he does not tell us how this knowing can be



achieved. Here we say that we can extend our method of the subject-in-act into the genre of proverbs. We can proceed from the level of being attentive right through being intelligent, to being reasonable and responsible. Cronin talks of the compactness at the framework of common sense knowing. Again we say our method can open up this compactness through definition and differentiation, and through all the other operations which we have mentioned. Odera Oruka talks of the rational sage, but he does not tell us how this sage operates. We see lack of definition and differentiation in African religions, according to Mbiti, and in their concept of time. Our method through the set of operations can clarify this scenario. Cisternino's approach of the proverbs can lead to knowing, but this approach is not comprehensive enough to cover all areas of knowing, as we have demonstrated in this sub-section. The same can be said about many other thinkers. All-in-all we believe and remain convinced that it is the idea of the subject-in-act or self-appropriation that can lead to inter-cultural dialogue and debate that can finally lead to inter-cultural learning and knowing. We will now discuss how the self-appropriated subject comes about.

## **6.5 Self-Appropriated Subject**

### ***6.5.1 Moving in There***

Contrary to the empiricist view of reality being out there and being perceived by the detached sense organs, Lonergan invites us to begin the journey towards self-appropriation by "moving in there." Before we see what that means, let us explore the problem which motivates Lonergan to invite us to undertake this journey. In order to appreciate the envisaged problem fully, he begins by inviting us to appreciate the fact that when we pursue knowledge we pursue the unknown. This quest is not only conscious but it is a pursuit that is intelligent, rational, deliberate and methodical. From this statement, anyone would wonder how this pursuit, which is intelligent and methodical, would be possible when one is attempting to attain something which one does not know. This aspect alerts us to the fact that in the human being, there exists something which Lonergan calls a natural ideal of knowledge that moves her towards knowledge. This ideal is a tendency that is innate. That is it belongs to the human being by nature. It is not a facility that is acquired externally. We cannot easily understand its nature or what it is. Equally, we cannot understand its goals naturally or

naively. We have to exert conscious efforts in order to work out our conception of it and its goals. That makes it a formidable problem to face. Why is that so? Lonergan points out that several ideas of knowledge have been put in place, but found to be inept as ideas that would lead to knowing all reality. For instance, the ideal of pure reason has been criticised by Kant and contemporary scholastics. Lonergan wonders, if this ideal is wrong, then which one is right? By being wrong, it means that philosophy can no longer claim its status as a movement from self-evident, universal, necessary principles to equally certain conclusions.

In our discussion throughout this thesis we encountered several ideals of knowledge for knowing all reality, which all turned out to be inept foundations. These ideals included empiricism, rationalism, subjective idealism and dialectics, to mention a few. It has been a fundamental problem which, throughout this thesis, we have been trying to solve. Our solution to this problem, as we have demonstrated, is the subject-in-act. We have to repeat this here that we cannot fully be the subjects-in-act unless we have completed the process of self-appropriation. A moment ago we said that if we want to claim our position in the universe as human beings who are different from other creations, self-appropriation is a process which all of us have no choice but to undergo. We have to join hands with Lonergan, respond to his call and undertake this journey, but before we do that we have to understand what this journey is all about or what it involves. It is to that explanation that we now turn.

Self-appropriation involves the perfection of the ideal of knowledge. Once this ideal is perfected, it will lead us to the correct search of the unknown. The ideal, for which we are searching, is conceptually implicit. Lonergan points out

.... There does not exist naturally, spontaneously, throughout the whole of history, a set of operations, conceptions, and definitions that define the ideal of knowledge (Lonergan, 1990: 14).

However, we may say that, where they exist, they are historically or environmentally conditioned. If this is the case, then they are not adequate enough to give the identity of the ideal of knowledge. Lonergan gives us the true identity of the ideal of knowledge. "The ideal of knowledge is myself as intelligent, as asking questions, as requiring intelligible answers." (1990: 14).

The question of our concern now is, how do we begin the journey to self-appropriation? We begin this journey by “moving in there” – not in the Cartesian sense though – that is,

... to move into the subject as intelligent – asking questions; as having insights – being able to form concepts; as weighing the evidence – being able to judge...in there the ideal is functionally operative prior to its being made explicit in judgements, concepts and words. Moving in there is self-appropriation...reaching what is prepredictive, preconceptual, prejudicial...it is moving from ontology, which is the *logos*, the world about being, to the *ontic*, which is what one is (1990: 14-15).

Here we can say that moving in there is tantamount to looking in there, though not in the ocular sense, which Wittgenstein and the empirical school try to propose. Below Lonergan uses the term “presence” to illustrate what is understood by looking in there. He points out that there are three ways in which the term presence could be understood. For instance, it is possible to say that the chairs are present in the room, but it would not be possible to say that the chairs are present to the room, or the room is present to the chairs. Being present to, which is the second sense of presence, cannot be used in order to relate to the objects that are not conscious of one another. Presence in the second sense can be used to relate to animals, for instance a dog seeing another dog across the road and crossing over. In this example the term “present” can be used in the second sense. The dog is present to the other dog, or the dogs are present to each other. This second sense of present is different from the first, because the second sense of present presupposes consciousness. However, there is a third sense of presence, which is our direct concern. This is the sense which concerns the subject, which explains what is meant by self-appropriation, begins by *looking in there*. My being present to someone and someone being present to me is not the same thing as the chairs being present in the room. The third sense of present is that someone cannot be present to me without me being present to myself. This third sense of presence is again different from the second sense of presence. For instance, if I were unconscious someone would not be present to me and if someone was unconscious I would not be present to her, so the third sense of presence is the presence to oneself. In a nutshell, the presence of the chairs in the room is a physical, material presence. This sense of presence is different from the presence of two objects being present to each other, for example a dog being present to another dog. In the third sense, the person has to be present to herself first, in order for others to be

present to her. This is the presence which is of importance in the process of self-appropriation. Someone is there but she is also present to herself. Self-appropriation involves this third presence.

Our task now is to see how it is achieved. As Lonergan expresses it, is not achieved by craning one's neck to see what is inside oneself, neither is it achieved by turning oneself inside out in order to look at oneself. Even if this was possible, it would still be being present to oneself in the second sense. In other words, in order to have yourself to yourself, you will have to be out there first, looking at yourself. This type of looking is the empirical type. It is only a step in the process of self-appropriation. As Lonergan states,

What is important, in other words, is the looker, not the looked at, even when the self is what is looked at. So it is not a matter of introspection in any special sense, in any sense of "looking back into," because what counts is not the presence of what is looked at but the presence of the subject that looks, even when he is looking at himself (1990: 16).

To explain the main idea in the above quotation, Lonergan uses the example of a teacher in class. In a lecture room students are empirically conscious. However, depending on what is going on in the class, the teacher can tell by the mere looks on the students' faces whether what she is teaching them is penetrating, or whether they are finding it dull. If what the teacher is saying is getting through, then the consciousness goes beyond the mere physical to the intellectual or intelligent consciousness. What is happening is that the students are probably catching on or understanding; or they are trying to, but are still puzzled. That is what is regarded as intellectual consciousness or presence. Then there is the third level, which is the level of reflection. This is when the student is judging whether what she is trying to understand or what she has understood is true or false. Once the student is satisfied that she has got the idea properly and it is a true idea, then she moves to the fourth level, which is rational self-consciousness. That is the final level along the journey of self-appropriation. At this level the student's rational reflection is about herself. It is the stage when she asks herself whether what she is doing is right or wrong. This is where rational reflection is concerned with her own action. Lonergan summarises this journey of moving in on oneself, as follows:

It is not a matter of looking back into yourself, because it is not what you look at but the looking that counts. But it is not just the looking; it is not being entirely absorbed in the other object; rather, it is adverting to the fact that,



when you are absorbed in the object, you are also present to yourself. If you were not, it would not count. If there were no one there to see, that to whom other things are present, that which must be present to itself for other beings to be present to it, is not necessarily there. He or she is intelligent, rational, and rationally self-conscious (1990: 16-17).

Self-appropriation is thus a series of operations ranging from empirical experiences, or being empirically conscious, through to intellectual experiences or being intellectually conscious, that is trying to understand what one is confronted with, to being rationally conscious or the level at which one is trying to establish whether what one has understood is true or false and finally to the level where one takes personal responsibility for the rightness or wrongness of one's actions and that is the level of rational self-consciousness. What we are learning from this exposition is that understanding all reality begins with self-understanding. Understanding all reality involves engaging the operations of the subject-in-act. The subject-in-act, through the precepts of transcendental method, can dialogue in all cultures, hence learning from them. We now proceed with an overview of the entire thesis.

#### **6.6 Foundation for a Multi-cultural Context: Overview**

In this thesis we have presented an argument that it is the subject-in-act who is ultimately basic or foundational for knowing in its final analysis and not formal logic or any other system or tradition. The thesis has been presented in six chapters. In the introductory chapter we have the major problem that served as a motivation that led us into conducting this research. We have given the major assumption that underlies the entire thesis. It is this assumption which has revealed the solution to our major problem. We have also given the scope of our investigations, as reflected in the cited references. The purpose for including references for each chapter in the introduction is to provide an on-the-spot check. This is because the bibliography simply provides references, irrespective of the chapters concerned.

Our major problem was that formal logic, or any other system or tradition, was not ultimately basic or foundational for learning in all respects. What is foundational is the subject-in-act. We have demonstrated that this anomaly originated from the early Wittgenstein, who purported that formal logic formed an ideal language that could reflect all reality, as he understood it. Formal logic could not be foundational to knowing in all respects because of its failure to show clearly its link with

epistemology. We have argued that the link between formal logic and epistemology is the subject-in-act. This is an agent who functions both in logic and epistemology. The agent uses formal logic as a step in that direction. We have demonstrated that the subject-in-act is the architect of formal logic. So logic cannot be ultimately basic or foundational to her.

Our assumption has been that formal logic has to be placed in its context. This context is the subject-in-act. It is this subject-in-act who is ultimately basic or foundational for the understanding, explaining and knowing reality in any system or tradition. The subject-in-act wonders, asks questions and is critical of her suggested interpretations. Concretely it is the subject-in-act, engaged in the practical act of reasoning, who underlies all logic, all systems and all traditions. It is the subject-in-act who leads to inter-cultural learning.

In our argument to this effect we have looked at the views presented in the early and later Wittgenstein. In his early thought he attempted to find an ideal language. He identified this language in atomic or elementary propositions. He structured these propositions into logical form and it is this form that reflected all reality, as he understood it. He developed this form into the picture theory. A picture was supposed to agree or disagree with reality. This agreement or disagreement determined truth or falsity, correctness or incorrectness, in short, all reality. In his presentation we saw Wittgenstein moving from objects to things, to states of affairs or facts, to pictorial form, to thought, and he ends in deductive reasoning. Our biggest quarrel with Wittgenstein is his failure to give the agent of formal logic, in our case the subject-in-act, a functional role (2.1.3).

We have been helped by Hudson to clarify what Wittgenstein's views in his early thought were all about. Wittgenstein was of the view that the meaning of language was its referent, or that language was truth functional. An object could be identified either verbally or by pointing. Language involved meaning. Language had to refer to an object and the object had to be determinate. Because names carried meaning, objects had to be named and an atomic proposition contained a nexus of names. These names were simple signs. It is these simple signs that formed the atomic proposition. Because they were meaningful the atomic proposition had to be meaningful and it is in that sense that it became ultimately basic to knowing. Formal logic is such that it presents structures that comprise variables and constants. Names

or simple objects are variables, while connectives are constants simply because connectives do not name objects, but simply link together the simple signs or the atomic propositions (2.2.3). After seeing Hudson's clarification, we proceeded to examine what went wrong in Wittgenstein's early thought. His position was that all misunderstandings in philosophy could be wiped out if facts could be expressed in atomic propositions. This is because atomic propositions would eliminate the problems of ambiguity. While this may be true, we have argued that there is need for criteria to determine the presence or absence of ambiguity. We have also argued that the meaning of a proposition may be determined by circumstances and conditions. The shift in these could lead to change of meaning in the proposition (2.2.5). Wittgenstein was of the view that objective truth could be reached through logical calculus, which could describe the world fully. Our view on this has been that attempting to describe the world fully through logical calculus would be separating logic from semantics. This was not a correct endeavour, because logical calculus would project the formal objective reality. It would have no room for the informal reality or the reality of particulars. Between objective reality projected by formal logic and the reality of the particulars, there is the subject-in-act, who participates in both realities (2.2.5.2). We have noted the problem created by Wittgenstein when he attempted to separate the set of cognitional operations from their context. In talking about clarity of thought, he was actually talking about the thinking subject. It was not correct for him to say, at the same time, that there is no such thing as a thinking subject. We have noted that the subject is not only a metaphysical being but also functional in the activity of knowing (2.2.5.3). In this respect we have shown how Wittgenstein's idea of the subject-less formal logic, or the picture theory, does not work. We have also shown that logical symbolism and prose language do not necessarily agree. This disagreement does not, in the real sense of the word, reflect reality in its final analysis. We have seen that logic is not capable of looking after itself without the subject-in-act. We have also shown that it was a serious mistake for Wittgenstein to regard the subject-in-act as a metaphysical being without a functional role in the knowable world (2.2.6).

In his later thought we have seen Wittgenstein abandoning his former stand of having an ideal language – formal logic – that would picture and reflect reality in all departments of knowing. We have seen him placing language in a social context. We



have discussed his idea of knowing through following a rule in the language-game. Even in his later thoughts, it is Hudson who has helped us to clarify Wittgenstein's thoughts. We have seen Wittgenstein exposing the defects in his early thought. Referring a word to its referent becomes confounding the meaning of a name and the bearer of a name. This position is now rejected. He also rejects his idea of a one-one representation between the simples of a language and reality. His new stand now is that analysing a language into atomic propositions does not make the meaning clearer. He rejects the idea of the picture theory that, in order for a proposition to have sense, it must have an absolute determinate sense. He has now posited his stand in the fact that a proposition finds meaning in the use in which it is put (2.3.1). Hudson has helped us to clarify terms in Wittgenstein's new stand. Now knowing involves learning what meaning is, the object being named, and the action that is required in the process of naming. It is this that makes language part of an activity or a form of life. In order to accomplish this fact, training is required (2.3.2). We have seen how language relates to reality. It is a fact that reality is made up of things, facts and events each aspect having its own language-game; that game can only be played by following its rules. These rules must be followed without explanation because explanations do turn out to be endless. Following a rule is a social practice. Rules should be understood as they are applied in their social context. We have argued that, while Wittgenstein's stand may be acceptable for us, there should be a difference between accepting the beliefs and practices laid down by society and understanding. Understanding involves the cognitional set of operations. This is the inevitable fact which Wittgenstein does not bring out clearly. There is no aspect of understanding, in whatever language-game, that can escape these operations (2.3.3-2.3.5). We have discussed the relevance of the subject-in-act in the language-games. We have recaptured Wittgenstein's term that language is a labyrinth of paths. In order for us to be able to sort out these paths and find direction we have to apply the cognitional set of operations. Following a rule, in itself, is not enough. Rules must be formulated and reformulated, their relevance constantly assessed. It is the subject-in-act who can accomplish this task (2.3.6).

We have posited our foundation in the subject in Chapter Three. Cronin has assisted us in setting the problem of the lack of a trans-cultural philosophy. This had been the case because of the scenario of fragmenting philosophy. It became difficult



to establish a foundation in these fragments. We have seen that, in the past, it was possible for a particular society to establish a foundation. This was because societies then were simple and unsophisticated, but given the complexity and sophistication prevalent in societies today, society can no longer provide a foundation. We have also pointed out that science has solved many empirical problems, but when it comes to the aspect of human values, science has done very little. We also saw that science is incapable of accounting for its own success. Society and science could thus not provide us with a foundation that is ultimate. Our argument has been that the locus of a foundation that is ultimate is the subject. We have been invited to join in the task of self-discovery. Self-discovery will lead us to self-understanding and therefore self-knowing. From self-knowing we proceed to knowing everything else (3.1.1). We have seen that Lonergan, in *Insight*, characterises the problem of lack of a foundation as a crisis of knowledge. The solution is located in having insight into insight or insight into oversight, that is understanding what there is to understand and why people run away from understanding. In *Insight*, he invites us to join in, in the task of self-appropriation. We saw that *Insight* is not presented as an argument. It is a programme that presupposes readers. It invites us to focus on our inner intelligence and reasonableness. In this respect, we do not only focus on the activity of knowing but also on the fact of what it is to know. We are not to focus only on disciplines such as mathematics, science and humanities, but also to penetrate our inner dynamism of intelligent enquiry and critical reflection. We also saw that we could not find a foundation in the aspects of knowledge such as mathematics, science and the like, but in our own cognitional operations. The aspect of knowledge only provides a scheme for our cognitional operations. In order to understand this scheme we must first of all apply the cognitional set of operations. In our quest we have looked for a method that will integrate the content of knowledge and the knower. This foundation knows both the aspects of knowledge and the knowing subject. It, in effect, solves the crisis of knowledge (3.1.2).

In our argument we have shown that the main reason for not having a foundation so far is that the subject has hitherto been neglected. It had not dawned upon us that it is self-knowing that precedes all kinds of knowing. Philosophers have been engaged in the search for truth, as evidenced in empiricism and rationalism. What had not been recognised is the fact that, in order to reach truth, the cognitional

set of operations is an absolute necessity. We also noted that the focusing on the dualism of the body and soul has also engaged the attention of philosophers. This trend therefore deprived the subject of the opportunity to focus on herself and appropriate herself. The overall consequence of this has been self-ignorance and, in some cases, has led to the conclusion that there is no such a thing as the subject. We have argued that, through self-appropriation, efforts should be made to establish the nature of the cognitional operations of the subject. This is the knowledge that leads to all other types of knowing (3.2.1). We have presented the foundational nature of the subject in the knowing activity. Human knowing is a complexity of different operations. The subject is neither immanent nor partly hidden. We have also shown that the activity of knowing involves self-transcendence. This involves the act of knowing and at the same time being aware that one is actually knowing. In other words, being the subject involves being an integrated whole. The subject should not be regarded as merely immanent, or merely the soul or merely the body. The subject is a conscious being, present to herself both in the data of the senses and the data of consciousness. We have shown that the subject of our thesis is different from the neglected and truncated subject. She is characterised by a movement from the data of the senses to the data of intelligence to the judgement and to responsibility. Ours is a complete process that ensures knowing in objective terms (3.2.2).

We have shown the composition and description of the basic pattern of operations. We possess the operations of the senses and the operations of the mind. This is the edifice of the subject-based method. We have also shown the relationship between the subject and the object. This involves the perceiving subject and the object being perceived. We saw that the subject is the operator who voluntarily operates consciously. Because of the fact that the perceiving subject intends the perceived object, that makes the perceiving subject basic to the perceived object. We also saw that their relationship is psychological rather than mechanical. This is because a mechanical operation functions on mechanical rules, while the subject functions on conscious operations, that is she functions consciously and intentionally. We have discussed fully the four levels of cognitional operations: these being the empirical, the intellectual, the rational and the responsible. Their relationship is that they work in close collaboration with a conscious dynamism running across them: all of them being conscious and intentional. The movement is such that questions emerging from

enquiry help to organise data into intelligible wholes. We noted that the level of inquiry is more challenging than the empirical one. Conflicting alternatives are sorted out at this level, leading to appropriate judgement. This is done in order to ensure that before we commit ourselves at the level of judgement we have to ensure that the selected alternative is truly true. We have shown that the cognitional set of operations move progressively in an interlocking manner from the empirical level to the intellectual level, where alternative and competing data are sorted out, up to the more challenging level of depositing a judgement that finally leads to a responsible choice (3.3.1). We have shown that the subject-based set of operations is not only a method but also a transcendental one. It is a method because of its normative pattern of recurrent and related operations that yield cumulative and progressive results. It is transcendental because its results are not limited categorially to some particular field or subject. We saw that it is transcendental because its precepts are present in all of us and no one can function without them (3.3.2). We have reiterated that transcendental method is a rock to build on. This is because of its characteristics. These include presupposition of intellectual curiosity, together with a striving to understand and to know. It also presupposes critical reflection, responsibility, truth or falsity in the propositions and conclusions being drawn. We have shown that, in this method, operations are not arrived at in isolation. There is unity of consciousness at any level of cognitional operation. The cognitional operations are clearly distinguishable as we move from sense through to judgement and responsibility. In this processes anomalies are isolated. Transcendental method is neither hypothetical nor susceptible to change. We saw that it is only data that changes and not the operations. So any attempt to reject transcendental method is tantamount to self-rejection (3.3.3). We have shown that transcendental method is functionally useful to all other methods. It sets a standard for all of them. It operates in such a way that anomalies experienced at sense level can be resolved at the intellect level and the process proceeds through reasonable and responsible levels. This method is systematic in a sense that it constructs the elementary acts of knowing into compound knowing and the elementary objects of knowing into compound objects of knowing, thus ensuring continuity, something that is desirable for all methods. We saw that it also executes a heuristic function. This is a method that leads the prospective knower into the unknown until she reaches the knowledge world. This is done through the precepts of transcendental method. We saw that ,since no method escapes the precepts of



transcendental method of being attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible, transcendental method brings all the other methods to harmony, thus transcending all of them (3.3.4).

We have used ideas from commentators to help us argue our case. Cronin has reminded us that the reason why we do not have a foundation to all knowing is attributed to the attempt to locate this foundation in the wrong places. He helped us to locate this foundation in interiority or self-appropriation. Shutte concurred with Lonergan and described his method as capable of touching all areas of knowing. He helped us to show that this method is self-assembling and self-constituting. Shutte described the knower as conscious, intelligent and rational. Because of his description of the subject-in-act as conscious and self-assembling he helped us to bring the crux of the matter of our argument to the fore. He also reminded us that the subject-in-act is self-corrective. We have been trying to identify a method that is not only comprehensive but also self-corrective. This is the sort of method that Shutte is advocating. In addition to Shutte's views, Giddy has helped us to project Lonergan's ideas as integrative, or as heightening the presence to self. Lonergan's ideas do not presuppose the dualism of the subject and object. This fact helped us to clarify the empiricist position that knowing was through scientific objectivity achieved by eliminating subjective elements. His argument, that the empiricist and rationalist stand are lopsided, helped us to exalt transcendental method as all-inclusive and comprehensive. Using the precepts of transcendental method, Giddy stretched into the realm of behaviour. His argument was that there is no excuse for misbehaviour under the guise of being determined. This is because the actor has the potential to correct herself through the precepts of transcendental method. He also stressed the idea of self-understanding as leading to the understanding of everything else, or knowing in the ultimate sense (3.4).

We have extended our thinking to belief. Over the years, knowledge has been accumulated by experts and distinguished scholars. High-tech instruments have been designed and put in place. Libraries and museums are filled with information from all walks of life. We have been implored to believe in the knowledge that is prevalent in these sources. It would not be necessary to verify each and every piece of knowledge ourselves before accepting it as true. However, belief in this sense should not conflict with judgement in the Lonergan sense. Belief is based on trust of expertise and



scholarship, while judgement is based on the precepts of transcendental method. However, we are advised to resort to the precepts of transcendental method in the case of conflict (3.5.1). In order to emphasise our position on the transcendence of transcendental method, we made an attempt to compare it with the scientific method. We saw that the scientific method is based on hypothesis, theory and experimentation. It functions on set rules, logic and precision. Logic ensures accuracy, excellence and continuity. It also applies non-logical procedure that ensures advancement. This is in order, but our argument has been that science does not lead us to all departments of knowledge, as stipulated by the precepts of transcendental method. It starts us off on the journey to all knowing but it does not take it to its logical conclusion. This is because it does not recognise the subject. Failure to do so leaves science at the empiricist position and, as we have discussed, this is not comprehensive enough to lead to knowing in all spheres (3.5.2-3.5.3).

In Chapter Four we addressed the problem of incompatibility among cultures. We looked at what we called the European culture, following the scientific approach, and the Azande culture, following the oracular approach. We tried to address the question concerning whether there was any method that would lead to mutual comprehension between the two cultures. We also tried to see if it was possible for each of the two cultures to learn something from each other. To discuss these issues we were assisted by Winch (4.1).

We looked specifically at the idea of rationality being relative to culture. Winch helped us in this respect. We saw that the Azande do not only believe in oracular revelation but also believe that some of their members are capable of exercising a malignant occult influence on the lives of their fellow members. This was a point of incomprehensibility between the Europeans and the Azande. According to Winch, a social anthropologist such as Evans-Pritchard attempting to interpret the way of life of the Azande faced the problem of understanding them and of convincing fellow Europeans, who followed the scientific norms of rationality. Such a European was likely to suffer from an attitudinal problem because of the cultural ties of her tradition. Winch described both the European approach and that of the Azande as logical and remained opposed to Evans-Pritchard's stand that it was the European approach that led to objective truth and reality. On the issue of independent reality, Winch remained convinced that the check for independent reality was not peculiar to

science. To him reality was contextual. He gave the example of the reality of God as being comprehended in the religious context or tradition. Winch presented the reality of witchcraft as forming the very foundation of the social life of the Azande. They are entangled in their beliefs and practices. So it is difficult for the European to comprehend this structure using her own norms. We looked specifically at the fact concerning whether or not the oracular approach made sense to the Azande, especially given the contradictions that are evident in it. The contradictions in the Azande system are seen from the point of view of scientific theory. This is the level at which the Europeans are operating. The Azande, however, are operating at common sense level and these are two levels which are incompatible. We saw that what made sense to the Europeans did not necessarily make sense to the Azande. Because of this contextual difference, the oracular approach did make sense to the Azande. Because of these cultural differences, we saw Winch in full support of following the idea of the language-games. The European should play their own language-game and the Azande theirs. Should the Europeans want to play the Azande language-game, they should learn its rules and social use first. According to Winch, the European norms of rationality are not a finite set. Learning should come through training and not adhering to one's norms. It is not correct to take the scientific approach or norms of rationality as a paradigm by which to compare other systems or traditions. The Azande way of life should not be looked at in terms of the European way of life. We made it clear that what we are faced with is a clear case of cultural relativism. Winch, Evans-Pritchard, MacIntyre and Horton are only engaged in an academic exercise of attack and counter-attack, defence and counter-defence, with none of them helping us out of the situation. It was Barden, through his idea of the set of operations, that helped us extricate ourselves from these squabbles (4.2).

In addition to Winch, we were assisted by ideas from commentators. Barden, discussing Winch, raised the issue of whether there are meanings behind accidents, as Azande purport, or whether accidents are mere coincidence, as Europeans purport. He also brought out the issue of cultural relativism and therefore incompatibility between cultures due to contextual differences. Unlike Winch, who suggested inter-cultural learning without a method for doing so, Barden provided a method – the basic set of operations – that helped us to circumvent the problem of cultural relativism. We looked at the impasse between MacIntyre and Winch. Winch maintained the position

that in order for the Europeans to interpret the Azande way of life, they had to follow the Azande norms of rationality, while MacIntyre maintained the position that it would be impossible for the European to interpret the Azande way of life outside the European's norms of rationality. We reached the situation where the Europeans could not play the Azande game because the oracular approach appeared irrational to them. And because the Azande game appeared incompatible with the Europeans, the Azande could not play the European game. Again, using Barden's approach of the set of operations, we circumvented this problem. Along the same lines, we saw Horton defending Evans-Pritchard and MacIntyre against Winch, as regarding Winch's idea of translational understanding and mystical thinking. Winch's position was that in order to understand utterances made in an alien culture, one should first try to understand the point that these utterances have for them. These utterances must first of all be placed in the social context from which they arise. It is only after that that one will be in position to say which utterances associated with one's conceptual systems are appropriate translational instruments. Horton had a problem with this position. Horton, at the same time, seemed to have problems with Winch's insistence of not imposing one's norms of rationality on an alien culture. On the issue of mystical thinking, Horton interprets it as spiritualistic and therefore presents Evans-Pritchard's scientific approach as a model to emulate. We saw that all these are problems that can be overcome by the subject-in-act (4.3).

After a discussion on how we can learn from other cultures, we crowned the chapter by identifying the relevance of Winch's ideas to the whole project (4.4).

In Chapter Five we looked at how Barden came to our rescue. He gave us the idea that intercultural learning begins in a tradition, more specifically one's own tradition. We discussed the idea of the coherence of traditions, cultures and systems and the idea of how we arrive at truth in inter-cultural debate. We also noted that knowing is always knowing against a tradition. We do not choose where to be born but where we end is our choice. We are born with the potential to shape our destiny. This potential is the criterion that helps us to judge whether what we are learning is true or false. In this chapter, we moved from purely cognitive to the realm of behaviour. We did this by recapturing the Azande and their oracular system and the European judicial system. We showed that, though the two systems may be addressing different content, they nevertheless run side-by-side with each other. We



saw that they both have a method of approach. They may differ on the outcome of their judicial practice, but that is the purpose of our cognitional set of operations. The operators in the two systems both have this set of cognitional operations that can enable them to harmonise their differences (5.1- 5.1.1.3).

We discussed the fact that the subject-in-act is not only born in a tradition but, more profoundly, that is what she is. We also noted that traditions are not necessarily systematic. Traditional wisdom is translated into propositions, postulates and axioms that later turn into general guidelines for that tradition. For our purposes we saw that this scenario is nothing more than data for the subject-in-act to operate upon. We saw that traditions and systems are different. This meant that propositions, postulates and axioms in these traditions are also different. Needless to say, these differences led to incompatibility in these traditions and systems. What is cardinal is that this incompatibility is only apparent in practice and not in principle. This makes it vulnerable to the subject-in-act. We looked at the way out from the confines of traditions, contexts, logical systems and horizons. This attempt came as a result of radical revisions. To help us out of this we discussed Einstein's shift to relative mechanics because of the inconsistencies among the propositions of electromechanics and mechanics. We saw that there exists the possibility of incoherence among the propositions of science that could lead to the possibility of lack of understanding of the logical systems or the traditions or the horizons in which they might be functioning, with the consequence of unreliability in knowledge. In this respect we argued that propositions, or postulates or axioms on their own, could not lead us to reliable knowing. There is a need for the subject-in-act to direct them. We also discussed the aspect of what appears to be real at common sense level and noted that the situation could be explained by the subject-in-act. We also looked at the principle of non-contradiction. We saw that the principle of non-contradiction is not a proposition. It is not learnt first before it is applied. This principle is a criterion that is innate. We are programmed by nature to recognise a contradiction when it occurs. It need not first be expressed in a proposition. This principle is an operation and not a proposition. Because it is an operation, therefore it leads to coherence. We saw that coherence is vital in the activity of knowing. It is at this point at which we made an attempt to flesh out the idea of intercultural learning in the inter-cultural contexts. We first focused on how we arrive at truth of a proposition and then focused on the



criterion for truth. We first recaptured our major contributors, who included Wittgenstein, Lonergan, Winch, Evans-Pritchard, MacIntyre and Barden, and looked more specifically at their respective contributions in their traditions and systems. Wittgenstein's ideas were the formation of an ideal language, formal logic that would picture all reality. This language was meant to be foundational to all knowing; and following a rule in the language-games in a given social context. Either way, a functional subject-in-act was not given a clear role to play. Lonergan provided a foundation to all knowing in the idea of self-appropriation. We agreed entirely with this position. Evans-Pritchard took the position that it was only the scientific approach that could lead to objective truth and reality. Winch did not agree with that position, and in addition, he contributed the idea of inter-cultural learning. His view was that in order to comprehend and interpret social behaviour of an alien tradition one had to learn their way of life first. MacIntyre encountered problems with that view and his stance became that it was difficult to interpret an alien way of life outside one's norms of rationality. That scenario plunged us deep into cultural relativism. We were exalted by Barden, following Lonergan, with his idea of the set of operations or the subject-in-act. Barden helped us to demonstrate that the subject-in-act did not only understand her culture and the systems therein but transcended it. This is not all. She extends her own horizon into other cultures and systems and can learn from the new horizons, traditions and systems. It is through this procedure that the idea of inter-cultural learning can be actualised (5.2.7.2).

We specifically looked at the criteria for arriving at truth. To help us in this, we referred to the naïve version of correspondence theory. This is a theory that functions mainly at common sense level. According to this theory, truth is simply reached by "taking a good look." This is evident in empiricism and Wittgenstein's positivism in the picture theory of knowledge. We saw that in the picture theory the role of the subject is hidden. Truth is seen in the atomic proposition. Later it becomes contextual, due to many language-games, rules and uses. We saw truth being established in the subject-in-act, who happened to be the grasper of the sufficiency of the evidence. We discovered that horizons could be provisional. This was because new questions keep on emerging, demanding answers that cannot be found in our current horizon. This calls for a shift in horizons in search of new answers. We also noted that horizons are a two-way traffic. We do not only seek answers in a less

restricted horizon, but the time comes when we seek answers in a more restricted horizon. We noted that a horizon could reach perfection, when there is no more relevant questions to ask. By recapturing both the Azande and the European traditions, we noted that members in both traditions do possess a capacity to ask questions. This capacity is neither an exclusive possession of the Azande nor of the Europeans. It is an endowment that is common to all of us. We also saw that the questions and answers of both the Azande and the Europeans are contingent. We established that it is only the capacity, or the endowment, that is actualised into an operation for asking questions that is a constant for all human beings. Because of its being a constant it becomes the only facilitator for inter-cultural learning. We posited it as the solution to Winch's problem of inter-cultural learning or knowing. Since we are all born with this endowment – the set of cognitional operations – all of us can engage in dialogue that would lead to mutually acceptable answers and if some people do not recognise the mutually derived answers it will be because they have chosen not to recognise them and not because of inherent differences. (5.3.1- 5.3.4).

Chapter Six concluded our discussion, with a further application of the method for inter-cultural learning. We did this by applying it to the frameworks of inter-cultural learning. These included the common sense framework. We say that this framework is characterised by compactness where activities intermingle and overlap. We looked at specific cases which included proverbs with their pedagogical potential, religious experiences and the concept of time in the common sense framework and how philosophy has been interpreted before and after the colonial experiences. We established the fact that answers to questions raised in the common sense framework could be found in the theory framework. This is because the theory framework is characterised by rules, precision, systematicity, coherence, logic and control. It became evident, however, that theory also had its own weaknesses, such as failure to account for itself, failure to deal with contrary theories and the problem of being constantly subjected to revisions and changes. We came to the stage where it was evident that, though the framework of theory could explain some of the issues in the common sense framework, because of its weaknesses it could not be established as a foundation for inter-cultural learning. That necessitated a call for another framework, which is interiority or the cognitional set of operations or subject-in-act. We saw that, through its precepts of being attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible, it

qualified as being comprehensive enough to facilitate the pedagogical call for inter-cultural learning. We addressed more specifically the issue of whether, traditions, such as those of the Azande and other traditions, could actually reach the level of interiority. To answer this question, we looked at how the Greeks went about questioning their rich mythology. This was the beginning of a journey towards clarity and differentiation. We saw how philosophers during the modern period came up more succinctly with the theories of rationalism and empiricism. This demonstration shows that even traditions like those of the Azande, and all those which fall into the same category, could reach the framework of interiority (6.1.1-6.1.3).

However, that would not be possible until the Azande and all those who are still operating largely at the common sense framework, all those who are still operating largely at the theory framework and all of us have heeded Lonergan's call in *Insight* to undergo the process of self-appropriation or interiority. We must, first of all, be present to ourselves before anybody else can be present to us. We must know ourselves in the Lonergan sense, before we can know anything else in any tradition or system. We established that it is a prerequisite that we must first undertake the journey to self-knowledge as conscious, intelligent, reasonable and responsible knowers. This is the move that would make us ultimately basic or foundational for all knowing. It is after accomplishing this move that we could proceed to inter-cultural knowing. We established that through the cognitional set of operations, or the subject-in-act, we could move towards knowing reality in its final analysis in all traditions and systems. European and African social anthropologists, and philosophers such as Wittgenstein, Lonergan, Winch, MacIntyre, Evans-Pritchard, Horton, Shutte, Giddy, Mbiti, Wiredu, Masolo and Odera Oruka, would come to a round table to solve the problem of inter-cultural knowing, once and for all. If that could be achieved, then we say that we have completed the mission that this thesis set out to accomplish (6.1.4).



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