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## TRANSCENDENTAL METHOD IN ACTION

Patrick Daly

Lonergan Institute at Boston College

*I think there is something very true in the Hegelian connection between the subjective spirit and its manifestation in objective spirit...Self-appropriation is conditioned not merely by the fact that one is empirically, intelligently, and rationally conscious; it is conditioned also by that fact as manifested.*

Understanding and Being, CWL 5, 219

*All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity, not a quality. Character gives us qualities, but it is in our actions that we are happy or the reverse.*

Aristotle, *Poetics* 1450a 17-20

*The fact is I think I am a verb rather than a pronoun. A verb is anything that signifies to be; to do; or to suffer. I signify all three.*

Ulysses Grant, handwritten note while dying with throat cancer

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Lonergan's treatment of transcendental method in the first chapter of *Method in Theology* presents a bit of a puzzle.<sup>1</sup> While his instruction to apply the "operations as intentional to the operations as conscious" [M 14] makes sense with reference to the transcendental operations of understanding, judging, and deciding in coming to self-knowledge, it does not make sense with reference to "experiencing one's experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding" [M 15] as a moment of self-consciousness – or what he calls here "just consciousness" [M 15] – upon which the other operations build. Something about heightening consciousness at the level of experience is different from the reflexive operations by which we objectify this heightened experience [M 8-9]. Lonergan's summary statement of transcendental method makes no explicit reference to what this difference is. In what follows, I work out an interpretation of transcendental method in terms of Lonergan's earlier treatment of consciousness as experience

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972). Cited hereafter in text as [M page number].

and self-presence – to which he makes passing reference in the first chapter of *Method* – with explicit attention to the difficulties of his summary statement. In doing so, I relate the problem of being explicit about heightening consciousness at the level of experience to the problem of objectifying the subject-as-subject: both are a matter of performance. In this regard I identify a *performative* mode of subjective operation – in addition to the *direct* and *introspective* modes that Lonergan identifies in *Insight*<sup>2</sup> - and develop an account of this mode of operation as it is manifested experientially in feelings and existentially in action. I relate the notion of feelings as data of consciousness to Lonergan’s account of the unity-in-tension of human consciousness, various forms and degrees of tension being the primary feeling-states of conscious experience. Finally, I note the significance of transcendental method in action with regard to understanding the subtleties of subject-to-subject communication in the encounter of patient and clinician as part of a philosophy of health from the standpoint of generalized empirical method on which I am working.

## 2. THE PUZZLE OF TRANSCENDENTAL METHOD

### *Noting the problem*

Lonergan speaks of four levels of conscious intentionality: empirical, intellectual, rational, and responsible [M 9]. For brevity’s sake, he denotes the various operations on the four levels by the principal occurrence on each level [M 14], which can be represented:

EUJD = experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding.

He indicates that transcendental method is a “fourfold matter” of “heightening one’s consciousness” by applying the “operations as intentional to the operations as conscious” [M 14].

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<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Insight*, vol. 3 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1992), 299.

This is problematic since heightening consciousness at the first transcendental level does not involve applying experience as intentional to EUJD as conscious. If anything, it involves applying experience as conscious to EUJD as intentional; but this formulation won't do either, since consciousness is not an operation. The difficulty that emerges – as Lonergan is all too well aware<sup>3</sup> – is how to make explicit the distinction between consciously heightening one's conscious operations and intentionally heightening one's conscious operations without truncating the subject who does so. Lonergan handles this problem obliquely in this chapter and more thoroughly and effectively elsewhere in his work, as I discuss below, but the ambiguity of his compressed statement of transcendental method is a clue to dimensions of the problem that are worth further investigation, in my estimation.

Transcendental method unfolds as a complex series of operations, which for ease of reference I notate opposite Lonergan's text as follows:

<b>Text [M 14-15]</b>	<b>Shorthand</b>
[I]f for brevity's sake we denote the various operations on the four levels by the principal occurrence on that level, we may speak of the operations as experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. These operations are both conscious and intentional.	EUJD
----- But what is conscious, can be intended. To apply the operations as intentional to the operations as conscious is a fourfold matter of (1) experiencing one's experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding,	E(EUJD)
----- (2) understanding the unity and relations of one's experienced experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding,	U[E(EUJD)]
----- (3) affirming the reality of one's experienced and understood experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding	J(U[E(EUJD)])
----- and (4) deciding to operate in accord with the norms immanent in the spontaneous relatedness of one's experienced, understood, affirmed experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding.	D[J(U[E(EUJD)])]

<sup>3</sup>“The recurrent difficulty in cognitional theory and psychology generally arises from a failure to distinguish between our actual performance and our abbreviated objectification of that performance.” Bernard Lonergan, “The Origins of Christian Realism,” in *A Second Collection*, ed. W. Ryan and B. Tyrrell (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 243.

Concerning the basic pattern of operations, Lonergan says, “whenever these operations are performed, the subject is aware of himself operating, present to himself operating, experiencing himself operating” [M 8]. This series of descriptions highlights several key formulations of consciousness from earlier work. The phrase, “aware of himself operating,” is drawn from *Insight*, where Lonergan says that consciousness is “awareness immanent in cognitional acts” and not an “inward look.”<sup>4</sup> The phrase, “present to himself operating,” is drawn from “Cognitional Structure” (among other sources) where Lonergan treats cognitional operations as conscious in terms of subjective self-presence.<sup>5</sup> The phrase “experiencing himself operating” is drawn from *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ* where Lonergan speaks at length about human consciousness as experience.<sup>6</sup> Beginning with this last formulation, Lonergan distinguishes interior and exterior experience within the field of experience, while “experience in itself forms a sort of continuous and rather confused whole” [OPCC, 6]. This is a key notion with respect to the unity of consciousness, which I address below in relation to Lonergan’s treatment of consciousness in *Insight*. Staying with the distinction for the moment, what we experience exteriorly as an object (*per modum obiecti*) is apprehended by a special act of sensation [159]; what we experience interiorly on the side of the subject (*ex parte subiecti*) is our “becom[ing] aware of...the one seeing and the act of seeing...the one who understands and the act of understanding...the one who judges and the act of judging” [159-60]. Lonergan refers to these two aspects of experience several pages apart in *Method* without characterizing them as interior or exterior: (1) the “principal” operation at the first of the four levels of conscious

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<sup>4</sup> *Insight*, 344.

<sup>5</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “Cognitional Structure,” in *Collection*, vol. 4 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 209-210.

<sup>6</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ* [De constitutione Christi ontologica et psychologica], vol. 7 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, trans. Michael G. Shield (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 157-169. Cited hereafter in text as [OPCC, page #].

intentionality [M 14] and (2) the experiencing oneself operating that is not “another operation,” but an instance of “being conscious” [M 8].

We can modify the shorthand notation indicated above by using different fonts to distinguish these two aspects of experience: (1) E for the “principle” operation or exterior experience and (2) *E* for “experiencing oneself operating” or interior experience. Thus, we can rewrite the first level of transcendental method as  $E(EUJD)$ , which is equivalent to the sum of its component operations:  $EE + EU + EJ + ED$ .<sup>7</sup> This notation allows us to focus on a discrete problem at the first transcendental level – namely, what is  $EE$ ? Some may balk at putting the question this way since it suggests that *E* is a separate operation from E and thus reduces the conscious subject to object of consciousness. I concede the problem.<sup>8</sup> But what are we to make of Lonergan’s very words, “experiencing one’s experiencing” [M 14], repeated several times with minor variation in the summary statement of transcendental method? Did he misspeak or was he tacitly engaged in virtue of the tension of human consciousness with a unity at once precarious and alive? I am pursuing the latter possibility. The most important point to keep in mind is that the field of experience – encompassing interior and exterior experience – is unified performatively. The second point is that as embodied subjects’ wakefulness and attentiveness vary; consciousness is a matter of degree.

Regarding  $EE$ , or experiencing one’s experience, Lonergan employs several images to

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<sup>7</sup> I represent all four levels of transcendental method utilizing this format in the Appendix at Table 1.

<sup>8</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, “Christ as Subject: A Reply,” in *Collection*, vol. 4 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 164: “John knows his dog. John knows himself. In both, the subject is John. In the first, the object is John’s dog. In the second, the object is John himself. It follows that knowing is of two kinds: there is direct knowing in which the object is not the subject; and there is reflexive knowing in which the object is the subject. Name reflexive knowing consciousness. Define the subject as the object of consciousness.” Left only with these alternatives, the subject-as-subject remains in shadows and never comes to light.

convey his meaning. In the paragraph after his summary statement of transcendental method, he says that we must “enlarge our interest” to encompass the intending subject at the “periphery” of our attending to a focal object [M 15]. In “The Fragility of Consciousness,” Fred Lawrence distinguishes focal and tacit awareness in relation to both interior and exterior experience (restricting the spatial metaphor of “periphery” to sense perception): “internal experience is that tacit, implicit, or background presence of ourselves to ourselves concomitant with any conscious acts which is the radical meaning of ‘consciousness’ and ‘conscious’”; similarly, “external experience as sensation (as opposed to perception)...can be utterly tacit or background for our focal awareness, such as, e.g., peripheral vision.”<sup>9</sup> Just as we can enlarge our experience interiorly, we can also do so exteriorly, as when we pay closer attention to what is going on. This relates to Lonergan’s designation of experience as the “principal occurrence” [M 14] on the first level, although it is not listed among the first five operations – seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting – of the eighteen that make up the “basic pattern” [M 6]. Think of the difficulty that a remarkably gifted investigator like Barbara McClintock had conveying the experience – interior and exterior – at the heart of her scientific investigations.<sup>10</sup>

A second image is that of fullness. Earlier in the chapter Lonergan says, “On all four levels [of conscious intentionality], we are aware of ourselves but, as we mount from level to level, it is a fuller self of which we are aware and the awareness itself is different” [M 9]. In this case, the image of fullness relates to development; that is, the blossoming of the subject in a differentiated set of operations. Although Lonergan does not say this, we might also think of fullness in terms of growth in the luminosity of the subject at each and every level of operation. Thus in performing the first step of transcendental method – *E(EUJD)* – one is more

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<sup>9</sup> Fred Lawrence, “The Fragility of Consciousness: Lonergan and the Postmodern Concern for the Other,” *Theological Studies* (1993) 54: 70-71, nn. 21 & 22.

<sup>10</sup> See Evelyn Fox Keller, *A Feeling for the Organism: The Life and Work of Barbara McClintock* (New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1983).

luminously oneself in experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. And in performing the other steps of transcendental method, one grows in the luminosity of self-knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

A third image is that of perfection. In *OPCC*, Lonergan defines consciousness as “interior experience of oneself and one’s acts” [157], where experience is a “preliminary unstructured sort of awareness” [159]. He adds, “[I]t is a serious error to think that consciousness consists not in that preliminary unstructured awareness that we have spoken of, but rather in the subsequent focusing and concentrating of attention” [167]. This latter statement would seem to preclude Lonergan’s saying that *E*(EUJD) is “just consciousness,” and yet he does. One way around this difficulty is to understand *E*(EUJD) not in terms of focusing but rather enlargement – or in meditative terms, relaxation – of consciousness. Another way concerns the notion of ontological perfection, about which Lonergan says: “‘Conscious’ adds nothing to being; it simply denotes being of a certain degree of ontological perfection” [189]. Nobody’s perfect, as Thomas Aquinas and Billy Wilder had occasion to say, and not being uniformly and perfectly conscious is among the many aspects of human living to which that dictum applies. With this in mind, it is possible to understand *EE* as a perfecting of conscious experience (*E*), such perfecting being a matter of degree.

While going from *E* to *EE* is not much of a “stretch,” it is, to be sure, a less than felicitous rendering of perfection. More importantly, neither the spatial imagery of center/periphery or exterior/interior, nor the duplication of the word experience sufficiently distinguish what occurs at the first level of transcendental method from what occurs at the next three levels or in the basic

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<sup>11</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*,” in *Collection*, vol. 4 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 223: “Substance prescind from the difference between the opaque being that is merely substance and the luminous being that is conscious. Subject denotes the luminous being.”

pattern of operations. I now turn to a way to meet this difficulty that builds on Lonergan's treatment of modes of subjective presence in "Cognitional Structure" and modes of cognitive operation in *Insight*.

*Noting a solution*

In "Consciousness and Self-Knowledge" – the third section of "Cognitional Structure" – Lonergan presents an early version of transcendental method in terms of a reduplication of EUJ, the structured operations of knowing. Consciousness entails "experiencing experience, understanding, and judging"; self-knowledge entails the "reduplicated structure [of] experience, understanding, and judging with respect to experience, understanding, and judging."<sup>12</sup> Since "consciousness is of the acting subject *qua* acting...experiencing of one's sensitivity is identical with one's sensitivity coming to act."<sup>13</sup> Concerning the distinction between internal and external experience, Lonergan asks, "[W]hat is the original datum that has been expressed by a spatial metaphor?" and goes on to describe the now familiar three modes of subjective presence: subject-to-object, subject-as-object, subject-as-subject.<sup>14</sup> Introspection concerns the subject-as-object. The heightening of "one's presence to oneself," such as occurs in the transition from dreamless sleep to dreaming and from dreaming to being fully awake, concerns the subject-as-subject.<sup>15</sup> Working with these three modes of subjective presence allows us to be explicit in stating what is different about the first level of transcendental operation: it concerns the subject-

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<sup>12</sup> "Cognitional Structure," 208.

<sup>13</sup> "Cognitional Structure," 209. Although Lonergan writes "experience of," its *identity* with coming to act concerns the mode of subject-as-subject and not subject-as-object.

<sup>14</sup> "Cognitional Structure," 209-10.

<sup>15</sup> See "*Existenz and Aggiornamento*," 223: "From the viewpoint of substance, those differences are merely accidental. But they are not accidental to the subject, for the subject is not an abstraction; he is a concrete reality, all of him, a being in the luminousness of being."



as-subject *qua* acting. It is a performative mode that sets the prior conditions for higher modes of transcendental operation.<sup>16</sup>

In *Insight*, Lonergan distinguishes two modes of cognitional operation: a *direct* mode that begins from data of sense,<sup>17</sup> and an *introspective* mode that begins from data of consciousness.<sup>18</sup> These modes of cognitional operation correspond to two of the modes of subjective presence: subject-to-object and subject-as-object. To these we should add a third *performative* mode of operation – an existential as opposed to a strictly cognitive mode – that constitutes a heightening of “one’s presence to oneself” as acting subject. The first level of transcendental method brings this performative mode of operation to light as both precarious and potentially significant. These three modes of operation can be symbolized as follows:

1.  $S \leftrightarrow O$ , the subject-object dipole of conscious intentional operation in the direct or subject-to-object mode,<sup>19</sup>
2.  $S \leftrightarrow (S \leftrightarrow O)$ , reflexive operation in the introspective or subject-as-object mode,
3.  $S^2 \leftrightarrow O$ , heightened self-consciousness in the performative or subject-as-subject mode of operation.

I compare the original shorthand notation of transcendental method with a modified version based on this differentiated symbolism in the Appendix at Tables 2 & 3. Several points regarding the modified notation are in order here. First, I explicitly indicate that the first level of

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<sup>16</sup> “Now it is true, of course, that self-appropriation occurs through a heightening of consciousness and such a heightening reveals not the subject as object, but the subject as subject. I should contend, however, that this heightening of consciousness proceeds to an objectification of the subject, to an intelligent and reasonable affirmation of the subject, and so to a transition from the subject as subject to the subject as object” [M 262].

<sup>17</sup> These include “colors, shapes, sounds, odors, tastes, the hard and soft, rough and smooth, hot and cold, wet and dry, and so forth” (*Insight*, 299).

<sup>18</sup> These include “of acts of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, perceiving, imagining, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, judging, and so forth” (*Insight*, 299).

<sup>19</sup> For the image of subject-object dipole, see “Metaphysics as Horizon” in *Collection*, vol. 4 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 198-204.

transcendental operation is performative, not introspective, which is consistent with Lonergan's position that "one must begin from the performance, if one is to have the experience necessary for understanding what the performance is."<sup>20</sup> Second, I indicate that higher levels of transcendental operation can be performative as well as introspective, since we can heighten awareness of ourselves in operation at all levels. The subject-as-subject operating at any given level is not bound by the horizon of that level, not even when operating in the introspective mode of consciousness. Rather, the subject increases in dimensionality as well as power, such that the higher-level subject sublates lower level operations.<sup>21</sup> Proceeding methodically in the performative mode of consciousness, we set conditions to become aware of ourselves as operators growing in unified intensity. The transcendental interplay of performative and introspective modes of operation is analogous to a musician who learns to play a piece of music by breaking it down into parts and then pulls it all together in actual performance. Or a teacher who breaks new material down into component parts for students to learn and at the same time demonstrates mastery of the topic as a whole in dynamic response to their actual learning. Third, this account brings forward the question whether consciousness in the mode of subject-as-subject can be objectified in any meaningful way. Fred Crowe, in his essay "The Puzzle of the Subject-as-Subject in Lonergan," argues that we get at the reality of the subject-as-subject by means of symbols: "Symbols are the means; understanding by proxy is the result."<sup>22</sup> Obviously, in order to talk about this problem one engages in verbal symbols. Obviously, I have just

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<sup>20</sup> "Christ the Subject," 174. Lonergan relates this position to Augustine's awareness that self-presence precedes self-inquiry and Aquinas' reference to Augustine on this point in distinguishing self-presence and the even more difficult attainment of self-knowledge (ibid, 162 n.11). In terms of contemporary discourse, Fred Lawrence relates Lonergan's position to the importance that Jürgen Habermas places on beginning from "a performative attitude" ("Fragility of Consciousness," 71).

<sup>21</sup> Sublation refers to the relation between a higher level of conscious operation and lower levels, which it "goes beyond...directs...preserves...and brings...to a far fuller fruition" [M 316].

<sup>22</sup> Frederick E. Crowe, "The Puzzle of the Subject as Subject in Lonergan," in *Lonergan on the Level of our Time*, ed. Michael Vertin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 171.

resorted to a formalized symbolism in order to elucidate transcendental method. But Lonergan is clear that the rock upon which transcendental method stands is not a set of symbols, but rather the “unobjectified” acting subject [M 20].<sup>23</sup>

There is a passage – which Crowe quotes at even greater length than I do here<sup>24</sup> – that can support another approach to this problem, in which Lonergan asks:

What is the reality of this subject as subject? It is reality in a very prior and probably conceptually incomplete sense, but nonetheless in a very real sense. The subject as subject is reality in the sense that we live and die, love and hate, rejoice and suffer, desire and fear, wonder and dread, inquire and doubt...the subject that is the victim of all these things and the origin of all these things...that subject in his own living...is reality in that ontic sense, prior to any ontology, prior to any conception of [self].<sup>25</sup>

While Lonergan emphasizes the significance of this existential level consistently and often enough to make clear his abiding awareness of its ontic priority, a certain intellectualism haunts his work that tends to block open communication between existential and intentional modes of operation.<sup>26</sup> With respect to transcendental method, this is manifest in his ambiguous formulation of the first level as “just conscious.” For all that, I think that Lonergan’s account can be developed to handle the relationship between existential performance and cognitive development more “luminously.” I argue in the next section that the reality of the subject-as-subject is manifested experientially in feelings (corresponding to the image of “victim” above)

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<sup>23</sup> “[T]he meaning of an experiential pattern is elemental. It is the conscious performing of a transformed subject in his transformed world” [M 63].

<sup>24</sup> “The Puzzle of the Subject as Subject,” 164.

<sup>25</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic: The Boston College Lectures on Mathematical Logic and Existentialism*, vol. 18 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Philip J. McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 315-16.

<sup>26</sup> For example, regarding Lonergan’s and Voegelin’s different viewpoints concerning objective truth and the “luminosity” of the existential subject, see Eugene Webb, *Philosophers of Consciousness* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 95-102.

and outwardly in action (corresponding to the image of “origin”). Further, I argue that the unity-in-tension of human subjectivity is both a source and a resultant of the self-correcting cycle of experience-inquiry-action-new experience, within which differentiated schemes of conscious intentionality develop and deepen the historical subject who suffers and acts in relation to truth and goodness.

### 3. MANIFESTING THE SUBJECT-AS-SUBJECT

#### *Feelings as felt*

A symbolism that differentiates direct, introspective, and performative modes of conscious operation has a role to play in self-understanding, but what is the empirical basis on which any such symbolism is based? Clearly, the subject-as-subject is manifest in acts of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. But are there data given in consciousness that manifest the subject-as-subject as distinct from the subject’s acts? In *OPCC*, Lonergan observes,

We are more conscious of ourselves than of our acts, since it is much easier for us to attain the one who sees and hears and touches and feels and wonders and inquires and understands and defines and reflects and examines evidence and judges and desires and wills, and so forth and so on, than to distinguish all these acts from one another [167].

We experience ourselves in act as both integrator and operator in what I am calling the *performative mode*.<sup>27</sup> As Lonergan is careful to add, “[W]e are not conscious of ourselves except by way of our acts” [167]. This is why it is appropriate to speak of *modes* of consciousness, since all modes relate to the same unified subject performing any given act: we experience *ourselves* performing any given set of *acts* at the same time that we experience *more*

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<sup>27</sup> With the understanding that experience, like insight, unfolds as *patis* and *actus perfecti*. See Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, vol. 4 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 116-121.

*than ourselves* in virtue of the transitive nature of these acts [M 7]. Data given in the performative mode pertain to ourselves *qua* acting – that is, to the subject-as-subject – and thus are data of consciousness. Since they are not the same data as acts given in consciousness, they are also irreducible to what we objectify in the introspective mode of subject-as-object. What are they? In my opinion, data of consciousness in the performative mode are the feelings that are accessible as experienced at all levels of intentional consciousness.

That feelings are data of consciousness is a judgment of fact that is readily verifiable in the experience of any conscious individual. Difficulties arise, however, in relating this judgment to Lonergan’s own accounts of cognitional and existential operation, including transcendental method. I address these difficulties under two headings: (1) several texts expressly related to feeling; and (2) the relationship between his accounts of existential/deliberative operation (including the self-correcting cycle of learning) and cognitive operation. My limited purpose in this section is to situate my claim that feelings are data of consciousness in the mode of subject-as-subject as making explicit what is implicit in Lonergan’s account of transcendental method.

To begin then with the passage from *Phenomenology and Logic* quoted above, Lonergan characterizes the reality of the subject-as-subject as a series of verbs, all of which involve feeling – “love and hate, rejoice and suffer, desire and fear, wonder and dread” – and goes on to characterize the subject-as-subject in terms of experiencing such feelings as “the terror of death, the agony of suffering, and the torture of guilt” [315]. Regarding the aesthetic pattern of experience, he says in *Insight*, “Conscious living is itself a joy that reveals its spontaneous authenticity...in the exhilaration of sun-lit morning air, in the sweep of a broad perspective, in the swing of a melody” [207]. In *Method* he says, “Feelings are related to objects, to one another, and to their subject...[as] related to their subject: they are the mass and momentum and

the power of his conscious living” [64].<sup>28</sup> In characterizing the reality of Christ’s human consciousness in reference to Christ’s experience of pain [OPCC, 213], Lonergan refers to pain as felt, not simply pain as imagined or represented symbolically.<sup>29</sup> In this regard, Lonergan relates “feelings as felt” to an infrastructure of “pure experience,” as contrasted with “feelings as integrated in conscious living.”<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Lonergan speaks of “being in love” as “the prior conscious reality that words and, more securely, deeds reveal,”<sup>31</sup> about which Fred Lawrence comments:

[F]eeling, the “prior conscious reality” about which Lonergan is speaking here, is pure experience in the sense that as an internal experience it is a mode of consciousness as distinct from self-knowledge. In other words consciousness itself is prior to and distinct from any later process in which we heighten our awareness through inquiring about and understanding, through checking out and judging what we undergo in experiencing feelings.<sup>32</sup>

These texts indicate that Lonergan did at times treat feelings as data of consciousness and relate them explicitly to the mode of subject-as-subject. However, because he integrated feelings most explicitly into his theoretical account of conscious intentionality at the level of value [M 30-41] and not at the level of experience, a series of problems has followed in the wake of his account. I should again emphasize that I am approaching this contested area of Lonergan studies from the standpoint of understanding the relation between existential and intentional modes of operation, particularly in reference to transcendental method. With this in mind, if

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<sup>28</sup> Lonergan uses the same phrase to characterize feelings at [M 30].

<sup>29</sup> “Christ as Subject,” 170: “Pains are not objects of sense, *sensibilia propria*. There are no unconscious pains. The subject of pain feels the pain.”

<sup>30</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *A Third Collection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 58.

<sup>31</sup> “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*,” 229.

<sup>32</sup> “The Fragility of Consciousness,” 70.

feelings originate as data of consciousness at the level of experience, and those very data develop meaningfully at higher levels of operation, we can account for the apprehension of value in feelings [M 37] with much less difficulty than if feelings arise *de novo* at the level of deliberation. We can also account for the relationship between feelings as “states and trends” and feelings as “intentional responses” [M 30] without falling back into faculty psychology. Because one not only experiences “feelings as felt,” but also experiences one’s own operations of understanding, judging and deciding,<sup>33</sup> so one’s feelings occur at different levels and include such things as the first stirrings of wonder and inquiry and the release of tension that accompanies insight; the exigence of judgment and the weight of evidence ; the ease or distress of conscience in making good or bad decisions.<sup>34</sup> Take, for example, Christ’s experiencing pain. This did not pop into consciousness at an upper level of consciousness. If he did not first experience pain, there would be no exigence on his part to understand and affirm the significance of this experience as suffering; and without understanding the reality of this pain and suffering, there would be no exigence on his part to value and accept this pain and suffering as redemptive.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> “We are conscious of ourselves in all our activities. But that consciousness is merely on the level of experience... Consciousness has its levels, but they are all on the level of experience. It is the experience of the subject, the subject’s presence to himself.” “Knowing, Believing, Theology,” CWL 22, 132-133.

<sup>34</sup> Where I differentiate data of consciousness based on the modes subject as object (introspective) and subject as subject (performative), Robert Doran differentiates data of consciousness into two sets: *psychic* at the level of sensitive experience (E) and *intentional* (spiritual) at the level of question and answer (UJD). [See Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990), 46]. To the extent that we genuinely integrate psyche and spirit, the subject as subject does the integrating, whereby we experience ourselves as one embodied subject operating at all levels (EUJD).

<sup>35</sup> Scheler, an acknowledged influence on Lonergan, distinguishes the “quality of feeling pain” from the “state of pain” [Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, trans. Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 256]. In contrast, I would distinguish the experience of pain (in the mode of subject as subject) at different levels of conscious intentionality. Pain may vary according to the attention it receives at the level of experience; learning to distract attention by focusing on something else is one of the best ways to deal with chronic pain. Pain may also vary according to what it means at the level of understanding (degree of suffering); at the level of judgment of value (how it affects one’s life); and at the level of decision (resolution or accommodation, torment or sacrifice). I plan to treat this subject at greater length in a separate paper.

There is another aspect to consider concerning feelings as felt in relation to experiencing and deciding. Differentiation of consciousness is not a matter of riding an elevator from lower to higher levels of conscious intentionality so much as it is a matter of organic growth and development. In “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*,” Lonergan speaks of “becoming oneself” as a subject: as a child learning to reason; as a minor learning to take responsibility; as an adult deciding what to make of oneself. In terms of the development of Lonergan’s own thinking on the relationship between knowing and doing, I would say that the self-correcting cycle of learning, which surfaces in chapter six of *Insight*, is a rudimentary formulation of cognitive operations (fully elaborated in the first eleven chapters) being integrated into the scheme of practical reasoning (sketched in chapter 18) – such integration being subject to development and decline. While the emphasis is predominantly on cognitive operation, there is tacit acknowledgment that cognitive ability develops in an existential context. In the first year of life infants master what Piaget calls “object permanence” by which world and image begin to be distinguished.<sup>36</sup> This development leads to a differentiation of cycles of imaginative rehearsal from cycles of performance, which remains in play throughout our lives, although the cycles tend to coalesce when we master a task such as learning to speak a language fluently. With further cognitive development we learn to play with ideas as well as with objects that we can observe and manipulate. This development involves a differentiation of questions and insights in terms of which we formulate and critique our thoughts and actions, concerning not only what has happened but also what is yet to happen.

In chapter 5 of *Method* Lonergan refers to the child’s “affective symbiosis with the mother” [121]. As Piaget notes, this symbiosis is also cognitive. But even at this early stage of

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<sup>36</sup> Piaget, J. and B. Inhelder. “The Gaps in Empiricism” in *Beyond reductionism: new perspectives in the life sciences*, ed. A. Koestler and J.R. Smythies (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1969), 118-160 at 127.



development when conscious experience exceeds the objectifying capacity of the infant subject, experience and action proceed in a cycle of learning to feed, to cry, to smile, to grasp, to respond to touch and voice and facial expression as somehow meaningful<sup>37</sup> – not unlike the mature subject’s acts of love expressed in response to religious experience that exceeds the objectifying capacity of mature conscious intentionality [M 122]. In the third chapter of *Method*, Lonergan speaks of the “internal communication” of “organic and psychic vitality” and “intentional consciousness” – of mind, heart, and body – by means of feelings or “affect laden images” [66-67]. Feelings as intentional responses arise out of less differentiated feelings in concert with the subject’s growth in cognitive capacity, setting the stage for the subject’s actual but precarious integration of intentional and existential schemes in a self-correcting cycle that admits of heartfelt intelligent, reasonable, and responsible action.

### *Feelings in action*

Although Lonergan does not explicitly identify a mode of consciousness related to the subject-as-subject or say that feelings are data of consciousness in this or any other mode, he does claim that transcendental method objectifies both the “subject” and the subject’s “conscious operations” [M 20]. In carrying out transcendental method, we objectify the subject’s conscious operations – EUJD – in virtue of the “superstructure” of introspection at the second through fourth levels. But the “infrastructure” of consciousness as experience, of the subject-as-subject *qua* acting, cannot be fully objectified in intentional consciousness even though such consciousness can be heightened.<sup>38</sup> In what way, then, do we objectify ourselves as subjects? And how does this relate to transcendental method?

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<sup>37</sup> Fred Lawrence [personal communication] points out that this is an example of elemental meaning in which there is no distinction between meaning and meant.

<sup>38</sup> For the image of “superstructure” and “infrastructure,” see *A Third Collection*, 57.

With these questions in mind it is interesting to note Lonergan's first use of the word "heighten" in *Insight*:

[Cosmopolis] is a dimension of consciousness, a heightened grasp of historical origins, a discovery of historical responsibilities. It is not something altogether new, for the Marxist has been busy activating the class consciousness of the masses, and before him the liberal had succeeded in indoctrinating men with the notion of progress... It is the higher synthesis of the liberal thesis and the Marxist antithesis... It stands on a basic analysis of the compound-in-tension that is man.<sup>39</sup>

This suggests that his interest in the objectification of consciousness goes back to his study of Hegel and Marx. The "compound-in-tension that is man" involves a tension between practicality as expedient and culture as the "capacity to ask, to reflect, to reach an answer that at once satisfies his intelligence and speaks to his heart."<sup>40</sup> It is significant in this regard that "delight and suffering, laughter and tears, joy and sorrow, aspiration and frustration, achievement and failure, wit and humor" – matters of the heart – "stand not within practicality but above it."<sup>41</sup>

On this basis we can say that feelings enter into both sides of the dialectic between intersubjectivity (the shared smile) and intelligence (the sting of satire) in the individual and in society and furthermore that they enter into all levels of the self-correcting cycle of learning as involving experience and factual inquiry as well as deliberation and action. The connection or bond between experience and action manifests the unity-in-tension of consciousness in terms of which we experience ourselves acting and being moved to act as "a sort of continuous and rather confused whole."<sup>42</sup> From the standpoint of objectifying consciousness in relation to being

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<sup>39</sup> *Insight*, 266.

<sup>40</sup> *Insight*, 261.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *OPCC*, 159.

oneself, transcendental method seeks to remove some of the confusion and shed light upon the unity of this whole. From the standpoint of cosmopolis, transcendental method seeks to build upon our growth and development from infancy and childhood to adulthood in terms of our growing capacity to think for ourselves and take responsibility for our own actions as members of a historically situated human community.

I have been exploring the significance of being oneself as a mode of consciousness that is heightened by transcendental method; of feelings as data that are given in this mode of consciousness; and of the conscious tension within being oneself between experience (the *potency* pertaining to the human mind and heart) and action (*act*, which is the actualization of the human heart and mind in society and history). The tension between potency and act is further heightened because the relations of potency-to-form and form-to-act also enter human consciousness as the tension between inquiry and insight, between reflection and the grasp of the virtually unconditioned, and between deliberation and the apprehension and evaluation of values. The possibility of both factual and practical insight sets conditions for action not simply as motivated but more significantly as deliberate. According to Lonergan, being oneself is not fixed or settled “once for all” but “precarious” in being open to development or breakdown. Fred Lawrence notes a parallel between Lonergan’s notion of “being oneself as being” and Gadamer’s notion of “experience as being,” which indicates “an encounter with an unfinished event and is itself a part of this event.”<sup>43</sup> Gadamer develops his notion with an eye to “Hegel’s dialectical account of human experience...as a mediation of self-understanding with what is other.”<sup>44</sup> This dialectic becomes for Lonergan the self-correcting cycle of learning, which is also

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<sup>43</sup> “Fragility of Consciousness,” 69, citing Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald B. Marshall, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. (Continuum: New York 2004), 85.

<sup>44</sup> “Fragility of Consciousness,” 66.

open to what is other - both to “other people” and to “what is otherwise.”<sup>45</sup> Transcendental method is intended to illuminate and perfect this cycle. As Lonergan says, “One must begin from performance, if one is to have the experience necessary for understanding what the performance is.”<sup>46</sup> With this in mind, we can say that heightened consciousness of the subject as subject is manifest (objectified) and known in performance or action.<sup>47</sup>

There is a reciprocal flow of feelings between experience and decision that factors into patterns of experience and interpersonal relations. As Lonergan says in *Insight*, the unity-intension of human consciousness is polymorphic in reference to patterns of experience.<sup>48</sup> This tension plays out in a recurring cycle of experience and decision, in which decision patterns experience (not only individually, but socially)<sup>49</sup> and experience reveals the limitations of present action and the possibilities of future action. This cycle is a conscious scheme of limitation and transcendence - a potentially self-correcting scheme of development, learning, and self-constitution.<sup>50</sup>

Rosemary Haughton provides a good example of this in discussing how a mother might deal with a quarrel between her young son and his younger sister (who has used her brother’s paints without asking permission). Haughton describes the quarrel as an “eruption of feeling” and the mother’s intervention as a potential model for both children to allow feelings into consciousness

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<sup>45</sup> “Fragility of Consciousness,” 78.

<sup>46</sup> “Christ as Subject,” 174.

<sup>47</sup> “By their fruits you shall know them” [*Matthew* 7:16].

<sup>48</sup> *Insight*, 410.

<sup>49</sup> Regarding decision and patterns of experience, from *Method* onward Lonergan speaks with increasing frequency about development from above in terms of socialization, acculturation, and education [M 79]. As Crowe says, the operator of development from above is not just the individual subject, but more importantly subjects acting upon one another as subjects in personal relations [Frederick E. Crowe, “An Expansion of Lonergan’s Notion of Value,” *Lonergan Workshop 7* (1988): 42 n4.]. Along these lines, evolutionary theorists note that the first year of human life amounts to an extended period of social gestation unique among mammals in that it takes that long for human infants to reach the same stage of biological development that other mammals reach at birth [Niles Eldredge and Marjorie Grene, *Interactions – The Biological Context of Social Systems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 181-83]. Even as adults, many if not most of our decisions are determined not by immanently generated knowledge, but by socially patterned beliefs.

<sup>50</sup> *Insight*, 497.

in such a way that they deepen and do not destroy fellow feeling. While the mother is consciously seeking to resolve the quarrel and to restore peace, she does not think of “peace” as such, but feels her way along according to the “quality of human relationships” that are in play.<sup>51</sup>

This communication, then, is her giving of love, her personal decision of self-surrender... Unless her own formation has taught her to think of herself as primarily at the service of her children, spiritually as well as physically, she will not have the kind of ‘feel’ for the situation that makes possible the lowering of barriers, so that the communication of love can take place.<sup>52</sup>

The link between experience and action in this communication of love manifests the nexus Lonergan identifies in a late essay between “feelings as felt” and “feelings as integrated in conscious living.”<sup>53</sup> Lonergan notes that it is through symbols – images that evoke or are evoked by feeling [M 64] – that mind, heart, and body communicate [M 67].<sup>54</sup> This communication moves in both directions between conscious operation and organic functioning – from experience to decision to action and back again. “Organic and psychic vitality have to reveal themselves to intentional consciousness and, inversely, intentional consciousness has to secure the collaboration of organism and psyche”; such communication involves what Lonergan calls “elemental meaning” [M 66].

This reciprocal relation of experience and action is manifest in the biological pattern of experience, whose “complex sequence of delicately coordinated bodily movements is at once the

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<sup>51</sup> Rosemary Haughton, *The Transformation of Man: A Study of Conversion and Community* (Springfield, IL: Templegate, 1967), 27.

<sup>52</sup> *Transformation of Man*, 32.

<sup>53</sup> *A Third Collection*, 58.

<sup>54</sup> Robert Doran has highlighted the role of feelings as a link between symbols and values in his account of psychic conversion. See “Two Ways of Being Conscious: The Notion of Psychic Conversion,” *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* n.s. 3.1 (2102), 10.

consequence of striving and a cause of the continuous shift of sensible presentations.”<sup>55</sup> The origination of conscious feeling not only at the level of deliberation, but also at the level of experience, relates to the apprehension of aesthetic as distinct from moral values (a domain that merits separate investigation). Regarding the heightening of consciousness and the objectification of the subject as subject in the dramatic pattern of experience, it is good to remember the way that feelings enter into interpersonal communication, beginning with elemental intersubjectivity and carrying through to the subtleties of gesture, tone, rhythm, and facial expression in personal conversation.<sup>56</sup> For transcendental method is meant to transform the spirit and the art of our daily living.

#### 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

To put this paper in context, I am a physician working on a philosophy of health from the standpoint of generalized empirical method (GEM).<sup>57</sup> Why write about transcendental method? The first answer concerns the intimate relation between transcendental method and GEM, which Andrew Beards has carefully illuminated in a recent essay.<sup>58</sup> After designating his approach to human and natural science as GEM in *Insight*, Lonergan shelved the term in favor of “transcendental method” up through the publication of *Method*, only to go back to using GEM almost exclusively in his work subsequent to *Method*. Beards notes that Lonergan’s motivation in going back to using GEM was both practical in communicating his allegiance to the notion of verification in data as fundamental to his philosophy and theoretical in calling attention to the full range of data within the horizon of any genuine science. On both these counts my

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<sup>55</sup> *Insight*, 206.

<sup>56</sup> *Insight*, 200.

<sup>57</sup> Patrick Daly, “A Theory of Health and the Healing Arts Based on the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan,” *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* (2009) 30:147-160.

<sup>58</sup> Andrew Beards, “Generalized Empirical Method,” in *Lonergan’s Anthropology Revisited*, ed. Gerard Whelan (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2015), 103-28.

philosophy of health is in full sympathy with GEM. And yet, the transcendental thrust remains operative in GEM to the extent that experience is open to what is other and what is otherwise.

My second answer concerns the clinical encounter as the hub of healthcare. It is an example of the self-correcting cycle of learning in action, which in this case revolves around the patient's experience of health and illness. The clinician attends to the patient's illness in the mode of subject-as-object and seeks to understand the patient's illness in terms of disease in the mode of subject-to-object. The patient experiences and seeks to understand illness in the mode of subject-as-subject as well as subject-as-object; like the clinician, the patient may also seek to understand illness in terms of disease in the mode of subject-to-object. Clinician and patient attempt to move from a commonsense to an explanatory perspective and then back again as this affects the narrative of the patient's life. This interaction involves another mode of conscious intentionality, subject-to-subject,<sup>59</sup> a domain that also merits further investigation. In a clinical context, ongoing attention to transcendental method promises to deepen our understanding of personal relations at the basis of health science and practice. Which is all to the good since, as Francis Peabody said nearly a century ago, "The secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Bernard Lonergan, "Horizons," in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, vol. 17 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 22-23.

<sup>60</sup> Francis Peabody, "The Care of the Patient," *Journal of the American Medical Association* (1927) 88:877-882.

## APPENDIX

**Table 1** The operations of transcendental method: grouped and differentiated<sup>◇</sup>

$E$ (EUJD)	=	$*EE$	+	$EU$	+	$EJ$	+	$ED$
$U[E$ (EUJD)]	=	$U(EE)$	+	$*U(EU)$	+	$U(EJ)$	+	$U(ED)$
$J(U[E$ (EUJD)])	=	$J[U(EE)]$	+	$J[U(EU)]$	+	$*J[U(EJ)]$	+	$J[U(ED)]$
$D[J(U[E$ (EUJD))]	=	$D(J[U(EE)])$	+	$D(J[U(EU)])$	+	$D(J[U(EJ)])$	+	$*D(J[U(ED)])$

<sup>◇</sup> Compare Lonergan on differentiated consciousness: “Considering only the mathematically possible combinations, one can list some thirty-one different types of differentiated consciousness” [M 272].

\* In Table 2, I select these operations to demonstrate a symbolism that differentiates their introspective and performative modes.

**Table 2** Modes of direct and transcendental operation

<i>Level</i>	<i>Operations</i>	<i>Mode of conscious intentionality</i>	
	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Direct (S↔O)</i>	
1	E	S<E>O	
2	U	S<U>O	
3	J	S<J>O	
4	D	S<D>O	
	<i>Transcendental</i> <i>(selected)</i>	<i>Introspective (objectified)</i>	<i>Performative (integrated)</i>
		$\sum S \leftrightarrow [(S_e)^2 \leftrightarrow O]$	$(S_l)^{L+1} \leftrightarrow O$
1	EE		$(S_e)^2 \langle E \rangle O$
2	UEU	$S \langle U \rangle [(S_e)^2 \langle U \rangle O]$	$(S_{ue})^3 \langle U \rangle O$
3	JUEJ	$S \langle J \rangle (S \langle U \rangle [(S_e)^2 \langle J \rangle O])$	$(S_{jue})^4 \langle J \rangle O$
4	DJUED	$S \langle D \rangle [S \langle J \rangle (S \langle U \rangle [(S_e)^2 \langle D \rangle O])]$	$(S_{djue})^5 \langle D \rangle O$

KEY:

- 1)  $S \leftrightarrow O$  represents the subject-object dipole of any intentional act.
- 2)  $E$  (EUJD) is a performative, not an introspective mode of operation. Higher levels of transcendental method can be heightened performatively as well as introspectively.
- 3) Transcendental method in the introspective mode of consciousness unfolds as a sequence or series of operations that builds on the performance of  $E$  (EUJD), or in differentiated symbolism,  $[(S_e)^2 \leftrightarrow O]$ .
- 4) Transcendental method in the performative mode of consciousness raises the power of the subject operating at any given level:  $(S_l)^{L+1} \leftrightarrow O$ , where lower case  $l$  indicates the range of operations sublated at any given level;  $L+1$  indicates one higher than the ordinal value of the highest transcendental operation under consideration; and the ordinal value of  $E=1$ ,  $U=2$ ,  $J=3$ , and  $D=4$ . This power is one order higher than the level ( $L$ ) of transcendental method on which the subject operates, but it is not a new level of operation.



**Table 3** Comparing original and modified notation of transcendental method

	Original	Modified	
Basic pattern	EUJD	S<E>O; S<U>O; S<J>O; S<D>O	
Consciously heighten	perfect	perform	
grouped	$E(EUJD)$	$(S_e)^2<EUJD>O$	
differentiated	$EE + EU + EJ + ED$	$(S_e)^2<E>O + (S_e)^2<U>O + (S_e)^2<J>O + (S_e)^2<D>O$	
Intentionally heighten	explicitly introspective, implicitly performative	explicitly introspective	explicitly performative, existentially heightened
	$U[E (EUJD)]$	$S<U>[(S_e)^2<EUJD>O]$	$(S_{ue})^3<EUJD>O$
	$JU[E (EUJD)]$	$S<J>(S<U>[(S_e)^2<EUJD>O])$	$(S_{jue})^4<EUJD>O$
	$DJU[E (EUJD)]$	$S<D>[S<J>(S<U>[(S_e)^2<EUJD>O])]$	$(S_{djue})^5<EUJD>O$
objectified		in intentional consciousness	in action