

## Critique of Bochenski's Conception of Methodology in Philosophy

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### ABSTRACT

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This paper is an examination of Bochenski's conception of an acceptable methodology for research in philosophy. Generally methodology refers to the building of scientific knowledge, methods are the how for building knowledge. It is the how, why method we have elected to reflect on the method of doing philosophy. This reflection proceeds from a preliminary discourse on the various methods that have been deployed in doing philosophy in the past to a discourse on the lessons from Josef Maria Bochenski's thought. The paper, found out that such methods as the phenomenological method, the analytical method, the dialectical method, the hermeneutical method amongst others have been used in doing philosophy, past and present. We have argued in this paper that while it is true that real progress in philosophy can only be guaranteed by an adequate method that is grounded in logic and semantics, there is no single universally accepted method of doing philosophy. However, the conclusion that is reached in this paper, drawing from a reflection on Bochenski's thought and insights from an intercultural perspective is that, an authentic philosophical method that rest on the phenomenological analysis and proceeds through analysis. Finally, whichever method one elects to use in doing philosophy, it must be guided by logic, and it must be complementary and not confrontational.

**Keywords:**

Philosophy, method,  
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## Introduction

Philosophy, following from its definition as “the critical evaluation of the ideas that we live by” (Staniland, 1979), is a rational and systematic attempt at evaluating life and the universe as a whole, with reference to first principles that underlie all things as their causes and are implicit in all experience. Philosophy is a special thinking that involves abstract thoughts and ideas. This type of thinking is instrumental to asking questions about the often-puzzling world in which we find ourselves and it allows us the latitude on the one hand to come to terms with the fact of whether the questions are meaningful; and helps us to find out after going through the questions, whether the conclusion reached are valid on the other hand (Rochelle, 2012: 2).

It is an impartial approach to all problems and aspects of life and existence, and its studies are not devoted merely to the empirical world, as in the case of the physical and biological sciences; not restricted to the provinces of faith and authority or to the questions of the other world, as is the case with theological disquisitions; not confined to investigation of the mind and its behaviour, as in psychology; not taken up with the consideration of civic duties and problems of administration and constitution, as in the case of politics; not concerned with the solution of problems and techniques of adjusting and ordering and discovering the origin and organisation and development of human society, like economics and sociology. Rather, its studies are adapted for an exhaustive treatment of the basic presuppositions of each and every one of these, as also of what is other than and beyond all these, that on which all these are ultimately founded and which is the ground of all knowledge and experience in general. Philosophy investigates the very possibility and conditions of knowledge, its extent, nature and value. The question however is this; what is the method of doing philosophy? This paper seeks to reflect on the above question. To do that, the paper proceeds from a preliminary discourse on the problem of method in philosophy. In the final third, the paper draws lessons from Bochenski's analysis of what should be the method of doing philosophy.

## On the Question of Method in Philosophy

Before proceeding to the discourse on the problem of method in philosophy, it is important, as one will expect for the concept of method and methodology to be clarified and situated in the context with which it will be used in this paper. Method is a way, a procedure, to attain knowledge. Any branch of knowledge presupposes a method. The word method is used to describe the way in which procedures are determined, and the study of methods is called methodology. Properly situated, the study of methods is what is referred to as methodology. Methodology is an important instrument for the growth and development of knowledge. The general acceptability of any branch of knowledge depends upon the method which is being used. Philosophers, scientists and others have developed certain methods. Methodology has an important place in every science and the humanities.

Methodology is defined as that science in which we think over all those procedures and techniques by which the establishment of the validity of previous knowledge and the establishment of new

knowledge is possible. Methodology is concerned with those procedures and techniques which have been devised to aid us in extending our knowledge, in clarifying and justifying what we already know and in discovering what is still unknown. It is a theory of methods. The aim of methodology is to find out what the different methods are, why they are accepted and how they are interconnected.

Having accounted for philosophical methods, the way of doing philosophy, it remains to show what methods have been employed and deployed in the task of doing philosophy in the history of the discipline. Not undermining the pre-Socratic philosophers and their contributions to the discourse, it should be noted that the pre-Socratics adopted and deployed the dialectical method in their bid to doing philosophy for the most part. This method has enjoyed the patronage of philosophers from the ancient period to the contemporary times. Prabhakaran corroborated the above, showed the prevalence and use of the dialectical methods from the ancient to the contemporary era in the study of the history of philosophy when he asserted that, In the ancient Greek period Zeno's dialectic was a method of refutation by examining logical consequences. For the Sophists, dialectic became a mere instrument for winning a dispute. Dialectic regained its purity in the Socratic Method. In the philosophy of Plato, dialectic was transformed into the theory of ideas. For Plato, dialectic came to mean the "art of methodical scientific inquiry by question and answer, akin to, though differing from, logic. Aristotle takes it as the argumentative process, whereby a comprehensive theory of first principles is constructed through the criticism and modification of other man's conflicting doctrines. Later, formal logic came to be called dialectic by the stoic logicians. Kant takes dialectic as the criticism or the logic of transcendental illusion. For Hegel, dialectic is the process of the logical development of thought and reality through thesis and antithesis into a synthesis. The Hegelian dialectic is the method of "synthesis" of opposites, but the Kantian dialectic is not so. Marx views dialectic as the law of becoming and change according to which social events take place ((Prabhakaran, 2011: 20).

In the golden age of western philosophy, Socrates, the acclaimed father of the golden age of western philosophy adopted the dialectical method (otherwise referred to as the Socratic Method) as argued above and used dialogues to approach issues and to disseminate clear thoughts. The Socratic method of philosophical debate involves arguing out the entire composition of the subject under interrogation, in the manner of a dialogue. The first view is repudiated by uncovering the inconsistencies and contradictions involved in accepting it as true. Here, the teacher feigns total ignorance (the Socratic ignorance), but stimulates the truth from the interlocutor through intelligent subtle examination, questioning and analysis. Following from Socrates, Plato, who besides providing us with all that we know about Socrates and using dialogues too, diverges from Aristotle in his approach to doing philosophy. While Plato believed in the eternal realm of forms and a rational approach to understanding issues, Aristotle believes clearly in the empirical and observational approach to doing philosophy through argumentation and elevated the same.

After the golden age, the best known proponent of philosophical method was the great French philosopher and mathematician, Rene Descartes. Descartes in his *Discourse on Method* and his

*Meditations* sought to model philosophy and ground it on a mathematical and scientific foundation that is both solid and indubitable. This he sought to achieve through his “methodic doubt” and followed from his mathematic background. For Hegel, the dialectical method and its triadic logic was the best method that there is for doing philosophy. In Hegelian dialectics, we move from a thesis through an anti-thesis to a new thesis which is otherwise referred to as synthesis.

Although considerably influenced by Hegel, Marx departed from Hegel in his use of the dialectical method. He rejected the principles and laws of Hegelian dialectics, reworked it critically and applied to the materialist view of the world and history. To quote Marx:

My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea,' he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea.' With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought (see: Shagor, 2020).

Marx discovered the rational kernel with Hegel's mystical shell by turning it right side up and placed it, on a materialistic foundation. The Marxian dialectic, contrary to the Hegelian one, aims at showing the mind-independent character of nature as well as the autonomy of the historical laws of development of social forms. And for Marx the thesis is the bourgeoisie, the anti-thesis is the proletariats while the synthesis becomes a class society.

Regarding the features of the dialectical method, it must be noted that two distinguishing common features of dialectic are its discursive form and the place of contradiction in it. They are overlapping: they are not inter-exclusive. In fact, dialectic is at once the consciousness of the interminable and total conflict in reason and the attempt to resolve it. Due to this fact dialectic is a universal conflict, implicit also in philosophy. Opposition is the basis of dialectic (Prabhakaran, 2011: 20).

The most prominent and essential characteristic of dialectic is the place of ‘contradiction’ in it. In fact, contradiction is not a defect from the dialectical point of view, but it plays an important role in it.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, pragmatism came to the center stage in response to the question of what method is best for doing philosophy. C. S. Pierce, William James, and John Dewey are the leading proponents of this movement and method. Pragmatism is a movement, a school as well as a method of doing philosophy. The pragmatic method holds that anything is genuine when it tends to productive activity and outcomes. The character of fulfilling the aboriginal interests of man should be the guiding principle in philosophy. The main problem before Peirce was what method of inquiry is more effective? He reviewed various methods. He dismissed “the method of tenacity” in which we meet the future by blindly adhering to inherited convictions. He also rejected “the

method of authority”, since it is a method in which we submit to an institutionally regulated set of beliefs.

Peirce also refused to accept the ‘apriori method’, a method whereby we seek to base our beliefs on a few so called self-evident principles. He accepts only the “general method of science”, a method that employs hypotheses, but require their empirical verification. It guides us to relevant and objective solutions to our concrete problems. Furthermore, scientific method alone is self-corrective in the sense that it tests its claim on the continuing maxim of pragmatism rather than with its use and justification (Prabhakaran, 2011: 45).

The earliest statement of Peirce’s pragmatism comes from his 1878 paper “How to make our Ideas clear”. In this paper, pierce introduces a maxim or principle which allows us to achieve the highest grade of clarity about the concepts we use. Peirce introduces this principle as a development of the rationalistic notion of “clear and distinct ideas”. There are three grades of clarity or understanding. The first grade of clarity about a concept is to have an unreflective grasp of it in everyday experience. The second grade of clarity is to be capable of providing a definition of the concept. This definition should also be taken from any particular experience. These two grades of clarity are only part way to a full understanding of reality. Peirce introduces his own third grade of clarity. Then to have a full understanding of some concept we must not only be familiar with it in day to day encounters, and to offer a definition of it, we must also know what effects to expect from holding that concept to be true (Prabhakaran, 2011: 45-46). Pragmatism as a method of philosophy is opposed to absolutism, absolute truth, absolute good, absolute reality. Everything is relative to time, needs and utility. Workability and usefulness determine the relevance of a belief. A belief helps us in achieving success and in forming useful habits.

Hermeneutics is the science of analysis and interpretation of text. It involves an interpretation, not only of words but also of concepts, theories and principles behind the text in question. Therefore, hermeneutics cannot simply be reduced to a science, it is also a method. ...it is a philosophical search for meaning. Its aim is, therefore, an exploration of text in search for truth. It aims at knowledge rather than the sanctity of words (Odok, 2014: 425).

The origin of hermeneutics as a method of doing philosophy is almost as old as philosophy itself. This is because in the ancient period of the history of philosophy, Aristotle wrote one of his major treatises entitled *Peri Hermeneais* (On Interpretation). While hermeneutics was basically used for the interpretation of the bible in the medieval era, a voyage into modern hermeneutics reveals that Edmund Husserl’s use of the hermeneutical in his interpretation of human science which also led to the weakening and overturns of the enlightenment ideal of objective reason. Heidegger, a student of Husserl also employed this approach when he abandoned the subject and introduced his notion of *Dasein* in which self and the world belong together in a single entity. Following from Heidegger his master, Hans-George Gadamer developed what is now known and referred to as moderate or philosophical hermeneutics in his *Truth and Method*. In this book, Gardamer disabused any notion

of truth that is arrived at through method. This is because, truth for him, cannot be separated from the idea of inquiry. Hence, "philosophical hermeneutics is not concerned with methods of interpretation and understanding but rather with the question of what enables understanding to occur" (Agrey, 2014: 190). The central task of hermeneutics then moved beyond its original concern which was the understanding and interpretation of text to include oral utterances and the understanding of what is said (Agrey, 2014: 20).

As a methodological discipline, it offers a toolbox for efficiently treating problems of the interpretation of human actions, texts and other meaningful material. Hermeneutics looks back at a long tradition as the set of problems it addresses have been prevalent in human life, and have repeatedly and consistently called for consideration: interpretation is a ubiquitous activity, unfolding whenever humans aspire to grasp whatever *interpretanda* they deem significant. Due to its long history, it is only natural that both its problems, and the tools designed to help solve them, have shifted considerably over time, along with the discipline of hermeneutics itself (See Mantzavinos, 2016). Hermeneutics as the methodology of philosophical interpretation can provide guidance for solving problems of interpretation of human actions, texts and other meaningful material by offering a toolbox based on solid empirical evidence. Throughout its historical development hermeneutics has dealt with *specific* problems of interpretation, arising within specific disciplines like jurisprudence, theology and literature, which have not been the focus of this article. The aim was indeed to show what kind of *general* problems of interpretation are treated by the discipline of hermeneutics and to identify some important procedures leading to their efficacious solution-always keeping in mind that these procedures, like all epistemological procedures, are bound to remain fallible (See Mantzavinos, 2016: 12).

Another method that have been employed and deployed in the task of doing philosophy is that of philosophical analysis. According to Prabhakaran, analytic philosophy gave the impetus to the rise of the method of analysis. For him, in 20th-century philosophical movement, analytic philosophical tradition dominated in Britain and the United States. The main aim is to clarify language and analyze the concepts expressed in it. The movement has been given a variety of designations, including linguistic analysis, logical empiricism, logical positivism, Cambridge analysis, and Oxford philosophy. The last two labels are derived from the universities in England where this philosophical method has been particularly influential. Analytic and linguistic philosophers agree that the proper activity of philosophy is clarifying language, or clarifying concepts. Russell describes his method as the logical-analytic method of philosophy (Prabhakaran, 2011: 31).

A number of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century, including Russell, Moore, and Wittgenstein (the early), have argued that philosophical analysis is the proper method of philosophy. But the practitioners of analytic philosophy have disagreed about what kind of thing is to be analyzed. This method heavily relies on conceptual and linguistic analysis.

Phenomenology is a science whose preoccupation is with the essences of phenomena or experiences. In other words, phenomenology is concerned with the study of the essence of things. That is why Herbert Spiegelberg submits that:

Pure phenomenology is the study of the essential structures of consciousness comprising its ego-subject, its acts, and its contents.' The ego, subject or individual is made up of his/her consciousness of something. Since consciousness, phenomenologically, is always directional or intentional, the ego as a subject of experience has acts and contents of his/her consciousness. And that which consciousness is occupied with is made up of essence (Spiegelberg, 1971: 152).

Phenomenology is also a method of doing philosophy. Edmund Husserl is the founder of phenomenology. Phenomenology originated with the creative criticism of British Empiricism by Brentano and Husserl. For others, phenomenology is a philosophical movement, but for Husserl it is the only correct way of philosophizing. Husserl was the first to use it as the name of a way of doing philosophy. Husserl used the term phenomenology to state a doctrine as well as a method (Prabhakaran, 2011: 50). After the foundation of phenomenology, it is still impossible to define this method in a simple manner. It is a special cognitive procedure which is based on intuition. Intuition refers to the phenomena. It is an intellectual observation of phenomena.

Phenomena, here means the object of phenomenological observation. The term phenomena have been used in many different senses by different thinkers. Therefore these meanings are to be distinguished from it is phenomenological meaning in order to clarify the exact nature of phenomenological method. Generally, 'phenomena' is contrasted with reality, because it is taken to be an appearance. But, this is not the phenomenological sense. The leading rule of phenomenological method is "Back to things themselves" whereby "things" are taken to mean just the 'given'. Phenomenon is that which gives itself. It is a name for whatever appears to us in "immediate experience". Phenomena are "essences" and are "intuited". They are revealed by "bracketing experience", and are intentional. The proper business of philosophy is the examination and description of all kinds of objects in a particular way that reveals them as phenomena. For Prabhakaran:

A pure phenomenological method also demands the exclusion of the existence of the object. It is called "Bracketing Existence", suspension of our belief in the existence of objects. Husserl calls this the "phenomenological *epoché*". This characteristic shows the fundamental difference between the phenomenological and the empirical methods. In empirical methods we proceed from the ascertaining of facts i.e. from the ascertainment of their existence. But there is no such ascertainment needed in the phenomenological procedure. The phenomenological method consists in describing objects as pure and simple

intentions of consciousness, as meanings. The essence is neither "ideal reality" nor "psychological reality", but ideal intention, intentional object of consciousness. To bracket existence is not to eliminate existence in general. It only means that even if the object does exist, its existence can be ignored. It is also possible to deal with those objects which are merely imagined (Prabhakaran, 2011: 52-53).

Drawing from the above, it feels safe to aver that the phenomenological method is not just about the examination or description of phenomenon, it excel and move beyond that to the bracketing or suspension of one's judgment and knowledge of the existence of such an object or phenomenon that is to be studied. In this way, no one approaches a philosophical investigation from the point of view of pre-conceived biases and from a Presuppositionless position. From this position, the phenomenon is allowed to reveal itself.

It must be noted that presuppositionless does not mean to begin in complete ignorance. A presuppositionless philosophy is one which will reach what is absolutely primary or most fundamental in experience. This ideal was first provided by the method of phenomenological reduction. It was recognized by Husserl as the acid test of a truly critical philosophy. The aim of Husserl's phenomenological inquiry was always the radicalism of method, and for achieving this aim he proposed freedom from presuppositions as an "ideal". The phenomenological way of philosophizing requires that there should be no presuppositions.

The phenomenological method of doing philosophy is justified because phenomenological observation is necessary because man is so constituted that his observation of an object is always affected by his subjective emotional attitude, or by his already acquired knowledge. The aim of eidetic or phenomenological reduction is to see the 'given object' and nothing else at all. To attain the stage of an impartial seeing, a carefully developed method is necessary. The phenomenologists justify their claim that there must be a phenomenological method, and it is necessary to master it in order to see correctly.

In the preceding paragraphs, attempts have been made to account for some of the basic methods that have been using to do philosophy. What can be deciphered from the discourse in this section is that there is no one method of doing philosophy that has been accepted as axiomatised by all philosophers in the world over. In fact, "throughout its long history, philosophy has displayed a variety of schools, doctrines, methods. The lack of consensus has been a main feature of the history of philosophy since the very beginning" (António, 2020: 1). To this end, it feels safe to argue that contrary to the practices in other disciplines, philosophy and "philosophers use not just one method but a variety of different methods according to the subject and the more specific philosophical tradition within which they work: the phenomenological, the hermeneutical, the dialectical, the analytical tradition, to name just some of the more widely known" (António, 2020: 1).



Ozolin corroborated the above when he argued that there is no particular method that is prescribed in philosophy for doing philosophy and that it is difficult to specify a single method of doing philosophy (Ozolins, 2014: 30). Some scholars will argue that the above postulation constitutes a draw back to the enterprise of philosophy. Williamson seems to hold this opinion when he argued that “the current philosophical mainstream has failed to articulate one adequate philosophical methodology, in part because it has fallen into the classic epistemological error of psychologizing the data” (Williamson, 2007: 7). It must however be noted that such a position is flawed and that rather, the availability of a myriads of methods at the disposal of the philosopher makes for the beauty of the discipline. From the intercultural perspective:

What the catalogue of philosophers from various European cultures and traditions briefly illustrates is the wide variety of philosophical method and methodology that has arisen, particularly in the modern era. It is by no means exhaustive, only gives consideration to mostly Western philosophy, and is a rather idiosyncratic list. If we were to add philosophers working in Chinese, Indian, Russian, African, Middle Eastern, and South American philosophy, the catalogue of approaches to philosophy would grow considerably (Ozolins, 2014: 31).

### **On the Method of Doing Philosophy: Reflections from J. M. Bochenski’s Thesis**

Josef Maria Bochenski (1902-1995) a Polish Dominican Priest, logician and philosopher published over 25 works of renowned amongst which is his *The Method of Contemporary Thought*. He was among the most distinguished Polish philosophers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Such was the depth and breadth of his erudition that he was equally proficient in the history of philosophy in contemporary continental and Anglo-American philosophy (Lukasiewicz, 2013: 1).

In the closing stages of the introduction to his novel work entitled *The Methods of Contemporary Thought*, J. M Bochenski linked methodology to logic and referred to it as the second part of logic (Bochenski, 1965: 8-9). He then defined method along its etymological conception to mean “the right going along the way”. He further averred that “method is a manner of proceeding in any particular field, that is, of organizing activity and of coordinating its objective” (Bochenski, 1965: 9). Method is a way, a procedure, to attain knowledge. Any branch of knowledge presupposes a method. The word method is used to describe the way in which procedures are determined. It is drawing from the above that Bochenski defines methodology as the theory of method (Bochenski, 1965: 9).

The very first of the methods that Bochenski elected to consider in *The Methods of Contemporary Thought* is the Phenomenological method. This is captured in the second chapter of his work. Here, Bochenski reiterated the fact that it was Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) who first used the word phenomenology in the sense of method and argues that the phenomenological method is of great and decisive significance to philosophy. To quote Bochenski:

Husserl used the word “phenomenology” to denote a doctrine as well as a method. It is true that no method can be wholly divorced from certain presuppositions in the actual content of the thought, but in this case the intertwining of method and content is so close that it often appears doubtful whether a purely methodological idea can be distinguished at all (Bochenski, 1965: 16).

He further distinguished intuition (back to the things themselves) which requires a threefold reduction or exclusion of; first, subjectivity (a purely objective stand point), second, all theoretical knowledge, such as hypothesis and proofs derived from other sources, so that only the given will be admitted and thirdly, of all traditions (everything that others have taught about the object in question) (Bochenski, 1965: 9) as the essential characteristics of phenomenology.

Bochenski provided the justification of the phenomenological method on the basis of the fact that man is so constituted that he has almost incorrigible disposition to see, in what he looks at, extraneous elements which are not contained in the object itself at all and that no object is simple and every object being complex, consist of various components and aspects which are not all equally important. Since man cannot grasp all the elements at once and has to consider them one after the other, it requires a carefully devised method- these twin reasons according to Bochenski, accounts for the not just the existence of a phenomenological method but it is necessary to master it in order to see correctly (Bochenski, 1965: 16-17).

Regarding the principles of the phenomenological method which consist of going back to the things themselves, Bochenski avers that it involves the observation of essence which means that one has to see these things, in an intellectual sense (this is a necessary foundation of all true cognitions) and objectivism which stipulates that in all enquiry, thought should be focused exclusively on the object and to get rid of everything subjective (Bochenski, 1965: 18-19). To quote Bochenski:

To begin with, it requires that the investigator should devote himself completely to the object of the enquiry, having regard only for what is objective. He must exclude everything that comes from himself, from the subject, above all his own feelings, desires, personal attitudes, etc. What is required of him is a detached observation of the object, a pure theoretical approach, in the original Greek sense of the word “theory” (observation). The researcher who acts in accordance with this rule is a pure knowing essence, one who forgets himself completely (Bochenski, 1965: 19)

The ‘back to the things themselves’ requires the exclusion of not only the subjective feelings and prejudices but everything that has been known from other sources. Only the given, should be focused on and seen (Bochenski, 1965: 21). After showing that the object of phenomenological investigation and observation is the phenomenon, he averred in the closing lines of his discourse on the phenomenological method that the phenomenological method is a specialized approach and that although it is common place amongst the philosopher in Europe, “no authentic special science,

and no philosopher who does not belong to this school, will be able to recognize or use these methods. But our concern is with *general* methods of thought. In view of this the problems posed by the new phenomenology need not be discussed here” (Bochenski, 1965: 21).

In the third chapter, Bochenski dwelt on the semiotic method and presented the three dimensions of signs (Bochenski, 1965: 32-34). He engaged in the discourse on formalism and stressed the nature of formalism in the following lines:

Formalism is thus a method which consists in completely disregarding the eidetic meaning of signs and operating with them on the basis of certain transformation-rules concerned only with the written shape of the signs. They are treated as though they were not signs but pieces in a game, which can be combined and transposed in various ways. It has therefore been said in jest that anyone who makes use of formalism does not know what he is saying, nor whether what he is saying is true (Bochenski, 1965: 40).

After presenting the justifications of the use of the formalist method, he discussed the rules of syntactic meaning, semantic function and types, semantic meaning as verifiability and finally used Taski’s concept of true sentence in everyday or colloquial language to buttress his discourse on the example of semantic methods in practice.

Bochenski concerns himself with axiomatic methods in the fourth chapter of the book, *The Methods of Contemporary Thought*. Here, he distinguished between laws and rule; he also distinguished between the two basic forms of inference being deduction and reduction. He presented infallible and fallible as rules as the two forms of inference and then delved into the discourse on the axiomatic system bringing to the fore, the procedures and requirements for constructing an axiomatic system. In his discourse on mathematical logic, he presented the methodological significance of mathematical logic in the following lines:

In recent years, mathematical logic has exerted a great influence on methodology, and this for two reasons. In the first place it was the first discipline for which a rigorous axiomatic method was developed, and while this method is also used in many other fields, it is still in mathematical logic that it has the most important role. Moreover, the structure of present-day mathematics (unlike the earlier forms of logic) is such that it poses certain interesting and indeed urgent methodological problems (Bochenski, 1965: 74).

At the end of his presentation on the history of mathematical logic, he put forward the essential features as well as the relevance of mathematical logic to non-logical axiomatic system. He then went further to argue for the relativity of logical systems with his famous reference to the thoughts of Reichenbach and Jan Lukasiewicz. To quote Bochenski, “In 1944 Reichenbach showed that quantum mechanics cannot be axiomatized without contradiction on the basis of “classical” logic (such as that of *Principia Mathematica*) but that it can be axiomatized straightforwardly without

contradiction in the framework of Lukasiewicz's three valued logic" (Bochenski, 1965: 78). It is from these discourses that the frontiers of the absolutistic conception of logic are pushed back. In the final third, Bochenski discussed definitions and concept formation bringing to the fore, the basic types of definition, the types of syntactical definition being the explicit, the conceptual, the recursive definition amongst others. Bochenski then concluded the chapter with a discourse on the axiomatisation of the sentential logic of Hilbert and Ackermann as examples of the axiomatic method in practice.

In the closing chapter of the work under review, Bochenski treated the reduction method. Here, he demonstrated that the foundations of the reduction methods of thought were laid by Aristotle and was followed by Francis Bacon who first attempted to establish the relevant rules for the modern form of the reduction method. He argued that significant inquiries were made by Herschel, Mills, Kneale, Braithwaite, Von Wright amongst others in this area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He then averred that:

The theory of probability and its applications form a particularly difficult chapter of reductive methodology which is being vigorously explored today. The publication of Keynes' work in 1927 was of paramount significance for these researches; another important work on reduction and the application of the theory of probability is that of Camap (1951). But even so this whole field of inquiry has not yet been illuminated nearly as thoroughly as that of deductive methodology (Bochenski, 1965: 91).

Bochenski distinguished deduction from reduction in connection with the works of Jan Lukasiewicz by stressing that in deduction, we infer the consequent from a conditional statement and its antecedent while in reduction, we infer the antecedent from the conditional statement and its consequent (Bochenski, 1965: 92). He showed the subdivision of reduction to be the progressive reduction which he called verification and the regressive reduction which he called explanation (Bochenski, 1965: 94). After a lucid discourse on the structure of the natural sciences, Bochenski delved into a discourse on the types of explanatory statements and showed that the reductive-explanatory statement always specify at least one condition governing the phenomenon to be explained and these conditions may be sufficient, necessary or necessary and sufficient and argued that:

Among contemporary methodologists it is beyond dispute that in the natural sciences many explanations take this last form. These are clearly not causal laws, since the phenomenon is not explained causally but rather formally (in the Aristotelian sense of the word) (Bochenski, 1965: 104).

Regarding induction as part of the methods of reduction, Bochenski averred that induction is an important form of reduction whose usage comes handy in the natural sciences (Bochenski, 1965: 107). He then distinguished authentic induction from spurious induction example of which are

mathematical induction and complete induction (which are a kind of deduction). Authentic induction for him “is reserved here first of all for a process of inference, that is a method of thought by means of which *statements* are made; secondly for a process which is essentially ampliative, i.e. one which proceeds not only from the totality of the individuals to the general (as in complete induction) but from *some* individuals, which do not comprise all the elements of the class in question, to the general” (Bochenski, 1965: 108). This process of inductive transition poses a special methodological problem which according to Bochenski is the so-called problem of induction. Showing the contribution of Mills to the discourse and history of induction, he discussed the Mills method and accounted for the five ways put forward by Mills. In his closing reflection on induction, he averred that:

To sum up, we may say that at least four postulates are necessary for the application of qualitative induction: the postulate of determinism, the closed-system postulate and the postulates of interconnectedness and of simplicity. Four corresponding rules may then be set up: look for determining conditions; assume that these conditions, when found, must belong to a given system; choose the hypotheses best interconnected with the system as a whole; choose the simplest hypothesis (Bochenski, 1965: 113).

After what he referred to as a sketchy consideration of the historical method he concluded that we do not really know what the logical structure of historical method is in detail. The impossibility of including this method among deductive and inductive methods, which were once the only methods known, seems to be the reason why most methodologists of the historical disciplines have limited themselves either to describing techniques of research, or to searching for irrational solutions to the theoretical problems of their methodology. Although the impact of the subjective is obviously very strong here, there is no need to resort to such heroic measures. The general methodology of contemporary thought provides concepts with which the historical method also can be investigated (Bochenski, 1965: 125). Having accounted for Bochenski analysis of the methods of contemporary thought in the preceding discourse; it remains to show the idea of the method that he favours and advanced for use in doing philosophy as well as other contemporary intellectual investigations.

As we have argued in the foregoing, Bochenski linked method and methodology with logic. According to him, methodology is the second of the tripartite division of the domain called logic. He further argued that “methodology is precisely the theory of the application of the laws of logic to the various fields” (Bochenski, 1965: 9). To quote Bochenski, “there can be a methodology for every field: there is for example a chemical, a didactic, an ascetic and many other methodologies. They can be divided into two classes: those which discuss respectively the techniques of physical and of intellectual activity” (Bochenski, 1965: 9). Only the second kind (intellectual) concerns Bochenski and is worthy of his analysis.

For him, “we are concerned here exclusively with *methods of thought* that is with directions for correct thinking. The methodology in question, i.e. the science of correct thinking, obviously relates to serious thinking, that is, to the acquisition of knowledge (Bochenski, 1965: 10). Bochenski favours the method of theoretical thought because as he argues, it refers exclusively to states of affairs which it wishes to study and understand not minding whether or not; these facts can in any way be turned to account.

It is from the above background that Bochenski argued that there is a general methodology of theoretical thought in contradistinction to the special methodologies. This general method deals with methods which find application either in all theoretical thinking or at least in a large proportion of the sciences and this is the only methodology that is a part of logic (Bochenski, 1965: 10). It suffices to state here that it is only the methods that falls under this general methodology that is a part of logic that Bochenski treats in the book under review and it is the same that ramifies the idea of the method of contemporary thought in the thinking of Professor Bochenski. Hence, he elected to dwell and account for the phenomenological method, the analysis of language, the deductive methods and the reductive methods.

The idea of the method of contemporary thought for Bochenski is the methods that are based on logic and precisely concerned with the application of the laws of logic to the various fields; it is the method that is concerned with the techniques of intellectual activity and the physical activity. It is the method that is with and directed toward correct thinking and relates to serious thinking that is concomitantly geared towards the acquisition of knowledge, it is the general methodology of theoretical thinking which is and only is the part of logic. These methods include the phenomenological methods, the semiotic methods, the axiomatic methods and the reductive methods.

The idea of the methods of contemporary thought for Bochenski ramifies the methods that are complementary, rather than confrontational. In Bochenski's thinking, methodologists and proponents of the various methods should see each other as complementary; the idea of the method of contemporary thought for J.M Bochenski in the light of what present methodology has to say to us is that “the various methods of thought are not mutually exclusive alternatives, but complementary aspects of thought. An adequate contemporary philosophy should not reject any method, especially since it can be known from methodology how difficult it is to arrive at valid results” (Bochenski, 1965: 127).

The idea of the method of contemporary thought for Bochenski is an authentic philosophical method which would arise when philosophers do not commit and restrict themselves to one single method that the consider axiomatised. It is on the basis of the above that he argued in the last paragraph of the epilogue that such a philosophy is urgently needed in an age when knowledge has become compartmentalized and specialized; in a time when knowledge and reason is threatened more than ever (Bochenski, 1965: 127). Only a genuine philosophy or philosophical method (that

is complementary and does not conceive of any particular method as axiomatised and mutually exclusive) which brings out the all the available resources to bear in the search for knowledge can remedy the situation.

Beyond Bochenski, an intercultural perspective to the question of method can also be advanced. In this perspective, sincere efforts are made to recognize the contributions of the different methods of doing philosophy within the context of the various regions of the world be it, western, African or Asian and integrated them into an open discourse on the question of method in philosophy. Within the context, the idea that African or some other groups do not have the capacity to conceive and deploy a particular method of doing philosophy will be jettisoned and considered unreasonable. This is because the persistent denial of the capacity or validity of any method whatsoever because it is not in consonant with those that are western is dangerous to the enterprise of philosophy. This perspective, following from that as advanced by Bochenski presupposes that every method of doing philosophy regardless of the cultural context of origin is equally capable of leading to truth and philosophical enlightenment in so far as it is grounded on sound logic.

Drawing from the methods of doing philosophy that have been advanced in the preceding section, it is obvious from an intercultural perspective that all the methods so discussed were both conceived and deployed in a cultural context. Consequently, it feels safe to conclude the discourse in this section with the following lines:

Though these philosophical methods have their roots in a specific cultural context, their use is not restricted to that culture and tradition. They are available to all those who take the time to immerse themselves in another tradition and to engage in an authentic way in intercultural philosophy. Nonetheless, philosophers cannot be cognisant of everything that is happening in different areas of the world in philosophy, and it takes a lifetime to be truly proficient in any philosophical method. Still, it is important to be aware of the vast array of philosophical riches that provide many different ways of approaching philosophical questions, especially that there are other cultures and other approaches to the tasks of philosophy which are not Western (Ozolins, 2014: 31).

## **Conclusion**

In the foregoing, attempts have been made to reflect on the method of doing philosophy. Here, the discourse proceeded from a preliminary discourse on the various methods that have been conceived and deployed in the task of doing in philosophy in history to the lessons that are derivable from the a reflection on Josef Maria Bochenski' thesis on what kind of method should be deployed in philosophy in contemporary times. As we draw to the conclusion of this paper, a number of position have been made and a rehearsal of the same is here considered necessary. One, several methods have been used in the past for doing philosophy and some of them include the phenomenological, dialectical, hermeneutical, analytical, pragmatic methods amongst other. However, for Bochenski,

methodology is linked to logic and it is only the kind of methodology that is linked with logic that Bochenski concerns himself with. Two, the idea of the method of doing philosophy for Bochenski, is that method which is based intellectual activity directed towards correct and serious thinking. This method for him is not confrontational of other methods but complementary. It is an authentic philosophical method that rest on the phenomenological analysis and proceeds through analysis, be it linguistic or axiomatic and finally appealing of the reductive science. It is this kind of method that he considers the urgently needed remedial approach to the failing search for knowledge. The submission of this paper is that while there will continue to be disagreement between philosophers as it has always been since the pre-Socratics on the question of what the method of doing philosophy should be, the proposal of Bochenski as regards philosophical method is timely and it excels all the other proposals that have been put forward in the past, this is because of it temper of tolerance, complementarity and the absence of confrontation amongst methods and methodologists.

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