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Beginning of first lecture: bibliography, introductory comments, opening of Introduction. September 6, 1979. Time: 31:57**. Recording at 2958AA0E060.**

? Professor of Divinity at Cambridge in England gave four talks on BBC [on] Recent Directions in Roman Catholic Theology. The first of the four is available in *The Month* July 1979 221-24.

James Hitchcock – I think he teaches history at St Louis – he's editor of *Communio*. *Catholicism and Modernity: Confrontation or Capitulation?* New York: Seabury, 1979. 250 pp. $12.95. (That's a lot for a paperback.) The alternatives are rather abrupt. I think there's a lot of room between confrontation and capitulation.

Gerald McCool, teaches philosophy at Fordham, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century: The Quest for a Unitary Method*. New York: Seabury, 1977. 300 pp. $14.95. It is a very solid piece of work. The quest for a unitary method as described in the nineteenth century is not the sort of thing we're talking about in this course. The problem there was dealing with traditionalism in France. The only way they knew about God was through tradition, and the only way you could be certain: no rational arguments. And on the other hand, the various Catholics who were trying to use Kant, Hermes, Schelling, Hegel – Günther was trying to use Hegel – Frohschammer, problems of history, people who had been condemned by the Holy Office. So there were people in Germany that had been condemned by the Holy Office and people in France, and the problem was to find the unitary method, a way out from 'no reason at all' and 'reason demonstrating the mysteries,' the Trinity, the Incarnation, and so on. A middle way was Thomism. This led to the encyclical of Leo XIII, 'Aeterni Patris.' The problem was far more complex, and that's the present situation.

My own concern with that problem of method goes fairly far back. I remember when I was studying philosophy in England and was due to do an external degree at London University. I spotted an honors course in methodology. I was eager to take it. But bureaucracy intervened, and ... because I had no acquaintance with problems in theology that really existed at that time, and I wouldn't have been able to use it properly. I was sure the mind didn't work the way we were taught in the philosophy course, and I had a concrete example of that in the greetings given Newman's *Grammar of Assent*. It was about 1870 or 1871. Newman came out with ... phrases as 'First learn to shoot around corners with pistols, and then you'll

change peoples' minds with syllogisms,' and so on ... He was vigorously attacked by another Anglican convert, an Oxford convert, in a series of articles in *The Month*. This man ... the exact ... way his mind thought. If it wasn't thinking that way, it wasn't thinking at all. And he went on for six or seven articles in this vein. I did two little essays: 'The Form of Inference,' which eventually appeared in *Thought*, and was published, the first one, in *Collection* in 1967; and another on Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, which has not been published.

I did my dissertation on grace and freedom, and that introduced me to historical study. It was Thomas on *gratia operans*. He changed his mind, fortunately, several times. When you have an author changing his mind on basic subjects like operative grace, the grace by which you begin to will the good that up to now you were not willing to do, a shift, a fundamental change, and Thomas changed his mind several times on the subject of grace and on the subject of all the connected topics: operation, causality, operation on the will. How can you operate on freedom? And so on and so forth. There was a nest of differences, and when you have a nest of differences it's far easier to pick out what the author is exactly saying than if he says the same thing 100 times... So that difference; and again I wrote a series of articles on operative grace; it's in *Theological Studies* 1941-42; it was published in book form with all the later editions that had appeared – I wrote the stuff, I did my dissertation from '38 to '40 and at that time books simply didn't exist that came out after the war, texts, and so on. Patout Burns, who is now teaching at Bellarmine, the Catholic group at Chicago, in the vicinity of Chicago University, he put out a very fine edition of it in book form. After that I did a study of St Thomas on *verbum*. Thomas's key texts on *verbum* are in Trinitarian theory, and philosophers usually don't venture into that field. But those are the clearest texts in Thomas on intellect, and I had the advantage over straight philosophers like Maritain and Gilson, and so on, I knew just what the theological problems were. A lot of that appears in *Insight*. It's my opinion that Aristotle and Thomas were aware of the fact of insight, that there is something in between the questions, your wonder, what you're trying to find out, and your concepts, your hypotheses. There's an act of intelligence that occurs there, and that controls the formation of concepts. Attention to that has dropped. You can't have science without universal principles, according to Aristotle, but the movement from sense to conception, and the intermediaries, have disappeared, and not only – they disappeared at the end of the thirteenth century with the row between the Dominicans and the Franciscans. We may say something more on that later. It was a knockdown debate, and when you get a knockdown debate you don't arrive at much in the way of truth and learning. They would simplify things down to the level of the stupidest people who were carrying on the arguments.

So in *Insight* I explore the relevance to cognitional theory of modern science. And to judgment, not only in modern science but also in common sense. And in *Method* I go on and take in things like hermeneutics (interpretation) and history. Now history was missing out in Aristotle's list of the sciences. It couldn't be a science because there are no universals. And it didn't come into subsequent thought until pretty well into the nineteenth century, when it became a ... affair: the German Historical School, in which the big influence was Leopold von Ranke. His seminar became the model for historical seminars in all the universities in the world, in the course of time. It penetrated the whole modern school. The History of Religions school is simply an application of von Ranke's methods or insights to the whole range of religion, and its fundamental influence on scriptural studies, patristic studies, medieval studies, and modern philosophic thought is of basic importance, and it is those issues that I was trying to deal with in this book on method in theology. And that will probably do to indicate roughly what the book is about.

The people who worked on history – when I was a student of theology in the 30s, the two great Catholic books on history of dogma were Lebreton on the Trinity in the first three centuries, roughly, and de Grandmaison on Christology. And by the time I was teaching at the Gregorian they were looked upon as apologists, not historians. So the shift in Catholic thought occurred in between. My work on Thomas was historical, but history came in first of all among Catholics in the Church historians, and then the patristic scholars, and then the medieval scholars. But it was not tolerated in biblical studies till after 1943, with Pius XII's *Divino Afflante Spiritu*. Biblical studies began to move after that. At the present time in the States, the Catholic Biblical Association has scholarly requirements – you can't get in without meeting the requirements – and the study of Biblical Literature hasn't, with the result that non-Catholics join the Catholic association, if they're scientific. The Association met here this year at the end of the month of August.

So history has been connected with theology. It was regarded as an auxiliary discipline, not as a part of theology. One of the things about this book is that it includes history within theology. How you get it in is something we have to figure out. We have it as an integral part of theology, and similarly interpretation. And they were not before. You had to know them and so on, but they were just a help.

This study of history involves a change in the notion of culture. I was brought up in the old school, and I first met the anthropological notion of culture – culture is a way of life; the Eskimos have a culture just as much as the Brahmins in Boston. A culture is simply a way of life, and if you have a way of life, no matter how barbaric it may seem and so on, it's a culture. It's a generalized notion of culture. And it's tied in with notions such as the historicity of man. People are born

in central Africa and people are born in ... London and they're born in ... Philadelphia, and so on. But there's a terrific difference in what they inherit. And it's not only schooling; it may be family. Churchill was a ... His home was the ... He ran away from school about the age of 16. But he had a terrific command of the English language, a powerful command, as he showed during the war. And it was just family. They made him speak, right from the start. In literary studies, we have four years in the Society of novitiate and literary studies, and during the summer we could read novels, to wit Dickens, Thackeray, and Scott, and I chose Thackeray. I made a point of every word I saw that I couldn't use ... I wrote it down on a list, and I had a rather big list. I ... them all, and I went to England for philosophy, and I discovered ... Your environment and so on makes a terrific difference to your upbringing.

Now, the first sentence in the introduction is that theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix. In other words, you're starting out from a historical conception of history. The cultural matrices keep changing. You get new problems. New ideas come forth that may help the religion or be adverse to it. Everything that can change in the culture can have its repercussions in the field of religion, some much more than others. A theology is the go-between between the culture and the religion. People are not just religious. They're in the culture too, whether they know it or not. There's the play of Molière's, 'Le bourgeois gentilhomme,' about the man who makes some money and is trying to be a gentleman. He was studying under a literary person, and he was told of the distinction between prose and poetry ... 'You mean I've been speaking prose all my life?' Similarly, people talk about culture ... they have it nonetheless; they have a way of life, whether they've ever thought of it. They find the people in the next village strange, because they don't act and behave the same way they do. And the further afield they go, the stranger they find people, and when they get beyond a certain ... the become foreigners. Culture is a variable.

Now the classicist notion of culture was normative. At least *de iure* there was but one culture that was both universal and permanent. To its norms and ideals might aspire the uncultured, whether they were the young or the people or the natives or the barbarians. But they were not cultured. They were the uncultured. They were not yet cultured. That was a sharp division, and people were sent to school to get a bit of culture: finishing school. But besides this classicist notion, which comes out of the classical Greek philosophers and the development of Greek literature – the key book on this topic is Bruno Snell, a professor of classics at Hamburg, on the Greek discovery of the mind. He runs through the Greek authors and shows what each one contributed to the Greek language. Homer: an ability to talk about character. And this ability to talk about character, how did Homer develop that? By the Homeric simile. A lion never retreats. Hector was a lion. And

so on. He had ways of characterizing all the people in his epics. And the lyric poets: they objectified emotions, feelings, intense feelings – love and war, hatred. The tragedians: decisions in situations. The play by Aeschylus about the Egyptian maidens. They fled. A Greek king in a small town had to decide whether he'd give them refuge or not. He'd be respecting their liberty if he did, but he might be incurring the antipathy of the powers of Egypt; or, on the other hand, he could give in to his fear of the power of the Egyptians and turn the girls away. The decision he had to make is key to the play. In the play there is objectified the fact of decision and the meaning, the situation in which decisions occur. And the Sophists applied the techniques to this development of literature with all sorts of questions, and they'd argue both ways on any subject. Out of this came the people who turned – Socrates had the distinction between eristic and dialectic. Eristic is when you're out to win in an argument. Dialectic is when you're out to say something in dialogue.

So the Renaissance, with its devotion to Greek and Latin letters, considered that *there* was the perfection of a literature, and that the statuary and the buildings and so on and the writings of the Greeks were, as Thucydides said in his *History*, a possession for all time. In that way there was developed a classicist notion of culture. When that classicist notion of culture was identified with the Catholic religion, it was very difficult to do serious missionary work. The attempt to take advantage of elements of Indian or Chinese culture by missionaries was blocked, and people that might have been converted to Christianity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries got nowhere. And it was simply that block, the idea that there's just one culture that we've got it and what hasn't got it must be wrong somehow or other.

So besides the classicist there is also the empirical notion of culture. It is the set of meanings and values that informs a way of life. It may remain unchanged for ages, it may be a process of slow development, or rapid dissolution. Building up is slow, dissolution is easy. When the classicist notion of culture prevails, theology is conceived as a permanent achievement, and then one discourses on its nature. What's the nature of theology? When culture is conceived empirically, theology is known to be an ongoing process, and then one writes on its method. In any modern science, the top dog is the method. Aristotle or an Aristotelian of a certain school would say that a science depends upon its principles. But in empirical science principles were also up for grabs. You can change the foundations of the science, move it on, put in new foundations underneath what's been achieved. Mendeleev introduced the periodic table in chemistry. He put chemistry on a new foundation, with a definition for each one of the known elements and slots into which unknown elements later on could be put, when they were discovered. The evolutionary notion in biology changed the structure of biology as a science. Before that the

species were all fixed. With evolution, you had to explain the species. And when you had an explanation of the origin of the species, where this species started and how it developed and so on, you have a science such that mere lists of classifications did not communicate.

When theology is an ongoing process, one writes on its method. Method is not a set of rules to be followed meticulously by a dolt. You do this and then you do that and then you do that. All your problems are solved if you just do what you're told. Well, that's all very well when you're with the hodmen of science, but you have to have some people going somewhere, or science won't amount to anything, for it to be an ongoing process. So method is a framework for collaborative creativity. It's what brings together the bright people and lets each make his own contribution by their interactions.

At Cambridge in England, the Cambridge School of Economics is outstanding precisely because the professors of Economics there talk to one another all the time. And while Keynes is a big name, Keynes was helped an awful lot by his coequals. And the people with whom he worked later on kept changing his doctrine ... That business of a dialogue, a collaboration, is fundamental to the modern notion of a science. A science is not something in a book. A science is a group of men and women working in a field and learning from one another and putting their results together. And the big shot is one of those people who work out how things can come together, as Crick and Watson did for genes.

In such a contemporary theology we envisage eight distinct tasks. In general, what we shall have to say is to be taken as a model. By a model is not meant something to be copied or imitated. By a model is not meant a description of reality or a hypothesis about reality. It is simply an intelligible, interlocking set of terms and relations that it may be well to have about when it comes to describing reality or to forming hypotheses. It performs in a science the same function as a proverb in common sense. Proverbs come in contradictory pairs. Look before you leap. He who hesitates is lost. If they're contradictory, what's the good of them? Both of them indicate possible lines of action. Method is doing something.

I do not think I'm offering merely models. But the fundamental thing that I'm talking about is the structure of your own mind. Whether I'm right or not is beside the point. You've got to find it in yourself for it to mean anything to you. It's like a therapy. *Insight* has been described as a therapy, an intellectual therapy. The therapies in depth psychology are concerned fundamentally with feelings. People have feelings, and they have no name for them. They know they're upset. And one of the stunts is to be able to get them to confront their feelings, not just panic when they have them. Take it coolly; cool it. Give it a name and distinguish it from other feelings and know what to do when it recurs, and know the sort of things that occasion it and so on, all the things in working through. Well similarly,

you can experience in yourself every kind of intellectual operation, all the types. It's not something that you can't help doing. It's something you have to work to get hold of, and keep working at until you do. Just as a person in therapy has two hours a week to get at it.

We'll do an example of that. Probably a number of you have seen this example before. Euclid's *Elements* is a nest of insights, over and above his definitions, axioms, and postulates. And if you want to rewrite Euclid in such a way that he can be perfectly logical ... it doesn't look like what's been known as Euclidean geometry at all. A mathematical friend of mine, I asked, Is it easy to see? and he said, You have to be a very good geometer to see that it's the same. And what are they starting from? Well, the first proposition in the first book (goes through it again, not transcribed here). Where is the fallacy? Euclid doesn't prove, and there's no possibility of a Euclidean proof, that the two circles will intersect; and if they don't intersect, there's no proof. That sort of thing is recurrent. It's not only in problems, How do you do something? like ... It's also in theorems. And how do you get away from that? Well, the fundamental solution is by Hilbert, *Grundlagen der Geometrie, Foundations of Geometry*. What he did was work out definitions that were not confined to images. You can see that these two circles are going to intersect. You can add an axiom such that you have a proof that those two circles will intersect. But you get an endless slough of axioms if you go through the whole of Euclid and add all the axioms that were needed. The way to set up a different way of doing geometry is by implicit definition. Two points determine a straight line; a straight line is determined by two points: implicit definition of point and line. But you don't necessarily mean by point position without magnitude, or by a line length without depth or thickness, or by a straight line a line that lies evenly between its extremes – all of which are imaginable. You mean anything where two of it determines some one other thing and so some other thing is determined by two. And so in Cartesian coordinates you have *ab* and *cd*, such that you can get a first-degree equation in terms of those four. It's equivalent to the algebraic representative of a straight line. You're doing geometry, without any imagination. Now when you're doing geometry without any imagination, you don't get these tricks (points to board). Now still that reveals why it is that it was in 1898 they finally moved off to something else. It was quite obvious that this is right. It is right. But it presupposes things about space and so on that were not thought of. It's the opening clue setting up all sorts of geometries.

That's an example of insight. The insight that the circles must intersect is something between the image and the statement that they must intersect. That's getting hold of something. That's the bright idea. If you don't express it, you'll lose it. You have to express it to keep it, to have it at your recall.

That is something that's missing out in philosophy from the fourteenth century on. You talk to people today about insight – it's just being goofy. It isn't part of the regular philosophic diet. Consequently, it's hard to say much about method if you don't know about insights and how to encourage them, how to check them, and so on. So that's what the book is about.

We have thirteen classes, the first on the sixth of September, and the last on the sixth of December. There are four a month, four in September, four in October, four in November. There are five Thursdays in November, but one is Thanksgiving. So there are four, and there's one in December, which gives you thirteen. In general our procedure will be to do a chapter each time. We'll do it in two steps. The first step will be an indication of what the chapter is about, and I'll do that. In the second step you'll ask questions about that chapter, and we'll try to answer them as a group. In that way we'll have a chance of helping the stuff sink in, helping all the different angles to come to light. It's a seminar. It's a teaching seminar, but the fundamental thing is to assimilate, to be able to do it on your own. You have the art or the technique when you can work on your own. The Aristotelian definition of the criterion of a habit is that when you have the habit you can do it on your own. You don't need someone to tell you what to do next. You already know. And it needn't be knowledge that you can formulate. There's such a thing as tacit knowledge. My favorite illustration of that I got from my youngest brother, who was out in western Canada. He had the greatest admiration for the way the Indian guide would be able to take hunters over hill and dale for a couple of days and finally catch up with a buck and shoot the buck. They would go back to camp, not retracing their steps but going straight. He wanted to find out how they could do it. And he asked them. 'Well, you know.' Well, how do you know? 'You know.' So he asked, Well, what do you look for? 'A stream.' Well, how do you know whether to go up or down? 'You know.' It's what Piaget calls sublating a group of possible operations. When the toddler with Mommy goes over to Daddy, and Mommy calls him to come back again, he doesn't know he's going back. That's further knowledge. He knows he's going back when he begins to relate possible motions to one another and form a group. He's able to move in any direction and know how to go back a straight way. And to have this over a stretch of country is the sort of thing that Indians are brought up to do. They know just what to notice, and they're noticing it all the time they're moving. It's a skill we don't have. Edmund Wilson had a friend among the Iroquois. And the Iroquois from ? near Montreal are famous for their work on high steel. In 1860 the Victoria bridge was being put up across the St Lawrence River, and not only did they hire the Iroquois from nearby to work on it. They discovered the Iroquois were totally unconcerned no matter what height they were on. They could walk along a steel girder at any height and never think of falling. And ... wherever we have high ...

we'll hire the Iroquois for working on them ... This one Iroquois whom Edmund knew was the supervisor of a job, and moved into the white man's life. And Edmund was talking to him about the ways of life, and one day the Iroquois said, You know, I think I would have been happier if I had stayed with the animals. It's an option we don't have. The animals were part of their world. They lived with the animals. They lived off the animals. They took care of the animals. They were scandalized at the way the white men were shooting off buffalo without any purpose of eating them. It was the height of barbarism. It was simply unthinkable that people would do that. They spoke of the divinity as the Lord of the animals. They had a whole culture so different from our own.

That's just illustrating tacit knowledge. You don't have to have it out in words and so on. It's a matter of acquiring a skill of any kind: riding a bike. You don't have rules for riding a bike; you know. And driving a car, and all the rest of it. And when you get old, ...

So we want to get into this idea of method, and in general, we have the exposition, the class – the chapters are not all the same length. Chapter 6 is about three pages, they're not all the same length. But we can get through the book in the 13 classes.

The better questions and the better answers are when you take time to write the questions out and think your way through on the question: what am I trying to say? what am I trying to get at? So at least people will know what sort of answer you want. Mortimer Adler, I once was at a lecture by him, gave a lecture and undertook to answer questions, and he wanted the people to write the questions out. And he gave them all the time they wanted to write out the questions. It's a little hard on the rest of the audience. And the questions were collected, and he took his own time reading the questions through and putting them in order. And when he finally had that done, he went to work on the questions. And he would read the question and he would say, Now, what would a person have in mind in asking that question? He was able to do a fairly good job of telling the audience what that person probably had in mind in asking the question. Now he would say that, and then he would give you the answer to that question. He would be able to recall instances from ... to change the question a bit and change the answer a bit, but in that way you get communication. So the better questions – you don't have to write them all out, but the more they're written out and handed in in time, because the professor can give answers off the top of his head, but they may not be very good. He may put on a good show, but that's not what's wanted. You want to give him time to think of something that meets the issue. So if they can be written out and handed in, even if it's a couple of weeks late that it's going back on, it's all to the good. So that's a bit of an ideal. But other questions also will be welcomed, but

people will want to know how does this tie in with that, and so on. So a maximum of communication is desirable.

The first chapter has an introductory section on the notion of method and then four other sections: a preliminary notion of method, the basic pattern of operations, transcendental method (the method that's found in any method, the way anyone thinks if they think), and the functions of transcendental method, what you can do if you have it. It's the core of any method. That's how we're able to take examples from the sciences and swing them over into theology.

Thought on method is apt to run in some one of three channels. And the fundamental type is reflecting on what someone did to solve a problem. It's always in the concrete instance and reflection on it that ideas of method develop. That's the first type of thinking on method. And it's an ongoing type, insofar as a science is still developing, because it's developing insofar as new wrinkles, new techniques, new types of mapping, and so on, are added. And you learn those not by reading a book but by seeing how the other fellow did it. A friend of mine was teaching quantum mechanics during the war, and at the place where he was teaching it the only books available were textbooks, which simplified it. And he couldn't teach it properly unless he found out what precisely the people who worked out quantum mechanics had in mind. And he had to work that out from the textbooks. It's the way to go about getting a subject and mastering it and teaching it successfully. If you understand, there's a possibility you can help others to understand, but if you don't, you won't. The possibility won't be there. So the first type is not to be learned from books or lectures but in the laboratory or the seminar, and in the experimental laboratory, and in the seminar that's solving a problem, not handing out the solution to a problem. However, if you get the idea in a seminar, you can hand out the solution to a problem. What counts is the example of the master and the effort to do likewise, his comments on one's performance. Such, I think, must be the origin of all thought on method for such thought has to be reflection on previous achievement. Method isn't something pulled out of the hat like a rabbit. Such also [gap in tape]

For Aristotle, the only science properly so called was mathematics. For him mathematics reached necessary truth. The *Posterior Analytics* in the second chapter of book 1 states, 'We think we understand when we know the cause, know that it is the cause, and know that the effect cannot be other than it is.' Cause and effect are a necessary connection. For him science had to be knowledge of necessity. That was the general opinion up to 1926 when quantum mechanics came into the picture. But as a matter of fact performance was that the sciences knew not

what must be but what could be, and worked. It was understanding plus verification. It was not just science, but empirical science. So Sir David Ross remarked of Aristotle: 'Throughout the whole of his works we find him taking the view that all other sciences than the mathematical have the name of science only by courtesy, since they are occupied with matters in which contingency plays a part.' So too today the English word 'science' – not the German *Wissenschaft*, but the English 'science' – means natural science. One descends a rung or more in the ladder when one speaks of behavioral or human sciences. Theologians, finally, often have to be content if their subject is included in a list not of sciences but of academic disciplines – and they're lucky even then!

Clearly enough, this approach to the method of science doesn't do much to help the less successful, precisely because they're not successful. And insofar as they're not the successful sciences, insofar as they differ from it, well what are they to do? All they get by being the least successful science is ... and not the real McCoy. They have a lower place in the pecking order. Some third way, then, must be found and, even though it is difficult and laborious, that price must be paid if the less successful subject is not to remain a mediocrity or slip into decadence and desuetude, as when people ask, Is contemporary Catholic theology confrontation or conformity?

To work out the basis for such a third way is the purpose of the present chapter. We shall appeal to the successful sciences to form a preliminary notion of method. What is the general characteristic of method? Secondly, we shall go behind the procedures of the natural sciences to something both more general and more fundamental, namely, the procedures of the human mind. Thirdly, in the procedures of the human mind we shall discern a transcendental method, that is, a basic pattern of operations employed in every cognitional enterprise. Not a basic set of rules but of operations. That's why you have to discover that you don't only talk but also have acts of understanding, inquiry, observation, imagination, reflection, weighing the evidence, making judgments probable or certain, and so on.

A question: In those three paragraphs, you explicitly mentioned what the limitation of the second way was. What would be the limitation of the first way? (Answer: It's like the tacit knowledge of the Indian guide; he isn't able to tell you why.)

So, a preliminary notion: A method is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results. There is a method, then, when there are distinct operations – experiencing, inquiring, understanding,

conceiving, forming hypotheses, working out their presuppositions and their implications, finding a series of experiments that will test the hypothesis, performing the experiments, noticing that it doesn't always work, changing the hypothesis, and so on. There is a method when there are distinct operations, where each operation is related to the others, each one leads into the others, it's the next step. And you don't have to be told to do it, you already know about doing it. You do it naturally. We'll see more about that. That 'doing it naturally' is what's meant by the a priori.

[RD: The lecture is continued on 2958CDTE070 (transcription) /2958CA0E070 (audio).]