

# PROGRESS AND PLURALISM IN THEOLOGY

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**T**HE CONTEMPORARY Christian community is characterized by the ever-growing awareness that, although its faith may be one, its theological expressions are many.<sup>1</sup> A major factor in the development of this theological pluralism has been the emergence of multiple philosophies within the Catholic tradition. Contemporary Catholic theology diverges in a very noticeable way from its centuries-old tendency to work from a single philosophical framework, scholasticism.<sup>2</sup>

The reason for today's philosophical pluralism is, in the last analysis, due to the multiple ways human existence can be experienced. As Rahner suggests, it arises

not only from the actual mutual confrontation of the plurality of cultures in a world which has become one and which yet remains unintegrated, not only from the growing differentiation and complexity of the individual philosophies, but at bottom it originates in a pluralism of the human sources of experience, which can never be adequately comprehended.<sup>3</sup>

A theological pluralism originating in diverse experiences of being-in-the-world runs far deeper than the differences among the well-known theological "schools" of the past. These schools existed either in totally separate geographical and intellectual environments, or in the same milieu but with the same ultimate presuppositions so that the possibility of subsequent unity was very real, or so contradicted each other that

<sup>1</sup> "While conversion manifests itself in deeds and in words, still the manifestation will vary with the presence or absence of differentiated consciousness. There results a pluralism in the expression of the same fundamental stance and, once theology develops, a multiplicity of the theologies that express the same faith" (Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* [New York, 1972] p. 271).

<sup>2</sup> "The era dominated by Scholasticism has ended. Catholic theology is being reconstructed" (*ibid.*, p. 281). Rahner makes the same point: "*In actual fact and thus for the purpose of instruction, there no longer exists today any philosophy which can be assumed as ready-made and already adapted to the needs of theology. This applies equally to the Catholic Christian.* In this sense there is no longer a Neo-Scholastic philosophy as a (relatively) complete 'system,' since Neo-Scholasticism has in actual fact dissolved into a wealth of philosophies. . . . Theology itself puts so many questions and demands before philosophy as far as concepts and possibilities of systematisation go, that traditional Neo-Scholasticism, as it was until recently and still is, is simply inadequate to meet these needs" (Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* 9 [New York, 1972] p. 48; emphasis Rahner's).

<sup>3</sup> Rahner, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

rationality demanded a choice of one over the other and thus plurality was not a viable option.<sup>4</sup> Today there is plurality, an "irreversible plurality of theologies," as Rahner puts it. These theologies are entwined over the same geographical and intellectual landscape, differ in their fundamental philosophical assumptions, and offer truly alternative frames of reference.

Once the depth of today's theological pluralism is seen, a number of questions surface. How should we think of progress in theology? If plurality is synchronic, why can it not be diachronic as well, that is, why could not later theologies be truly different from earlier ones? And if this is so, how can the replacement of the old with the new be consistent with the continuity of a tradition? Furthermore, is the choice of a theological framework conventional, that is, left solely to personal and communal preference, or is there a possibility of comparative analysis in some kind of rational description? To put it another way, are there any kinds of intelligible or logical relationships that can be articulated to help us understand this plurality and the creative progress it allows? Finally, how can the plurality of theologies be compatible with the magisterium of a church?

Because the kind of theological pluralism we are experiencing today is new, these kinds of questions are new and work on the answers has just begun. Even at this inchoate stage, however, it seems already clear that future theologians will not confine themselves to articulations of the faith experience (the *fides qua*) and contents of the revelation (the *fides quod*), supplemented by the effort to comprehend the nature of theological understanding and method. They will also have to investigate the actual and formal relations existing among the many different conceptual frameworks of today's pluralistic theological world.

With this in mind, it would be of interest to note first the work in framework transpositions by Stephen Toulmin, Robert Brumbaugh, and Patrick Heelan. These theories serve as convenient examples to illustrate the possibilities of intelligibility that exist in a theological world marked by irreversible plurality and truly creative development.<sup>5</sup> Then theologi-

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54 f.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the three theories of progress and pluralism mentioned here, other interesting models are being developed. Examples include Karl Popper's "logic of scientific discovery" (cf. his *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* [New York, 1959] and *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach* [New York, 1972]); Ludwig von Bertalanffy's "general systems theory" (cf. his *General System Theory* [rev. ed.; New York, 1968] and Ervin Laslo's *Introduction to Systems Philosophy* (New York, 1972)); Thomas Kuhn's "scientific revolutions" (cf. his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* [rev. ed.; Chicago, 1970]); Imre Lakatos' "dialectic of research programmes" (cf. his "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in *Criticism and the Growth of*

cal progress, pluralism, and the relation of theologies to the magisterium can be discussed in light of these analyses.

## I

*Stephen Toulmin: Intellectual Ecology*

Toulmin believes that the usually accepted dilemma that would force one to choose between the extremes of absolutism (the interpretation of diversity and progress as accidental variations of a unique set of ultimate principles) and relativism (the acceptance of many historical frameworks each made absolute in such a way that there is no hope of convergence) is dangerous and erroneous. Both such positions share a common flaw: they confuse rationality with logic. Toulmin's thesis<sup>6</sup> is that rationality is better understood in terms of function and adaptation. It is not so much a commitment to logical systematicity as an emphasis on the human activities and procedures directed to the creation and critique of new concepts and conceptual frameworks needed to solve the significant problems of the intellectual enterprise.

Questions of "rationality" are concerned, precisely, not with the particular intellectual doctrines that a man—or a professional group—adopts at any given time, but rather with *the conditions on which, and the manner in which, he is prepared to criticize and change those doctrines as time goes on*. The rationality of a science (for instance) is embodied, not in the theoretical systems current in it at particular times, but in its procedures for discovery and conceptual change through time.<sup>7</sup>

Toulmin's strategy is to explain the existing logical systems in terms of their social-historical evolution rather than the more usual approach of explaining current historical phenomena in terms of logic.<sup>8</sup> He offers a schema of intellectual populations of concepts and frameworks subject to historical change rather than formal systems related by logical connec-

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*Knowledge*, ed. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave [Cambridge, Eng., 1972]); and Gerard Radnitzky's "praxiology" (cf. his "Towards a 'Praxiological' Theory of Research," *Systematics* 10 [1972] 129–85).

<sup>6</sup> The most comprehensive presentation of Toulmin's work, which has appeared in many articles and books over the years, is Volume 1 of his *Human Understanding* (Princeton, 1972). This volume is entitled *The Collective Use and Evolution of Concepts* and is the first of a projected three-volume series.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84; emphasis Toulmin's.

<sup>8</sup> "Confronted with the question, 'How do *permanent* entities preserve their identity through all their *apparent* changes?', we must simply deny the validity of the question itself. In its place, we must substitute the question, 'How do *historical* entities maintain their coherence and continuity, despite all the *real* changes they undergo?' " (*ibid.*, p. 356; emphasis Toulmin's).

tions. The evolution of intellectual populations, just as that of organic populations, is explained by factors of variation and selection. Just as the biologist speaks of "organic ecology," Toulmin speaks of "intellectual ecology." Hence the notion of evolution whereby modifications are selected from a pool of possible variants is extended far beyond its original Darwinian usage. "The proper course is to treat the word 'evolution' as a general term, covering all historical processes in which a compact but changing 'population' is represented by successive sets of elements related by descent. On this definition, organic change, cultural change, social, conceptual and linguistic change will be so many different varieties of historical 'evolution' . . . ."<sup>9</sup>

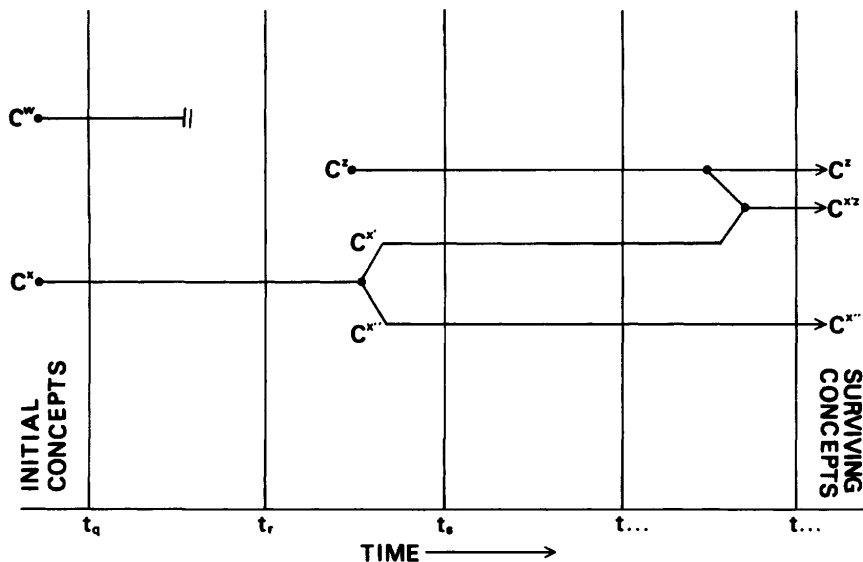
A rational enterprise appears in two modes: as a discipline (a common tradition of procedures and techniques) and as a profession (the institutions and the men who support them). The pool of disciplinary variants is composed of the possible solutions to the outstanding problems challenging the discipline, and the selection is governed by the filters of intellectual "reasons" (judgments) and social "causes" (fashion, prejudice, inadvertence). The pool of professional variants is composed of would-be scientists, and the selection is governed by the filters of magisterial authority vested in successful individual scientists and the institutional authority of such scientific organizations as universities and journals. The intellectual (disciplinary) and sociological (professional) histories complement each other and together explain not only an existing logical system but its genesis from and relation to other systems as well. There is therefore rationality among the various conceptual frameworks of the present plurality and past history, but it is a function of intellectual ecology rather than formal logic. Transformations from one existing framework to another and the creation of new frameworks are understood in a "populational" rather than a "propositional" way.

The evolutionary relationship underlying conceptual change and development is diagrammed by Toulmin as on the following page.<sup>10</sup> The diagram shows the shift in conceptual populations that can occur over different time intervals ( $t_q$ ,  $t_r$ ,  $t_s$ , . . .). Some concepts are fruitless and hence abandoned ( $C^w$ ); others are creatively constituted ( $C^z$ ); still other are modified ( $C^{x'}$ ) and hybrid unions are formed ( $C^{x'z}$ ). The development indicated by the diagram is to be understood in terms of selectivity filters operating at various times on pools of disciplinary and professional variants. In this way plurality and progress are described in rational, though not strictly logical, transformations.

Although the diagram shows a minimal logical continuity in that concept  $x$  is preserved in some form throughout all the different time

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 339.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205. I have somewhat simplified Toulmin's diagram.



slices, such continuity is not demanded by the notion of ecological development. It is possible for the theoretical concepts in  $t_q$  and  $t_r$  to be totally diverse.

It may well be that no proposition within Einstein's theoretical physics can be strictly translated into Newtonian terms, or vice versa; yet this fact by itself does not impose any "rational discontinuity" on the science. On the contrary: when two scientific positions share similar intellectual aims and fall within the scope of the same discipline, the historical transition between them can always be discussed in "rational" terms, even though their respective supporters have no theoretical concepts in common. Radical incomprehension is inescapable, only when the parties to a dispute have nothing in common even in their disciplinary ambitions. Given the very minimum continuity of disciplinary aims, scientists with totally incongruous theoretical ideas will still, in general, have a basis for comparing the explanatory merits of their respective explanations, and rival paradigms or presuppositions—even though incompatible on the "theoretical" level—will remain rationally commensurable as alternative ways of tackling a common set of "disciplinary" tasks.<sup>11</sup>

*Robert Brumbaugh: Cosmography*

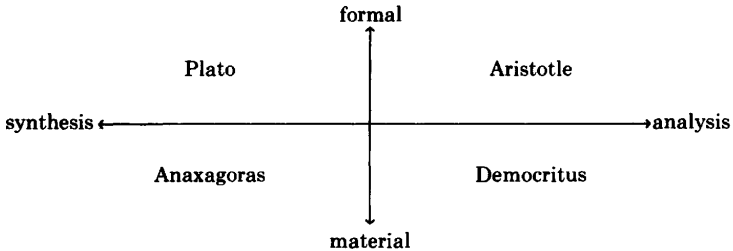
Cosmography<sup>12</sup> is the attempt to build a simple master map on which all the major philosophical families of our tradition can be projected.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>12</sup> Brumbaugh's approach is succinctly developed in three articles: "Preface to Cosmography," *Review of Metaphysics* 7 (1953) 53-63; "Cosmography," *ibid.* 25 (1971) 337-47; and "Cosmography: The Problem of Modern Systems," *ibid.* 27 (1973) 511-21.

Because of the differences among families, transformation rules must be employed if the map is to be co-ordinated in an intelligible way. History shows that these transformation rules cannot be based on the assumption that the basic co-ordinates of the different families are ultimately identical, for only irresolvable chaos and contradiction result from this approach. Transformation rules that assume a shift in the basic co-ordinates, however, show promise in describing an intelligible order among the families.

Brumbaugh suggests a tetradic scheme to distinguish the different philosophic systems according to method and analysis. Plato and Anaxagoras would exemplify a synthetic dialectical approach, while Aristotle and Democritus would favor analytical description. Direction tends toward either the formal or the material. Plato and Aristotle would typify the former, Anaxagoras and Democritus the latter. Thus the classical philosophical families can be mapped as follows:



The transformation rule, designed to show the logical relation between the different systems in spite of apparent contradictions, is: "the true propositions in any classical system of a given type can be translated into true propositions in any other classical system either by an operation of reversing modality, or reversing asserted relations of conjunction and disjunction, or both."<sup>13</sup> In a diagonal relationship (such as between Anaxagoras and Aristotle) the modality is reversed; in a horizontal relationship (such as between Plato and Aristotle) the relations of conjunction and disjunction are reversed; in a vertical relationship (such as between Plato and Anaxagoras) both the modalities and the relations of conjunction and disjunction are reversed. Examples of these transformations can be given:

1) *Reversal of modality* (diagonal relationship). Aristotle's description of actuality contradicts Anaxagoras' description of actuality but is consistent with the latter's description of possibility. Conversely, Anaxagoras' description of possibility, while inconsistent with Aristotle's, is

<sup>13</sup> "Cosmography," pp. 337 f.

consistent with the latter's description of actuality. If the modes of actuality and possibility are reversed, the seemingly contradictory systems are rendered logically coherent.<sup>14</sup>

2) *Reversal of relations of conjunction and disjunction* (horizontal relationship). Aristotle's method tends to distinguish and separate, while Plato tends to unify and join. This makes it impossible for Aristotle to comprehend the Platonic forms, which have separate identity (and thus are actual for Aristotle) but unite the individuals of the species in a conjunction (which rules out full actuality in Aristotle's opinion). On the other hand, the later Platonists cannot comprehend Aristotle's method of sharp distinction because of their synthesizing approach. The intelligibility of this conflict can be at least partially explicated, Brumbaugh believes, by systematically reversing the methodologies of conjunction and disjunction.<sup>15</sup> What the Platonists join, Aristotle separates, and vice versa.

3) *Reversal of both modality and the relation of conjunction and disjunction* (vertical relationship). For an example of this type of transformation, Brumbaugh refers to Bergson's description of his philosophy as "inverted Platonism." The Platonic one has a high reality index for Plato but is quite low for Bergson, while the latter's *durée réelle*, with its high reality index, comes out as Plato's *chōra*, with its low reality index. A vertical reversal will harmonize these extremes. It must, however, be supplemented by a horizontal reversal in that "a Bergsonian concrete individual can be analysed by a formalist into an indefinite multiplicity of separate abstractions; a Platonic form with its unity can emerge in flow with an indefinite number of adventitious topological deviations and individuating circumstances."<sup>16</sup> The divergence of the systems can thus be explained in terms of vertical and horizontal transformations.

Brumbaugh believes that such transformation rules enable us to avoid both the traditional assumption that new truth can be simply added on to an old nucleus of truths and a common modern opinion that alternate conceptual systems are radically untranslatable. "The alternative systems of philosophy are compatible, are talking about the same world, are within it, saying many of the same things. There is, then, a single discipline of 'philosophy' which is a common reality behind apparent disagreements."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "Preface to *Cosmography*," pp. 54 ff.

<sup>15</sup> "*Cosmography*," pp. 342 ff.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 345 f.

<sup>17</sup> "*Cosmography: The Problem of Modern Systems*," p. 521.

*Patrick Heelan: Context Logic*

Heelan distinguishes three major forms of framework relationship.<sup>18</sup> Because his terminology varies slightly as his thought develops, I will use the terms "compatibility," "absolute incompatibility," and "complementarity" to designate these relationships.

1) *Compatibility*. In the case of a common experience of facts and problems together with a common vocabulary (set of linguistic tokens or descriptive predicates), different theories can be employed to describe the common domain of experience in such a way that significantly inconsistent predications result. If this occurs, both theories obviously cannot be held simultaneously. In such instances the less adequate framework can sometimes be replaced by the more adequate one in such a way that the former remains as a subframework of the latter. The same tradition is thus continued but enlarged. The logical relation of these frameworks is that of compatibility, and progress occurs by linear growth. There is the "replacement of one framework by another in the same tradition."<sup>19</sup> Until recently this was the sole explanation of cognitional progress. "That all descriptive contexts are simply compatible was a basic presupposition of classical natural science, and is the only view consonant with a spectator theory of knowing."<sup>20</sup>

Heelan's examples of such compatibility relationships include the transition from classical to statistical thermodynamics, the latter containing the former as a restricted subframework, and, secondly, the development of Newton's laws of planetary motion, which added an account of planetary perturbations overlooked by the original laws of Kepler. In the fields of philosophy and theology, perhaps one could explain the transition from Thomistic realism to critical realism in this way.

2) *Absolute Incompatibility*. In the case of different experiences of facts and problems, frameworks can arise that cannot be combined without incoherence. These linguistic-conceptual frameworks are mutually exclusive and cannot be held simultaneously nor structured in such

<sup>18</sup> Heelan has presented his approach in a number of recent articles; among them: "The Role of Subjectivity in Natural Science," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 43 (1969) 185-94; "Complementarity, Context-Dependence, and Quantum Logic," *Foundations of Physics* 1 (1970) 95-110; "Quantum and Classical Logic: Their Respective Roles," *Synthese* 21 (1970) 2-33; "The Logic of Framework Transpositions," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 11 (1971) 314-34; "Toward a Hermeneutic of Natural Science," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 3 (1972) 252-83; "Nature and Its Transformations," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 33 (1972) 486-502; "Hermeneutics of Experimental Science," *Philosophia Mathematica* 9 (1972) 101-35.

<sup>19</sup> "The Role of Subjectivity in Natural Science," p. 187.

<sup>20</sup> "Nature and Its Transformations," p. 499.



a way that one becomes a subframework of the other in a continuing tradition. These absolutely incompatible frameworks constitute different and incommensurable traditions.

Heelan's usual example of this type of relation is the use of Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometries to describe two different perceptions of space. Ordinarily our perception of space is Euclidean and involves the possibility of measurement by straight-edge rulers, but recent experiments in binocular vision suggest that a non-Euclidean hyperbolic space can also be experienced. Perhaps, suggests Heelan, this is the space experienced by van Gogh and represented in his paintings.<sup>21</sup> There may be two different experiences of space, one Euclidean and the other non-Euclidean. Such frameworks cannot be combined, for they are rooted in fundamentally different human experiences. Both are "true," to the extent that we can call a framework true, but intrinsically incompatible. Because one can choose one or the other and be "right," these frameworks are conventional, that is, a group of people agree, sometimes only implicitly, on the one to be utilized. The "man in the street" invariably chooses the Euclidean; a segment of the artistic community has opted for the non-Euclidean.

Ultimately, however, even these different frameworks could be seen as synthesizable if taken as two complementary sides of purposive human activity. Toulmin has already suggested a way in which this could be done. Both the Euclidean and non-Euclidean projections of space originate from a common intentionality: man's description of his spatial experience. Looked at in this way, even absolutely incompatible descriptive frameworks can be seen as complementary aspects of a common human purpose.

3) *Complementarity*. This is by far the most promising of the three framework relationships. The heuristic paradigm is Niels Bohr's principle of complementarity in quantum physics. In classical (Newtonian) mechanics there was no reason why one could not give an exact measurement of position and momentum at the same time. It is well known that this cannot be done in quantum mechanics. Adoption of the exact-position context rules out the possibility of exact-momentum language. Bohr and Heisenberg believed that these two linguistic-conceptual frameworks were thus subsets of the classical mechanical language of exact position and momentum. Heelan suggests that they might instead be subsets of a new quantum mechanical language of inexact position and momentum, the inexactitude determined by Heisenberg's indeterminacy principle. If this be so, the complementary

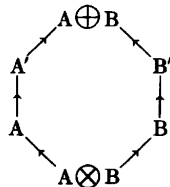
<sup>21</sup> "Toward a New Analysis of the Pictorial Space of Vincent van Gogh," *Art Bulletin*, forthcoming.

frameworks of exact position and of exact momentum, though not mutually compatible on their own level, are dialectically synthesized in the new higher language.

This relationship of complementarity and higher synthesis can be formalized in a non-Boolean or nondistributive lattice, that is, in a lattice such that the complementary contexts are not simply added together but rather dialectically synthesized in a new, richer framework. Everything that can be said in the exact-position language can be said in the higher inexact position-momentum language, and everything that can be said in the exact-momentum language can also be said in the higher inexact position-momentum language; but more can be said in the inexact position-momentum language than can be said in the simple additive union of the exact-position and exact-momentum languages. This "more" is the saying of position and momentum simultaneously, though inexactly, but with the inexactitude defined by Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty.

A nonadditive synthesis is difficult to imagine, as we naturally tend to think in terms of additive unions, where the whole is never greater than the sum of the parts. In a non-Boolean synthesis the whole *is* greater. Perhaps this would be easier to accept psychologically if one can imagine the additive union collecting only the component parts, while the nonadditive union collects both the component parts and the outcome of the relationships that exist among them. Thus we can imagine the non-Boolean whole as the sum of the parts together with the relationships occurring among the parts and between the parts and the whole. When the parts are related, the relations themselves add something to the subsequent synthesis, so that this synthesis will be richer than a mere addition of the parts alone. In Hegelian fashion, the negativity introduced by the relative noncompatibility of the complementary contexts is in turn negated (the negation of the negation), so that a truly expanded *Aufhebung*, richer than the sum of its components, emerges.

A simple non-Boolean lattice can be mapped as follows:



In this nonadditive lattice,  $\rightarrow$  means that  $x \rightarrow y$ , if and only if every sentence of  $x$  is also a sentence of  $y$ , but not necessarily vice versa.

$A \otimes B$  is the largest language that is contained in both  $A$  and  $B$ . It is

the greatest of the partially ordered set that implies both A and B. Thus  $A \otimes B \rightarrow A$ ,  $A \otimes B \rightarrow B$ , and there is no  $Z \neq A \otimes B$  such that  $Z \rightarrow A$ ,  $Z \rightarrow B$ , and  $A \otimes B \rightarrow Z$ .

A and B are languages that have developed from  $A \otimes B$ . They are compatible with  $A \otimes B$  but relatively incompatible (complementary) to each other.

A' and B' are the largest subframeworks of  $A \oplus B$  that have developed out of the A and B traditions. A' and B' are independent of the subframeworks B and A respectively in such a way that A' describes whatever can be said of the B context in the A tradition and B' describes whatever can be said of the A context in the B tradition. Yet A' and B' are not simply developments of the A and B traditions considered in isolation, because A' is complementary to both B and B', while B' is complementary to both A and A'. Since both A and A' are complementary to both B and B', and vice versa, the lattice is nonuniquely complemented.

$A \oplus B$  is the smallest language in which can be said everything that can be said in the A and B traditions.  $\overline{A \oplus B}$  is the least language implied by A and B. Thus  $A \rightarrow A \oplus B$ ,  $B \rightarrow A \oplus B$ , and there is no  $Z \neq A \oplus B$  such that  $A \rightarrow Z$ ,  $B \rightarrow Z$ , and  $Z \rightarrow A \oplus B$ . Since  $A \oplus B$  is richer than the A and B traditions taken separately, the lattice is not Boolean (distributive) but non-Boolean (nondistributive). The A and B traditions represent different contexts incompatible with each other but dialectically synthesizable.

Heelan suggests that frameworks of esthetic and functional philosophies of value, of essentialist and process ontologies, of behavioristic and teleological psychologies, all presently incompatible, might yet be dialectically synthesized.

To appreciate the context-logic model, it is crucial to understand correctly the type of synthesis indicated by  $A \oplus B$ . This synthesis is a new framework rather than a harmonization of the complementary subframeworks. In other words, the incompatible frameworks do not each develop until someday they can be integrated with each other. They are never so integrated; they remain incompatible with each other. What happens is this: a new conceptual framework develops. It says everything in its language they said in their language as well as some additional factors they could not say in their languages. They are each compatible with this new framework but still not with each other. Thus the exact-position and exact-momentum contexts can never be integrated with each other. Yet what each of them says can be said in a single higher language more adequate in its expression of reality than both the complementary languages.

Is there, then, one final truth that can harmonize all the incompatibilities facing us today? On the level of conceptual and linguistic frameworks, the answer seems to be negative. The contradictions are never resolved but remain in a higher synthesis that goes beyond them. The truths of complementary frameworks are valid, partial, and incompatible with each other. Man cannot harmonize these contradictions. He can develop more adequate frameworks to go beyond them.

Is a preconceptual, prelinguistic, single truth, what Heidegger calls in *The Essence of Reasons* ontological truth, possible? Perhaps, but this question takes us beyond the realm of conceptual-linguistic frameworks. In Heidegger's view, it also takes us beyond the realm of theological truth. His recently published (1970) *Phänomenologie und Theologie* situates theology on the ontic level of the sciences and not on the ontological level of philosophy.

To summarize: Heelan's position allows three modes of framework relationship. These are: (1) a new framework can replace the old in such a way the new is compatible with the old; (2) frameworks absolutely incompatible in their concepts and language can be seen as complementary aspects of a common human intentionality; (3) frameworks incompatible with each other can be compatible with a synthesis formalized as the least upper-bound of a non-Boolean lattice. This third possibility is, I think, the most promising elucidation and constitutes the originality of Heelan's position.

It is important to note that there is no intrinsic logical reason why complementarity has to be restricted to a pair of languages. There could be any number of complementary frameworks. Philosophies (and theologies) such as critical realism, process thought, existential phenomenology, and language analysis, though incompatible as they stand today, may eventually be read as subsets of an  $A \oplus B \oplus C \oplus D$  nonadditive synthesis where  $A \oplus B \oplus C \oplus D$  will describe everything in the A, B, C, and D traditions but other phenomena as well. Furthermore, there could be a plurality of lattices which may or may not be compatible with each other. "One might find a variety of lattices developing historically side by side, though incommensurable in principle with one another."<sup>22</sup>

In spite of obvious differences, the theories of Toulmin, Brumbaugh, and Heelan share much in common. They take seriously the radical historicity of man's knowledge but do not fall into relativism. They accept novelty and plurality without giving up rationality. They acknowledge the limitations of human truth by recognizing that a truth is true only within its conceptual framework, that conceptual frameworks are many, that supracultural formulations couched in a catholic lan-

<sup>22</sup> "The Logic of Framework Transpositions," p. 334.

guage are unattainable.<sup>23</sup> What they offer are ways of relating those frameworks.

This is not to say that these theories are without problems. The very fact that there are different explanations of progress and pluralism is indicative of the inchoate and partial nature of the enterprise. Moreover, Toulmin and Heelan have constructed models based on extrapolations from the natural sciences. As liberating as their explanations are, there is always the haunting question of the adequacy of scientific models to serve as the ultimate paradigm of human understanding in philosophy and theology. In other words, a rationality proper to the ecology of biology or the logic of quantum physics, though more open than the ancient logic of the Greeks and medievals or the classical logic of Whitehead and Russell, is still a utilization of the natural sciences as a paradigm of human knowledge. In this sense these approaches share one of the major tenets of logical positivism, a philosophical movement very much under attack today.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> The role of conceptual frameworks, which are not themselves true or false, in any epistemological clarification of the meaning of truth is often overlooked. A statement or definition can be true or false only within a framework. Admission of a plurality of frameworks, as this paper suggests, rules out the possibility of any set of speculative or theoretical propositions being considered as *the truth*. "All human propositions are true or false *within a framework*. . . . Human propositions and statements are not simply true or false and that's the end of it. They are true or false *within a framework*. In order to think anything out clearly for ourselves, and even more to express it linguistically, we must use predicates each of which forms part of a whole interconnected conceptual-linguistic system, or, if you wish, a system of meanings and conceptual schemes incarnated in a linguistic system. . . . Thus there are no atomic meanings or words. There are only conceptual-linguistic systems which are brought to bear on our experience of reality at some particular point in the system; and from this application results a particular proposition or statement, which will then be true or false as understood within this framework, within this perspective on reality" (W. Norris Clarke, "On Facing up to the Truth about Human Truth," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 43 [1969] 4 f.; emphasis Clarke's). More and more theologians are taking conceptual frameworks seriously. Dulles, e.g., writes: "If a theologian today were to accept a radically different philosophical system, such as one finds in modern personalistic phenomenology or process philosophy, he would have to transpose many of the Christian doctrines in a manner that might sound like a rejection. But to try to introduce these doctrines unchanged into a new philosophical framework would be impossible or would amount to an even greater deformation" (Avery Dulles, *The Survival of Dogma* [New York, 1973] p. 183).

<sup>24</sup> The approach of logical positivism manifests three major characteristics: (1) the attempt to use one method for all epistemological endeavors (methodological monism); (2) the use of the natural sciences as a paradigm for all human knowledge; (3) the claim that explanation is causal rather than teleological or functional. Cf. G. H. Wright, *Explanation and Understanding* (Ithaca, 1971) p. 4. Of course, Toulmin and Heelan are not logical positivists, notably because they reject the third characteristic. It is interesting to note a methodological monism in both authors. For Toulmin, the unique method is ecological adaptation (a fact that does bring him close to the logical positivists). Heelan, however,

Brumbaugh's schema also has difficulties. Much work would have to be done before the map could be considered as giving an adequate account of the relations between all the philosophic families of our tradition. Moreover, there is a problem with the unsystematic nature of many modern philosophies, a problem noted by Brumbaugh in his latest article. Finally, one might wonder if future developments must be confined within his analytic-synthetic, formal-material graph. Whereas both Toulmin and Heelan allow open-ended development, Brumbaugh's map tends to mark the boundaries of knowledge with finality.<sup>25</sup> A map, unlike ecological adaptations or dialectical lattices, does not permit creative advance. It represents only the known world and tends to become obsolete and be replaced as soon as new continents are discovered.

Moreover, all three schemata, and indeed any attempt to organize coherently human experience, run the risk of neglecting their origins. It is all too easy to forget that epistemological organizations are one step removed from the primordial life-world. It is often a fatal lapse to allow what developed out of the life-world to become normative for that primordial experience. The models, maps, and logics of man are helpful as long as they are seen as hermeneutical of his lived experience; they become perverted if accepted as criteria to which that experience must conform. Of the three, Heelan is most sensitive to this pitfall that so worried Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. Toulmin and Brumbaugh slight the life-world origin of man's problems and hence the way is open to taking the developed organic models and maps as normative.

This forgetfulness of the primordial life-world has its counterpart in theology. Theology develops its categories, with the help of philosophy, psychology, sociology, and other disciplines, from the experience of the believer, the faith as lived. Once developed, however, the categories tend to become sedimented and normative, so that the future faith experi-

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develops a monism in the opposite direction, thanks to insights from phenomenology. He presents natural science as a hermeneutic of the life-world. Hence both the positivistic monism of the nineteenth century and the subsequent positivistic-hermeneutical dichotomy of Dilthey are set aside in favor of a phenomenological monism. This is not to say that the positivistic approach of natural science is replaced. Rather it is seen as embedded in a primordial intentionality whereby man reaches the concrete world through the mediation of measurement, in which instrumental signals are taken as a "text" to be "read" in a context, i.e., interpreted. Cf. Heelan's "Hermeneutics of Experimental Science."

<sup>25</sup> "A further inquiry into why, in the history of thought, these systematic alternatives arise, and why each is persuasive, can be developed on the basis of logic, of sociology, of further study of time and modality. But no such further study will affect the present abstract account of systems of philosophy, classical and modern, their inner structure and their external mutual transformations" ("Cosmography: The Problem of Modern Systems," p. 521).

ences of the community not readily adaptable to these accepted and approved categories are at least suspect, if not rejected outright. Yet the particular theological categories, the carriers of the faith, resulted from the activity of men reflecting on that faith experience and should never replace the primordially of the experience itself. There is no a priori reason why articulations of this faith cannot transcend the existing theological categories. It is the life-world of the believing community and not the developed theology that is primary. We must always be prepared to accept from experience novelty and diversity that does not fit our theological categories or epistemological models, graphs, and logics. Theologies and philosophies follow the *Erlebnis*, they cannot confine it.

The primary factor in this ongoing history of the understanding of Christian faith is the transcendental act of faith or of religious experience itself. This is the unchanging "source" of development in understanding. Dogma is not the source. Faith transcends all past formulations of its content. . . . But since faith is not contained by dogma, we must be prepared for an element of creativeness in the present with regard to its understanding. . . . Theology begins from reflection on present experience and not from past dogma.<sup>26</sup>

## II

Recognizing the limitations of schemata proposed to explain in rational terms the synchronic and diachronic conceptual diversity of today's philosophical world is not to disparage them. They should be accepted as helpful in interpreting our experience and vastly superior to the previous attempts, which tended toward the unacceptable extremes of absolutism and relativism. This is perhaps their chief gain and brightest promise for theology.

To illustrate the value of framework-transposition theories for theology, their contribution to the current theological concern with problems of progress, pluralism, and the role of the magisterium can be adumbrated. These problems concern relationships: the relation of new and novel theologies with the traditional, the relation of diverse contemporary theologies with each other, and the relation of theologies and the magisterium.

### *Progress in Theology*

No one denies progress in theology. The crucial question is: just how radical a progress is acceptable in a theology claiming to be the continuation of a tradition rooted in divine revelation? Some theologies have understood progress in theology and dogma "as a system of logical relations and consequences of the basic data of faith (*articuli fidei*)

<sup>26</sup> Colm O'Grady, "Change in Theology," *Louvain Studies* 4 (1973) 213 f.

projected separately and in succession onto the stream of time.”<sup>27</sup> In this view, criticized by Rahner, no really new theological or dogmatic concepts emerge. Progress is understood as developing the truth within the usually unacknowledged conceptual framework. It is the passage from implicit to explicit, imprecise to precise, incomplete to complete. The only advance is by enlargement of the tradition and adaptation of its truth to a particular time and culture.

Lately a growing number of theologians feel that this view of progress is too narrow. They now admit the “unfolding” of new concepts, that is, true doctrinal development. Their theory, however, according to Rahner, runs as follows: “once these concepts are there, they acquire a fixed and final character, by virtue of which they are removed from the situation of perpetual openness to the future in history, and stand like fixed stars, immobile and unquestionable, shining down on the future history of theology.”<sup>28</sup> Accepted theological concepts, especially when promoted to the status of dogma, become, in this view, absolute and normative; they enjoy eternal, immutable, definitive validity.

An example of this position can be found in a recent article by Frederick Crowe on the development of dogma.<sup>29</sup> In his view, a dogmatic truth is never really new but “previously there as part of the furniture of the mind, undifferentiated, imprecise.” It is promoted to the level of dogmatic truth and “becomes normative for the later Church.” “There is dogma; it is normative, the core of our faith and the basis of theology. . . .”<sup>30</sup> Progress in the past has been limited to the promotion of

<sup>27</sup> Rahner, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>29</sup> Frederick Crowe, “Dogma versus the Self-Correcting Process of Learning,” *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 31 (1970) 605-24.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 615, 620, 623. Compare this position with Rahner’s claim that “the changes which have appeared during the last hundred years up until the most recent time cannot all be included under the heading of ‘the transition from the implicit to the explicit’, from the lesser to the more precise, or as the simple addition of new supplementary insights” (Rahner, *op. cit.*, p. 78). Bernard Lonergan is the source for Crowe’s position. Although Lonergan speaks of “the historicity of dogmas,” “dialectic,” and “pluralism and the unity of faith,” his view, as he admits, is essentially that of Vatican I: “I have written a chapter on doctrines without subscribing to any but the doctrine about doctrine set forth in the first Vatican council” (Lonergan, *op. cit.*, p. 332). His theological historicity seems to apply only to cultural contexts and expressions; his theological dialectic consists in recognizing positions and counterpositions, but only to develop the positions and reverse counterpositions by removing in them whatever is incompatible with the position; a true *synthesis* is never attained. J. H. Walgrave’s recent book *Unfolding Revelation* (Philadelphia, 1972), for all its advance, also restricts itself to unfolding the initial essential perfection of doctrine. In a recent article Walgrave summarized his position as follows: “There is room in Christian thought for a plurality of theologies in different cultures and different centuries. But . . . Christian language, theological or not, is based upon a set of dogmas that are for ever the



dogma from the imprecise to the precise, and progress in the future is restricted by the established dogmatic precisions of the present.

More recently, however, some theologians have been unhappy with the notion of development in doctrine and are suggesting other theories of theological and dogmatic advance. Rahner seems to be moving in this direction when he wonders "why should not new concepts be formed from these explanations in the course of their historical evolution, to overtake and *replace* the concepts explained in former times, not declaring their meaning to have been false but transcending the meaning in a new concept?"<sup>31</sup> This view allows new concepts to be introduced and obsolete ones replaced.

Avery Dulles makes the same point in even stronger terms. "Once a dogmatic formula is hammered out, it must, according to the popular conception, remain forever. If it states a revealed truth, why should it ever be changed?"<sup>32</sup> Now, since the meaning of words changes in different times and places, many modern theologians would allow different words to be used for the expression of established dogmatic concepts. There are times, Dulles feels, when this is sufficient, but there are other times when a "reconceptualization" is needed.

It is an oversimplification, therefore, to say that dogmas are irreformable. In principle, every dogmatic statement is subject to reformulation. At times it may be sufficient to reclothe the old concepts in new words that, for all practical purposes, have the same meanings. But in other cases the consecrated formula will reflect an inadequate understanding. In order to bring out the deeper and divinely revealed intended meaning, which alone is inseparable from faith, it may be necessary to discard the human concepts as well as the words of those who first framed the dogma.<sup>33</sup>

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same because they condition the possibility of right thinking about the mystery of God's condescendence and our salvation" ("Change in Christian Dogmatic Language," *Louvain Studies* 4 [1973] 252). This position can also be found in recent Vatican documents. The *Declaration in Defense of the Catholic Doctrine on the Church against Certain Errors of the Present Day* speaks of the treasure of divine revelation contained in Scripture and the apostolic tradition as the source of faith and morals. Teachings are drawn from this treasure by the pope and the bishops and are "necessarily immune from error," and present doctrines are "to be held irrevocably." "Therefore the objects of Catholic faith—which are called dogmas—necessarily are and always have been the unalterable norm both for faith and for theological science" (*Mysterium ecclesiae*, June 24, 1973, no. 3).

<sup>31</sup> Rahner, *op. cit.*, p. 71.; emphasis added.

<sup>32</sup> Dulles, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 165 f. There are signs that the notion of dogma's historicity is receiving recognition by the magisterium. *Mysterium ecclesiae* (1973) enumerates four observations relevant to the historical condition affecting the expression of revelation: (1) the meaning of the pronouncements of faith depends partly on historical languages; (2) dogmatic truth is sometimes first expressed only incompletely and then receives a fuller and more perfect

This conceptual newness, as Dulles points out, is often difficult to detect. Even though theology and the Church have actually reversed themselves on a number of positions over the years, "in many cases the faithful are not aware that the doctrine is being changed. Roman documents have a way of making it appear, whenever they say something new, that they are just clarifying what has always been taught."<sup>34</sup>

A theologian operating with traditional theories of human understanding will judge positions advocating doctrinal replacement and innovation untenable and dangerous. They seem to threaten the permanence of doctrine and the implicit omniscience of the deposit of faith. He would see no way of preserving continuity of truth and identity of tradition if some dogmatic concepts were dropped and others introduced.

At this point the superiority of theories allowing continuity even with conceptual replacement and novelty becomes clear. In Toulmin's schema the rejection of obsolete concepts and the introduction of new ones do not compromise the unity of a tradition, for this unity can be maintained by the rational continuity of disciplinary and institutional aims constant in the ecological development. A collective human enterprise, such a theology "takes the form of a rationally developing 'discipline,' in those

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expression as faith and knowledge develop; (3) although new pronouncements only confirm or clarify what is contained in Scripture or the previous expressions of the tradition, they are also usually directed at certain historical problems or errors; (4) even though dogmatic formulas are distinct from the changeable conceptions of a given epoch and can be expressed without them, nevertheless it sometimes happens that they bear traces of such conceptions (cf. no. 5). Although the recognition of historicity in this document would not satisfy all theologians today, it nonetheless represents a definite advance over positions taken less than ten years ago. In the 1965 Encyclical on the Eucharist (*Mysterium fidei*), e.g., we read: "We would never tolerate that the dogmatic formulas used by the ecumenical councils for the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation be judged as no longer appropriate for men of our times. . . . For these formulas, like the others which the Church uses to propose the dogmas of faith, express concepts which are not tied to a certain form of human culture nor to one or other theological school. . . . These formulas are adapted to men of all times and all places. But the most sacred task of theology is, not the invention of new dogmatic formulas to replace old ones, but rather such a defense and explanation of the formulas adopted by the councils as may demonstrate that divine revelation is the source of truths communicated through expressions" (Rome: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1965, pp. 16 f.).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148. Dulles' "reconceptualization" of dogma becomes interesting when applied to the crucial dogma of infallibility, the dogma about dogma. What would it look like if it were reconceptualized today? Dulles suggests: "If formulated for the first time today, the definition of infallibility would probably sound very different. Perhaps the word 'infallibility' would not be used; almost certainly the confusing term 'irreformable' would be omitted" (*ibid.*, p. 206). The growing tendency, which we have noted in this paper, to reject the notion of development as an adequate paradigm to explain the actual (and desirable) reversals, new departures, and alternative structures found in the history and contemporary situation of theology has been noted by Paul Misner, "A Note on the Critique of Dogmas," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 34 (1973) 690-700.

cases where men's shared commitment to a sufficiently agreed set of ideals leads to the development of an isolable and self-defining repertory of procedures; and where those procedures are open to further modifications so as to deal with problems arising from the incomplete fulfillment of those disciplinary ideals."<sup>35</sup>

The other two theories also account for progress that is more than developmental. Heelan's quantum logic allows outmoded concepts to be bypassed and new ones introduced. His schema has the advantage of being dialectical (Toulmin's is more linear) and makes use of the ability of the dialectic to preserve obsolete concepts as integral stages in the developing lattice.<sup>36</sup> Brumbaugh's graph, though basically a static analysis, does lend itself to a progressive interpretation in that all the examples enumerated above can be understood as involving historical sequence as well as logical reversal. Working with theories such as these, the theologian would not be upset by Rahner's claim that new teachings sometimes occur (Rahner believes there was a time when the Immaculate Conception was not known<sup>37</sup>) or Dulles' suggestion that such dogmas as original sin, transubstantiation, and the virginal conception of Jesus are being reconceptualized.<sup>38</sup> He would know that conceptual innovation and replacement do not destroy a continuity understood in terms of intellectual ecology, graphic reversals, or context logic.

### *Plurality and Theology*

The problem of plurality is not radically different from that of progress; both deal with diversity, one diachronically and the other synchronically. Hence, once real conceptual shifts in the tradition are accepted, there is no reason why there could not be a simultaneous dogmatic pluralism today. "If one and the same faith can be differently formulated for different historical epochs, a similar variety may be tolerated for different cultures in a single chronological period."<sup>39</sup>

The simultaneity of diverse dogmatic conceptualizations does, how-

<sup>35</sup> Toulmin, *op. cit.*, p. 359. Toulmin does not mention theology in his book, so our presentation is by extrapolation. Moreover, he distinguishes various rational activities as "compact" (the natural sciences), "diffuse" and "would-be" (psychology and sociology), "nondisciplinable" (ethics and philosophy). It is not clear where he would want to locate theology. He does maintain, however, that his schema applies at least in general outline to all forms of the rational enterprise, even the nondisciplinable.

<sup>36</sup> Dulles makes an interesting remark in this regard: "With suitable qualifications one may apply to the development of dogma the Hegelian triad of affirmation, negation, and resolution. The defined dogma may not be directly negated in the precise sense in which it was asserted, but a qualified negation, in terms of a new sociocultural context, may lead to a further development, or resolution, on a more comprehensive level" (*op. cit.*, pp. 206 f.).

<sup>37</sup> Rahner, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>38</sup> Dulles, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

ever, raise a particular problem: just how deep can doctrinal differences run within the same faith community at any one time? It is one thing to recognize a sometimes tortuous series of gropings as the tradition developed; it is quite another to be confronted with fundamental theological diversity in the community today. To put the question in the sharpest possible terms, could logically irreconcilable dogmas be admitted within one and the same Church at the same time? Dulles raises just this question and concludes "it is difficult to see why not."<sup>40</sup> The example he presents is all the more interesting because of its obvious ecumenical impact. It is drawn from Otto Pesch's *Theologie der Rechtfertigung bei Martin Luther und Thomas von Aquin* and concerns the well-known differences between the Thomistic and Lutheran theories of justification. Thomas, approaching the problem from a medieval point of view that tended to be abstractive and logical, insisted that justification obliterated sinfulness completely by inner renewal. Sin and grace were logical contradictions. A man is either justified or a sinner; the justified man is no longer sinful, no matter how unworthy he may feel. Luther, approaching the problem from a more existential point of view that tended to be concrete and dialectical, insisted that the justified man remains a sinner. No matter how full of grace he may be, he must still recognize his unworthiness, must still pray "Lord I am not worthy. . . ." To the Lutheran it is *simul justus et peccator*, but for Trent it is the Thomistic-inspired formula *ex injusto fit justus*.<sup>41</sup>

Now, as Dulles points out, these two very fundamental doctrines are, at least in their present stages of understanding and acceptance, logically irreconcilable. In fact, according to Pesch, they lead to contradictory doctrinal formulations and no amount of interpretation can harmonize them. The situation changes, however, if it is realized that different theological contexts or conceptual frameworks are involved. The Thomistic is rational and abstract, it stresses more what happens objectively, that is, whether a person is saved or damned. The Lutheran is more personal and existential, it stresses what happens subjectively, that is, what the person experiences as a living human being undergoing conversion to sanctification. Once this context plurality is recognized, there is no strict contradiction, for the propositions of one conceptual framework cannot be simply related to the propositions of another. The contexts, not the propositions, have to be related, perhaps on the order of the ecological, cartographical, or context logic models presented above. If this be so, there would be philosophical justification for the conclusion of Pesch and Dulles: "the two modes of theology need each other as critical

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>41</sup> DS 1528.

insurance against falling into mistaken forms," and "the Church of all times needs both, in order to preserve the full tension of Christian reality."<sup>42</sup>

In more recent times there are instances of irreconcilable teachings in the documents of the Church. Positions taken by Vatican II often reflect the plurality already at work in the Catholic tradition. In the critical area of morality, for example, the Declaration on Religious Freedom upholds the more traditional position that the ultimate norms of morality are "the imperatives of divine law." "The highest norm of human life is the divine law—eternal, objective, and universal—whereby God orders, directs, and governs the entire universe and all the ways of the human community by a plan conceived in wisdom and love."<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, discussing the problem of harmonizing conjugal love and respect for life, teaches that morality is to be determined by standards grounded on "the nature of the human person and his acts." "Therefore, when there is question of harmonizing conjugal love with the responsible transmission of life, the moral aspect of any procedure does not depend solely on sincere intentions or on an evaluation of motives. It must be determined by objective moral standards. These, based on the nature of the human person and his acts, preserve the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love."<sup>44</sup>

Prescinding from the particular moral problem of human sexuality and reproduction, the issue here, of course, is the ultimate source of moral norms. Is it the law of God or the nature of the human person? Do we begin with divine imperatives or the person as the norm and criterion? The fact that the personalists include insights from revelation and see communion with God as the ultimate fulfilment of the person, while divine-law advocates are sensitive to the conscience and freedom of the person, does not resolve the fundamental irreconcilable opposition of the positions. Only when it is realized that two different philosophical and

<sup>42</sup> Pesch, *op. cit.*, cited in Dulles, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

<sup>43</sup> *Dignitatis humanae*, no. 3.

<sup>44</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, no. 51. The "acts" mentioned here should not be understood in the merely biological sense, as Aquinas and most of the tradition have held. In fact, the document corrects the Thomistic position whereby "those things are said to belong to the natural law which nature has taught to all the animals, such as sexual intercourse" (*Summa theologiae*, 1/2, q. 94, a. 2). In place of this biological conception of sexuality, the Council notes: "The sexual characteristics of man and the human faculty of reproduction wonderfully exceed the dispositions of lower forms of life" (no. 50). Hence the acts are to be understood in a personal way, as acts proper to a person as such in all his specifically human dimensions of freedom, dignity, existential concern for his spouse and children, his state in life and material situation, the needs of his particular country, the world, and the Church, as the document enumerates in the same section (no. 50).

theological contexts are involved, a tradition steeped in notions of the Platonic transcendent good, Aristotelian nature, and Stoic logos influencing the traditional authors and phenomenological personalism influencing the authors of *Gaudium et spes*, can the source of the difficulty be seen and the possibility of reconciliation by some context transposition be achieved.<sup>45</sup>

As an example of how this would work; Heelan's nondistributive lattice can be employed. Let A stand for the divine-imperative context and B for the personalist context.  $A \otimes B$  would be the primitive concepts and language developed from the chiasm of divine commandments and the love ethic found in the Scriptures and tradition. A would then represent the divine-law tradition and A' everything that could be said within this tradition about personalism. B would represent personalism and B' everything in this tradition that could be said about divine law. A' represents a linear growth and expansion of the A tradition, B' the same in the B tradition, but the A and A' languages are incompatible with the B and B' languages. However, when placed on the lattice, they can be seen as complementary subsets of an as yet undeveloped  $A \oplus B$  language in which everything expressed in both traditions, and more, can be said.

The irreconcilable but complementary concepts of divine-law and personalist moralities could also be mapped on Brumbaugh's graph. They would be related by a reversal of modality in that the divine-imperative adherents see God as the norm and criterion and show the place of the person in light of God's law, while the personalists see person as the norm and criterion and "demonstrate the place of God in [their] existence."<sup>46</sup> And, of course, these different concepts of morality could be easily located in Toulmin's schema as well.

<sup>45</sup> One of the major authors of *Gaudium et spes* was Louis Janssens of Louvain. His commentary on the document from a personalist standpoint is therefore very valuable. It can be found in many of his publications, among them "Moral Problems Involved in Responsible Parenthood," *Louvain Studies* 1 (1966) 1-18; "Chasteté conjugale suivant l'encyclique *Casti connubii* et selon la constitution pastorale *Gaudium et spes*," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 42 (1966) 513-54; "Les grandes étapes de la morale chrétienne du mariage," in *Aux sources de la morale conjugale*, ed. Philippe Delhay and Gustave Thils (Paris, 1967); *Mariage et fécondité*, especially chap. 4, "Le courant personaliste et l'acte de la personne suivant la constitution *Gaudium et spes*" (Paris, 1967); "Considerations on *Humanae vitae*" (in which he noted that "the encyclical suggests as a norm of morality, respect for biological functions and processes, and does not mention the personalist norm of *Gaudium et Spes*"), *Louvain Studies* 2 (1969) 231-53; and "Personalist Morals," *ibid.* 3 (1970) 5-16. In this last article he states succinctly his fundamental position: "The term 'personalist morals' describes a conception of morality which takes as its norm or criterion the human person" (p. 5.). "We begin with the person as norm and criterion." "The human person is the norm and criterion of morals" (p. 16.).

<sup>46</sup> Janssens, "Personalist Morals," p. 16.

*Theologies and the Magisterium*

A very important question concerns the impact that theories of innovative progress and doctrinal diversity would have on our understanding of the teaching authority in a church. Toulmin's ecological approach shows great promise as a model in this area. A position such as his would stress the fact that the theological enterprise is not simply disciplinary, it is sociological as well. The magisterium is therefore included in the theological enterprise and is not to be seen, as so often is the case, as distinct from it or even in opposition to it. The teaching of the magisterium embodies the work of the theologian for the community and, since future theologians come from the community, it is a powerful force shaping the sociological aspect of the enterprise. It provides an important part of the institutional dimension which must be added to the intellectual aspect of theological effort. The development of the sociological factor follows the same ecological selectivity as the intellectual development; power shifts occur in both cases.

In this view theology becomes the rational enterprise embracing the scientific work itself and the magisterial authority of the institution in a chiasmatic relationship. "At the least, then, we are driven back to the idea of a science as being, first and foremost, an integrated rational enterprise, and of the intellectual and institutional features of science as complementary aspects of that single enterprise."<sup>47</sup> In this integrative approach, the discipline is rational and innovative, the magisterium political and conservative. The theologian discovers, the magisterium teaches.<sup>48</sup>

This understanding of the theological enterprise, however, introduces a rather startling problem. If the magisterium is an integral part of the theological enterprise, and if synchronic and diachronic diversity is acknowledged in theology, then theological plurality would naturally entail magisterial plurality. In other words, it would entail the recognition of several magisteria in one church. To a believer accustomed to thinking of *the* magisterium of his church, this may come as something of a shock. Plurality of theologies may be acceptable, but never a plurality of teaching offices within the same church.

Yet there are signs that respectable theologians are beginning to think

<sup>47</sup> Toulmin, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

<sup>48</sup> "The disciplinary aspect of intellectual history is rational, justificatory and prospective, the professional aspect causal, explanatory and retrospective, and, in the nature of the case, these two aspects are complementary rather than equivalent. In the course of any rational enterprise, experience of previous explanatory achievements is continually being mobilized to influence current intellectual decisions, while the results of those decisions are, in turn, modifying the rational verdict on our accumulated experience" (*ibid.*, p. 311).

of just this possibility. If many conceptual frameworks are really at work, it seems difficult to see how one simple teaching authority could function effectively. Inevitably its philosophical presuppositions would render it incapable of understanding and evaluating with sensitivity and appreciation theologies originating in frames of reference other than its own. The only solution, then, once a real theological plurality is acknowledged, is a plurality of magisteria. Rahner suggests this very idea:

If we put the matter at its most acute: how is the bearer of teaching authority in the Church to give his verdict on a particular theology if he *is not* and *cannot* really be acquainted with it?—if he cannot really understand it except by knowing the profane presuppositions on which it is based and which he does not share? One may ask whether in the future there should not be ideally as many “teaching authorities” as there are theologies.<sup>49</sup>

Should the plurality of teaching authorities actually develop, chaos need not result. Rational continuity (though not logical identity) could be preserved if the magisterial authority is considered as an important part of the sociological aspect of the discipline and if continuity is conceived in light of theories such as those discussed in this paper. The different magisteria, as an aspect of the total enterprise, could be joined by a common faith and set of disciplinary aims, pools of variants, resources, etc., or by a cosmographical mapping, or as complementary phases developing side by side in a dialectical lattice or by some other way. In this way the identity of a tradition can be maintained even though different magisterial frameworks are embedded within it.

#### CONCLUSION

Progress in theology has long been generally understood as developing *the* truth within *the* traditional conceptual framework. Change in theology was thought of in only one way: a linear enlargement of the tradition and adaptation of its truth to a particular time and culture. The core of the theological tradition was considered to be a nucleus of truths so intimately connected with revelation that all progress must remain within this framework and all pluralism be integrated with it. The possibility of creating alternative descriptive languages and concepts to describe the faith experienced by the person in the community was not generally recognized until recently, even though from our vantage point today it seems clear that such developments were in fact occurring. The Aristotelian and Platonic traditions, for example, probably represent truly alternative and complementary frameworks.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Rahner, *op. cit.*, p. 60; emphasis Rahner's.

<sup>50</sup> A recent paper has pointed out that the soul-body theory of St. Thomas, later Thomists, and Catholic Christianity in general has been ambiguous, even to the point of



It is quite understandable that, forced to confront theological development in terms of the ancient and medieval schema of substantial and accidental change, the scholastic theologian really had no choice but to see theological change as accidental. Aristotle's substantial change gave rise to a radically new substance, and the theologian could never admit that the substantial form of his tradition was replaced with a new form substantially different from the original. Hence progress was understood in terms of accidental modification, the only other form of change.

Such a position means that the nucleus of affirmations and truths must ever remain the same and be couched in some kind of supracultural formulation and definition. Theological progress, whether it understands these truths as definitive or as heuristic, is restricted to the logical development of what was inherent and implicit in the original nucleus. An extreme form of this view was manifested in the approach whereby theological progress was understood in terms of a syllogistic conclusion where at least one premise, and perhaps both, were considered revealed.

All this had the unhappy consequence of making revelation propositional and of confining its development to the deductive logic of medieval syllogisms. Today's theology has gone far beyond this propositional understanding of revelation to a much more personal approach, but what is not always noted is that today's philosophy has gone far beyond the classical deductive syllogism. It strongly suggests that intellectual progress may better be understood in terms of ecology than of logic, or in terms of a new kind of logic such as the quantum logic developed by Birkhoff and von Neumann, which is the inspiration for context logic. At any rate, what is obviously needed is a theory of progress and pluralism that will give the theologian categories sufficiently nuanced to allow more than accidental modification of the tradition and yet not destroy its identity and continuity.

The approaches adumbrated in this paper are intended to suggest to the theologian some such current developments in theories concerning the growth of knowledge. These may enable him to expand his understanding of synchronic and diachronic theological diversity in such a way that real pluralism and truly creative progress can be accepted without compromise to his faith. Only if theological diversity can be

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containing, perhaps, "in principle" some irresolvable difficulties. These difficulties occur because Thomas frequently moves among three traditions or thought systems: Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Christianity. "Now, a statement that has meaning in one system cannot simply be transferred to another system or network of beliefs without undergoing serious qualifications, if not radical changes in meaning. Yet St. Thomas has failed to take into consideration such changes in meaning when attempting to amalgamate these thought systems" (Gerald Kreyche, "The Soul-Body Problem in St. Thomas," *New Scholasticism* 46 [1972] 466-84).

rendered intelligible by some form of ecological, cartographical, or logical articulation can the man conscious of one faith flowing from a historical tradition and united community embrace the “irreversible plurality of theologies” with peace of mind.