

## POSTFOUNDATIONALISM AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY: A RESPONSE TO JEROME STONE

by *J. Wentzel van Huyssteen*

*Abstract.* In my recent work I argued that the religion and science dialogue is most successful when done locally and contextually. However, I also argued against theology's epistemic isolation in a pluralist, postmodern world, and for a postfoundationalist notion of human rationality that reveals the interdisciplinary, public nature of all theological reflection. I now want to explore the possibility that, when we look at what the prehistory of the human mind reveals about the biological roots of all human rationality, some forms of contemporary evolutionary epistemology may actually hold the key to understanding the kind of cognitive fluidity that enables true interdisciplinary reflection. Philosophically the religion and science dialogue benefits from this move when a postfoundationalist notion of rationality re-describes the dynamic interaction of our various disciplinary dialogues with one another as a form of transversal reasoning. Transversality in this sense justifies and urges an acknowledgment of multiple patterns of interpretation as one moves across the borders and boundaries of different disciplines.

*Keywords:* authentic pluralism; biological roots of human rationality; cognitive fluidity; constructive postmodernism; evolutionary epistemology; interdisciplinary reflection; postfoundationalist rationality; public theology; transversal reasoning; wide reflective equilibrium.

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During the past eight years of teaching at Princeton Theological Seminary, I have increasingly come to recognize, and ultimately redefine, the so-called theology and science debate as an important subset of a much larger and more complex intellectual challenge: the nature and status of interdisciplinary reflection and how theology might or might not fit into this multidisciplinary venture. Currently I am doing research for a new project on

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[*Zygon*, vol. 35, no. 2 (June 2000).]

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evolution, knowledge, and faith. In this work I am picking up arguments from my recently published research projects not only by developing them further but also by exploring the ramifications of what might happen if these very different arguments are fused into a more comprehensive argument about the nature of the religion and science dialogue. Jerome Stone is right: in *The Shaping of Rationality: Toward Interdisciplinarity in Theology and Science* (1999) I argued *against* theology's epistemic isolation in a pluralist, postmodern world and *for* a postfoundationalist notion of rationality that reveals the interdisciplinary, public nature of all theological reflection. In *Duet or Duel? Theology and Science in a Postmodern World* (1998) I proposed that some forms of contemporary evolutionary epistemology may actually hold the key to understanding this ability for public theological reflection: by revealing the biological roots of all human rationality, evolutionary epistemology may facilitate a more comprehensive and integrative approach to human knowledge and to interdisciplinary reflection as such. In this book I also made the case that precisely in the interdisciplinary conversation between theology and the sciences of cosmology and evolutionary biology there are rich resources for retrieving an integrative approach to human knowledge that would be neither modernist nor foundationalist in nature. Moreover, I argued in this book that theological reflection is radically shaped not only by its social, historical, and cultural embeddedness but also by the biological roots of human rationality. Especially in contemporary evolutionary epistemology we find surprising attempts to facilitate precisely the most difficult challenge of a constructive form of postmodern critique: the need for a more comprehensive and integrative approach to the problem of human knowledge that will not again totalize our views of human rationality into new and oppressive metanarratives.

In *Duet or Duel?* I argued that evolutionary epistemology may facilitate a postfoundationalist notion of rationality that could actually take us beyond the confines of traditional disciplinary boundaries and modernist cultural domains. As Jerome Stone correctly observed, this notion of a postfoundationalist rationality emerged as the central theme of *The Shaping of Rationality* (1999). An interdisciplinary notion of rationality allows us to re-vision human rationality along the following lines:

First, it acknowledges contextuality and the embeddedness of all our reflection in human culture and, therefore, in specific scientific or confessional traditions.

Second, it takes seriously the epistemically crucial role of interpreted experience or experiential understanding and the way that tradition shapes the epistemic as well as nonepistemic values that inform our reflection, our thoughts about God, and what some of us believe to be God's presence in the world.

Third, it allows us to explore freely and critically the experiential and interpretative roots of our beliefs from within our deep commitments and

to discover patterns in our lives and thought that might be consonant with the biblical paradigm. The persuasiveness of these patterns will be taken up in critical theological reflection, where their problem-solving ability will be evaluated and judged in an interpersonal and cross-contextual conversation.

Fourth, rationality itself can now be seen as a skill that enables us to gather and bind together the patterns of our interpreted experience through rhetoric, articulation, and discernment. It is on this point that *transversality* replaces modernist notions of universality in a distinct move—beyond static notions of rationality—to see human reason as dynamic and practical in the way we use it to converse with one another through critique, interpretation, narration, and rhetoric. In *The Shaping of Rationality* I argued that philosophers now speak of the “transversal performance” of rationality precisely when referring to this dynamic interaction of our dialogues with one another. The notion of transversality has now indeed become popular in various disciplines, as the following examples show:

- in mathematics, where a line intersects two or more lines or surfaces without logical contradiction or coincidence
- in physiology, where ‘transversality’ is used to describe the networking and the overlay of bands of fibers in the human body
- in philosophy, to indicate the dynamics of consciousness (and our remarkable ability to move between domains of intelligence with a high degree of cognitive fluidity) and the interplay of social practices
- in pastoral care, where a good example, as Calvin Schrag (1992) has indicated, would be the multilayered dialogue of a team of diverse experts working with a patient in a hospital.

Also in the relationship between theology and psychology, as Donald Capps (1999) has argued, transversality identifies different but equally legitimate ways of looking at issues or disciplines. The dialogue can thus be seen to be on convergent paths moving toward an imagined vanishing point: different voices are therefore not in contradiction or in danger of assimilating one another but are dynamically interactive with one another.

In these multidisciplinary uses of the concept of transversality there emerge distinct family resemblances: the interweaving of fibers, the dynamics of consciousness, and the interplay of social practices are all expressed in a metaphor that points to a sense of lying across, extending over, intersecting, meeting, and conveying without becoming identical. Transversality thus provides a philosophical window to the wider world of communication through thought and action. It also represents a strong reaction against rationalist/modernist impulses to unify all faculties of knowledge into a seamless unity and against the positivistic impulse to claim science as a superior form of knowing. It clearly also represents a protest against the imperialism of all kinds of ideological thought: in this sense it is a vibrant

and constructive postmodernist move to integrate all our ways of knowing without totalizing them in any modernist sense.

The focus, then, is on the dialogue between various, even dissenting, partners and as such fosters a concern for otherness. It reveals the power play hidden in a variety of our social forms: the power of men over women, of one race over another, of psychiatry over the mentally ill, and so on. Transversality, therefore, justifies and urges an acknowledgment of multiple patterns of interpretation as one moves across the borders and boundaries of different disciplines. Finally, it represents a distinct move from seeing the human self as a pure epistemological point to seeing the self as resituated in the space of communicative praxis. As such it establishes the necessity of a multiplicity of voices and perspectives in our ongoing conversations and should foster genuine theological pluralism.

Finally, therefore, a postfoundationalist notion of rationality claims to point beyond the boundaries of the local community, group, tradition, or culture toward a plausible form of interdisciplinary conversation. True interdisciplinary reflection in theology will be achieved only when the conversation proceeds not in terms of imposed "universal" rules, nor in terms of purely *ad hoc* rules, but in terms of the intersubjective agreements we reach through persuasive rhetoric and responsible judgments, and where both the strong personal convictions so typical of Christian commitment and the public voice of theology are acknowledged in cross-disciplinary conversation.

Postfoundationalism in theological reflection thus claims to be a viable third epistemological option beyond the extremes of absolutism and the relativism of extreme forms of pluralism. And in developing this notion, the "fabric" of my postfoundationalist notion of rationality was woven by trying to demonstrate what this kind of interdisciplinary conversation would actually look like if one literally went into a multilayered conversation with a whole array of important voices in philosophy, theology, and the sciences. Ultimately, the overriding concern was as follows: while we always come to our cross-disciplinary conversations with strong beliefs, commitments, and even prejudices, epistemological postfoundationalism enables us to identify the shared resources of human rationality in different modes of knowledge and then to reach beyond the boundaries of our own traditional communities in cross-contextual, cross-disciplinary conversation. In this way an interdisciplinary, public space was cleared for thinking between more than one knowledge system or reasoning strategy and for finding strong links between often very diverse disciplines.<sup>1</sup>

On this point, too, Stone gets it exactly right: although we cannot think and act except through experiential understanding and an engagement with tradition, our task is also to stand in a *critical* relation to our respective traditions. This implies a conscious step beyond the confines of particular traditions and is warranted by a revised notion of rationality, where the

task and identity of theology are revealed as definitively shaped by theology's location in the living context of not only tradition but interdisciplinary reflection. The constructive postmodern challenge always to critique our own (often foundationalist) assumptions certainly means that there are no universal standards of rationality against which we can measure other beliefs or competing research traditions. The fact that we lack a clear and "objective" criterion for judging the adequacy or problem-solving ability of one tradition over another should not, however, leave us with a radical relativism or even with an easy pluralism. Our ability to make rational judgments and share them with various and different epistemic communities also means that we should be able to communicate with one another meaningfully through conversation, deliberation, and evaluation in an ongoing process of collective assessment. Sharing our views and judgments with those inside and outside our epistemic communities can therefore lead to conversation, which we should enter not just to persuade but also to learn from. Such a style of inquiry can provide a way of thinking about rationality that respects authentic pluralism—it does not force us all to agree or to ever share the same assumptions, but it finds ways we can talk with one another and criticize our traditions while standing in them.

Probing the problem of interdisciplinary reflection in a postfoundationalist mode leads to the important discovery that human rationality can never be adequately housed within any single specific reasoning strategy or discipline. To recognize that science as well as religious reflection may actually share in the rich resources of human rationality will be to open our eyes to the exciting fact that human rationality itself only exists in being operative *between* our different modes of knowledge and in linking together the different domains of our lives as well as different disciplines and different reasoning strategies.

*The Shaping of Rationality*, therefore, should be read as an attempt to refigure the interdisciplinary nature and cross-contextual task of theological reflection. This book also is written with the strong conviction that talking about the nature and task of Christian theology today means talking about the complex set of values that shapes the rationality of theological and scientific reflection. The quest for the rationality of specifically theological reflection was presented in terms of two rather strong claims: first, the rationality of theology is definitively shaped by its location in the living context of interdisciplinary reflection; second, this interdisciplinary context is—epistemologically, at least—significantly shaped by the dominant presence and influence of scientific rationality in our culture. Theologians, often focusing on the unique hermeneutics of theological reflection, are notorious for neglecting this profound epistemological challenge, ignoring or failing to recognize the pervasive influence of the sciences on the epistemic and other values that shape theological rationality today.

For theology, an all-important focus of its dialogue with our contemporary culture will be found in two seemingly unrelated issues: on the one hand, the tremendous problems that arise if theology should choose to abandon its interdisciplinary, cross-contextual obligations and retreat to the insular comfort of sectarian notions of theological rationality; on the other hand, contemporary theology's enduring but uneasy relationship with what is often perceived to be a superior scientific rationality. Both of these challenges, however, look different when we realize that theology and the sciences have been profoundly influenced by postmodern culture. This gives an unexpected and complicating twist to the centuries-old theology and science problem: not only theology but also postmodern science and postmodern philosophy of science have moved away quite dramatically from positivist and technocentric conceptions of scientific rationality, with its closely aligned beliefs in linear progress, guaranteed success, deterministic predictability, absolute truths, and some uniform, standardized form of knowledge.

As I argued in both of my last books, some contemporary philosophers of science now claim a postmodern philosophy of science which—along with feminist interpretations of science—rejects all global interpretations of science as well as the power play implied by scientific progress and focuses instead on trust in local scientific practice. This kind of postmodernism in science not only sharply deconstructs and rejects the autonomy and cultural dominance of especially the natural sciences as the accepted paradigm for rationality in our time but also seriously challenges and deconstructs any attempt to develop a meaningful and intelligible relationship between science and Christian theology. It is clear that the *problem of rationality* thus emerges as the heart of the current dialogue between theology and the sciences. Furthermore, trying to find some kind of meaningful epistemological link between theology and the sciences also directly confronts us with the *problem of interdisciplinarity* as we attempt to bring together two modes of knowledge as diverse as theology and science.

As I develop my new research project I will try to fuse these various claims from my recent books into a broader and more integrated argument. In doing so I will argue the following three important points that should serve as a case study for the interdisciplinary dialogue between theology and science.

*Thesis 1. The prehistory of the human mind and the evolution of consciousness and self-awareness reveal the remarkable cognitive fluidity of our mental abilities. It is this cognitive fluidity that generates imagination and creativity as well as the capacity for symbolic thought: the ability to generate complex mental symbols and to manipulate them into new combinations. This cognitive ability holds the key to our species' exceptional creative abilities and to the emergence of science, art, and religion.*

In this section I will look at some of the evidence from evolutionary

biology, paleontology, archaeology, and cognitive psychology and at what these disciplines tell us about the evolution of a creature called *Homo sapiens*, who is, of course, none other than us. Our ancestors have remarkably emerged into self-awareness and intelligence with an increasing capacity for consciousness, the possibility for moral responsibility, and the yearning and creative capacity for religious fulfillment. Human intelligence should therefore be seen as the product of a long and complex process of biological evolution. However, I also will argue that although biological evolution tells us how human minds arose and came to acquire their talents and capacities, what we *do* with them is explained only by cultural evolution. While biology can explain the emergence of the human mind and of that unique ability we call rationality, the unique character of our use of this ability for rational thought lies beyond the range of biology. A Darwinian account of the development of human rationality leaves open the wider scope for purpose and meaning and, therefore, for religious faith: natural selection cannot shut the door on issues it simply cannot address. A Darwinian account of the origin of mind does not—and by its very nature cannot—conflict with intentionality and purpose, because different things are at issue. An acceptance of the biological origins of human rationality thus leaves ample scope for the development of meaning, values, and purpose in the cultural domain of our thought and action. Just the mere fact that our self-conscious brains seem to be hardwired for cognitive fluidity, and can easily move between widely diverse intellectual domains, holds a lot of promise for our ability for interdisciplinary reflection on a cultural level.

*Thesis 2. Biology may be able to explain the emergence of the human mind and that unique ability we call rationality. It is evolutionary epistemology, with a special focus on the prehistory of the human mind, however, that helps us to understand that our unique use of the ability for rational thought lies beyond the range of biology. It also reveals a direct link between the fact that (on a biological level) our brains are hardwired for cognitive fluidity and that (on a cultural level) we have the creative ability for interdisciplinary reflection.*

Here I will argue that theological reflection is radically shaped not only by its social, historical, and cultural contexts but also by the biological roots of human rationality. In contemporary evolutionary epistemology we find a new and surprising proposal for a more comprehensive and integrated approach to the problem of human knowledge. Evolutionary epistemology, rightly understood, reveals the biological roots of all human rationality and that our brains are indeed hardwired for cognitive fluidity. In spite of the fact that the demands of natural selection, as I believe, are relaxed on the level of culture, it should still be possible to link our remarkable ability to move easily between specialized cognitive domains to an interdisciplinary account of our epistemic activities. The basic assumption of evolutionary epistemology is that we humans, like all other living beings, result from evolutionary processes and that, consequently, our

mental capacities are constrained by the mechanisms of biological evolution. I will accept, at least in a minimalist sense, that all our knowledge, including our scientific and religious knowledge, is grounded in biological evolution. And if human knowledge results from evolution, then the study of evolution will be of extreme importance for an understanding of the phenomenon of knowledge.

I also will show why evolutionary epistemology meets the need for facilitating a postfoundationalist notion of rationality that takes us beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. Evolutionary epistemology should therefore facilitate an interdisciplinary account of all our epistemic activities. I will argue that Darwin (and neo-Darwinism) was right in proposing that metaphysical and religious beliefs in human beings are related to evolutionary processes and that human rationality, therefore, has strong biological roots. I will also argue, however, that although this may explain away deistic notions of God, it does not fully explain religious belief and certainly not faith in God as such.

*Thesis 3. In an open, postfoundationalist conversation, Christian theology—for philosophical, theological, and scientific reasons—should be able to claim a “democratic presence” in interdisciplinary conversation. Theology’s public voice can be revisioned by relocating theological reflection within this broader context of interdisciplinary reflection. On this view theology will share in interdisciplinary standards of rationality, which, although always contextually and socially shaped, will not be hopelessly culture and context bound.*

The final challenge of this new project will be analyzing the impact of the evolutionary origins of knowledge and faith for the broader goal of finding a place for theological reflection within the context of interdisciplinary reflection. If the search for a comprehensive model of human knowledge adequately reveals human rationality as our species’ most distinguishing survival strategy, performatively present in all the various domains of our lives, then the seemingly remote epistemologies of our various reasoning strategies are actually integral parts of webs of theories about the world and ourselves. On this view, then, theology could indeed become an equal partner in a democratic, interdisciplinary conversation between theology and the sciences, where an authentic Christian voice might actually be heard in a postmodern, pluralist situation. This kind of theology will share in interdisciplinary standards of rationality, which, although always socially and contextually shaped, will not be hopelessly culture and context bound: even with widely divergent personal, religious, or disciplinary viewpoints, we still share in the rich resources of human rationality. And because of these shared resources of rationality, we also share an epistemological overlap of beliefs and reasoning strategies that finally may provide a safe space for conversation between theology and other disciplines.

In my most recent work, then, I have argued for a revisioning of theology’s public voice: for the clearing of an interdisciplinary space where not only



are diverse and pluralist forms of theological reflection welcome but also where theology and other disciplines might explore shared concerns and discover possible overlapping epistemological patterns in an ongoing interdisciplinary conversation. Rediscovering the fact that, in spite of our diverse theologies and our pluralist approaches to various reasoning strategies, we still share in the resources of human rationality has opened up the possibility of affirming the creative continuity of our various, diverse traditions: by discovering the shared epistemic resources as well as the interdisciplinary ability for critically evaluating our problem-solving traditions, we are freed from being the fideistic prisoners of our traditions. By allowing ourselves to freely and critically explore the experiential and interpretative roots of all our beliefs in our various domains of knowledge, we theologians too are freed to speak and reflect publicly, but from within personal faith commitments, and in this cross-disciplinary conversation with others in other traditions to discover patterns that may be consonant with, or complementary to, the Christian worldview. In genuine interdisciplinary reflection this should be the definitive move beyond the kind of fideism where our own experiences and explanations are never challenged and the need for transcommunal conversation is never taken seriously.

At this point I want to come back to Jerome Stone's most important challenge. Stone clearly, and correctly, states that the agreement between the two of us includes a desire to find a postpositivist notion of rationality as well as a concept of interpreted experience and the need for some form of experiential adequacy in all forms of rationality. Against this background Stone finds it strange that I would insist that we enter into dialogue with our commitments intact and at the same time criticize him for his own prior commitment to naturalism. Stone certainly is right in that we have a major disagreement in our respective commitments to naturalism or the Christian faith, but he then states that I have never argued the case for theism as the best explanation for this claim. Maybe I should have been more careful in my own statements on this issue. Let me just say that, first of all, I don't necessarily or easily equate "theism"—as a philosophical position—with the Christian faith as such. And second, nothing in my book suggests that I was about to argue for theism as a "better" or even "best" explanation. I argued *not* that we need to try to find ways to "prove" our respective metaphysical positions (Stone wouldn't want that, either) but that in our interpersonal and interdisciplinary dialogues we should through good judgment, rhetoric, and discernment point to the best available reasons why certain notions—or non-notions—of God would be experientially more adequate to the way in which specific religious people live and practice their daily lives of faith within the context of concrete traditions. Maybe Stone and I can still explore in the not too distant future how a comparison of pragmatic arguments for greater experiential adequacy will shape up! In the meantime, the heart of the argument of my

last book most certainly implies that both of us are rationally justified to hold on to our respective beliefs in naturalism and the Christian faith while at the same time carefully managing this “dissensus” through exactly the important points where our arguments and worldviews transversally intersect.

Against this background, then, I want to argue for a theology that would be acutely aware of its deeply interdisciplinary nature and status and of the epistemological obligations that should go with this status. The overall thesis of my project is that a constructive appropriation of some of the epistemological issues raised by the postmodern challenge to theology and the sciences will make it possible, first, to collapse rigid, modernist disciplinary distinctions into more comprehensive interdisciplinary spaces where, second, traditional epistemic boundaries and disciplinary distinctions are blurred precisely because the same kind of interpretative procedures are at work in all our various reasoning strategies, and, third, through a creative fusion of hermeneutics and epistemology, reasoning strategies as distinctive and different as theology and the sciences may be revealed to share the rich resources of human rationality.

A postfoundationalist model of rationality thus enables us to communicate across boundaries, from context to context, from one form of life to another, from one discipline to another. The tentative and shared mutual understanding that we achieve through this, I have named—following various other scholars—a *wide reflective equilibrium*. Optimal understanding, or a wide reflective equilibrium, thus points to the fragile accomplishments of our interpersonal and interdisciplinary communication and establishes the necessity of a multiplicity of voices and perspectives in our ongoing processes of mutual assessment. So, in this wide reflective equilibrium we finally find the safe but fragile public space we have been searching for: a space for shuttling back and forth between deep personal convictions and the principles resulting from responsible interpersonal judgments. The dynamics of a postfoundationalist rationality are thus finally revealed in this fragile process where we strive to attain the most coherent and most consistent sets of beliefs in the interdisciplinary conversation between theology and the sciences. The wide scope of a postfoundationalist notion of rationality thus encompasses the separated cultural domains of modernity (science, morality, art, religion), but it is the dynamics of this process of intercontextual and cross-disciplinary reflection that enables one to move across discourses, effecting a binding and integration of sorts that finally could yield the wide reflective equilibrium of interdisciplinary understanding in reasoning strategies as diverse as theology and the sciences.

On this postfoundationalist view we are also prevented from taking fatal epistemological shortcuts from our various theologies to our many and diverse sciences: in responsible interdisciplinary conversation our already agreed upon principles and background theories can now provide a critical, independent constraint that prevents these principles from being mere

generalizations of our contextual judgments and practices, while at the same time these principles can always be critically questioned. The epistemic goal of a wide reflective equilibrium is therefore truly postfoundationalist because it could never accept any one tradition of responsible judgments, or practices, or principles as foundational. Also, in any theology's conversation with any of the sciences, a postfoundationalist strategy acknowledges that one always starts an interdisciplinary conversation with initial commitments, which could be anything from moral judgments to religious convictions to strong commitments to science or scientific world-views. These disciplinary, philosophical, or religious commitments are often brought into the conversation as principles or rules for discussion. As principles they are in part independent of the strong commitments they express and should actually be able to modify them if interdisciplinary argument and rhetoric should justify that, even as they themselves always remain open to revision.

The epistemic goal of attaining this wide reflective equilibrium in interdisciplinary conversation has far-reaching implications for the religion and science dialogue. On this view genuine religious, theological, and scientific pluralism emerges as normal and natural, and ought to allow for conversations between people from different traditions or cultural domains who may enter the conversation for very different reasons and who may in fact disagree about many issues. This pluralism also allows for a legitimate diversity: the fact that different people have different experiential situations because they come from different traditions, and in addition commit themselves to different research traditions, makes it normal, natural, and rational that they should proceed differently in cognitive, evaluative, and practical matters. We have to accept that also, and maybe especially, in theology, cognitive agreement or consensus is unattainable, and that exactly what Nicholas Rescher called "dissensus tolerance" (1993, 3) could prove to be a positive and constructive part of pluralism in the religion and science dialogue. It is at this point that we reach beyond our specific traditions in cross-contextual conversation, to a shared wide reflective equilibrium where the diversity of our traditions will yield the diversity of our experiences, the diversity of our epistemic situations, the diversities of our values and methodologies. Also in the theology and science dialogue the most sensible posture is to accept the reality of cognitive pluralism within a shared public realm of discourse, to accept the unavailability of consensus, and to work at creating a communal framework or wide reflective equilibrium of thought and action. This is what true coherence is about: dissensus and a variety of opinion provide for the creative enhancement rather than impoverishment of our intellectual culture.

This also means that, even if we lack universal rules for rationality and even if we can never judge the reasonableness of statements and beliefs in

isolation from their cultural or disciplinary contexts, we can still meaningfully engage in cross-contextual evaluation and conversation and give the best available cognitive, evaluative, or pragmatic reasons for the responsible choices we hope to make. True interdisciplinarity in theology and science will be achieved when our conversations proceed not in terms of imposed “universal” rules, nor in terms of purely *ad hoc* rules, but when we identify this interdisciplinary space where strong religious convictions and the public voice of theology are fused in public conversation. A postfoundationalist acknowledgment of the pluralist character of such an ongoing process of collective assessment should open our eyes to how our various traditions, our various discourses, our communities, our sciences, and our practices make up our social and intellectual domains and shape our behavior and our different modes of understanding. Each of our domains of understanding may indeed have its own logic of behavior, but in each the rich resources of human rationality remain.

To talk about the shaping of rationality is therefore not only to talk about accountability, optimal understanding, and responsible judgment but also to reveal the intellectual activity of discernment, judgment, and decision making as a progressive, problem-solving process that takes us closer to exactly the kind of fragile epistemic equilibrium that constitutes interdisciplinary conversation. When responsible, rational judgment is revealed as an effective form of problem solving, the scope of human rationality again goes far beyond the narrow confines of a strictly natural scientific rationality. Linking the role of rational judgment to theory choice and progressive problem solving has made it clear that the adoption of theories or doctrines in nonnatural scientific fields of inquiry does not have to be more arbitrary or more subjective than the use of rational judgment in scientific decision making. And, as I argued in my last book, although scientific rationality often shows itself as a very disciplined and manicured form of human rationality, this kind of problem solving reaches beyond the sciences and already forms part of the everyday or common-sense reasonableness we live by every day. Furthermore, a broadened notion of postfoundationalist rationality has shown that the “intrusion” of seemingly nonscientific factors into the process of theological and even scientific decision making is, or can be, an entirely rational affair. Far from viewing the introduction of philosophical, religious, and moral issues into science as the triumph of prejudice, superstition, and irrationality, postfoundationalist rationality claims that through the role of responsible judgment in interdisciplinary conversation the presence of such elements may be entirely rational. In fact, the suppression of such elements may itself be irrational and prejudicial.

In our quest for the values that shape the rationality of theology and the sciences, a broader and richer notion of human rationality with distinct cognitive, evaluative, and pragmatic resources has thus emerged. Whether

in faith, religion, or theology, or in the various sciences, we normally have good reasons for hanging on to certain beliefs, good reasons for making certain judgments and moral choices, and good reasons for acting in certain ways. In theology, too, rationality implies the ability to give an account, to provide a rationale, for the way one thinks, chooses, acts, and believes. I have therefore claimed that the quest for intelligibility and ultimate meaning in theology as well as in the sciences is inexorably linked to and imbedded in tradition, and that precisely because of this it also is dependent on broader resources than just the purely cognitive. But what does this concretely imply for the religion and science dialogue? At the very least it implies that the assumptions and faith commitments of experienced religious faith are relevant epistemic issues that deserve to be taken seriously in our interdisciplinary discussion with the sciences.

#### NOTE

1. F. LeRon Shults has recently made a strong case for a postfoundationalist approach to theological reflection. For him, too, postfoundationalism is "all about affirming the contextuality of traditions and interpreted experience, without giving up the drive for intersubjective and transcommunal conversation" (Shults 1999, 13), and he affirms my definition of postfoundationalism as a middle way between the dichotomy of modernist foundationalism and postmodern nonfoundationalism. Shults ultimately defines the postfoundationalist task of theology as that of engaging in interdisciplinary dialogue within our postmodern culture while maintaining a commitment to intersubjective, transcommunal theological argumentation for the truth of Christian faith, and at the same time recognizing the provisionality of our historically embedded understandings and culturally conditioned explanations of the Christian tradition and religious experience (1999, 22).

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