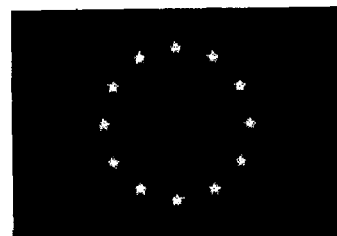


European University Studies



Heinz Streib

Hermeneutics of Metaphor,  
Symbol and Narrative in  
Faith Development Theory



Peter Lang Frankfurt am Main · Bern · New York · Paris

**Hermeneutics of Metaphor, Symbol and Narrative  
in Faith Development Theory**

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## PREFACE

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This book developed from a project in which I have been engaged for several years--a project which can be viewed as an exercise in correlative discussion, if correlation means relating different scientific domains and bringing them together with the expectation of reaching better mutual understanding: 'having grown up' in West German theology and graduated from the University of Tübingen, I 'stepped out' and went overseas to pursue my interest in the psychology of religion and, more specifically, in faith development theory. Thus this book is the result of a 'theological-bilateral' and bilingual encounter. Relating Paul RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective to James FOWLER's theory of faith development still reflects this 'bilateral' movement.

The text is the revised version of my dissertation, which I completed in the Spring of 1989 at Emory University, Atlanta. The dissertation developed from professional and personal contact with extraordinary men and women. Therefore, I wish to express my appreciation and gratitude to a number of them: First, I am extremely thankful to Professor James E. DITTES who, in my 1983/84 year as a foreign S.T.M.-student at Yale Divinity School, encouraged me to apply for the Ph.D. program in Theology & Personality at Emory University. He has been an encouraging dialogue partner and friend during these years. I am particularly grateful to my adviser Professor James W. FOWLER for his consistent encouragement, availability, and important critical help in developing my ideas. He has been a talented teacher who, in the Theology & Personality program and in the Center for Faith Development, introduced me to faith development theory. A special word of thanks must go to Professor Karl Ernst NIPKOW in Tübingen who, due to his pioneering discussion of faith development theory in German-speaking theology, agreed to become a member of the dissertation committee. His supportive encouragement of my ideas, his suggestions for the proposal and for focusing on the hermeneutics of symbols, metaphors, and narratives were of tremendous value.

Special thanks is owed to Professor Romney M. MOSELEY, whose initial encouragement of the dissertation and consultive help on the proposal and the emerging form were of great value to me. I am also indebted to Professor Walter LOWE who, in seminar discussions and many conversations about the dissertation project, has brought the significance of RICOEUR's work to my attention. Additionally, I would like to thank Professor Charles V. GERKIN for his valuable suggestions in the discussions of earlier drafts. Thanks go to Dr. Friedrich SCHWEITZER for his criticism and suggestions in regard to the focal point of the dissertation and for taking many hours of his valuable time to act as a critical reader of Part Three. And finally, I am also very thankful to Susan NURMI-SCHOMERS, who read the manuscript and made suggestions for eliminating grammatical and stylistic errors.

Stuttgart, July 1990

H.S.

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## INTRODUCTION

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Faith is embedded in the context of symbols, metaphors and narratives. Faith means interpretation and being-interpreted. As Paul RICOEUR points out, faith and self-understanding derive from interaction with texts and contexts, faith derives from 'listening,' from 'hearkening.' Being introduced to faith means being introduced to understanding the symbolic world. The development of faith involves changes in interpreting the texts and contexts of our religious tradition. Faith language is essentially metaphoric language. The development of faith not only involves progress and change in understanding metaphors, but it involves our 'being-metamorphosed' by the interaction with texts and contexts. Faith has a unique relation to narrative. If it is true that narrative has 'the power to remake reality,' then interacting with, and 'reading' these narratives--including our own life narrative--enables us to become 'authors' of our own lives as well.

With this focus on the hermeneutics of symbol, metaphor and narrative, this book is a contribution to theory building and research design in the domain of faith development. It is a critique and an advancement of James FOWLER's theory which is informed by RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective. Thus we will engage in a correlative discussion: the attempt to illuminate the correlation between two contributions to our understanding of a person's faith and faith transformations: that of philosophical hermeneutics and that of developmental psychology and theology. In our correlative discussion of FOWLER's and RICOEUR's perspectives, we will proceed in three steps: starting with an investigation of FOWLER's faith development theory, in Part One, in Part Two, we will turn to RICOEUR's work for a deeper understanding of the hermeneutics of symbol, metaphor, and narrative. In an attempt to strengthen the hermeneutical perspective in the context of faith development theory, I will present, in Part Three, the proposal of a con-text-ualist model for faith development theory.

As the outcome of a *correlation*, the proposal of the con-text-ualist model is not so much to be regarded as a compelling conclusion, and even less a conclusion made on the basis of data derived from empirical research, but rather it is a more comprehensive picture resulting from a widening of our scientific horizon. Thus by expanding our kinaesthetic perception and by including a *hermeneutical* perspective in a theory of the structural-developmental family, I expect that the contours of a more comprehensive model for faith development theory will begin to emerge.

Therefore, with good reason, the inquiry into the works of RICOEUR and FOWLER could proceed in reverse order. We could illuminate the hermeneutics of symbol, metaphor, and narrative first and then approach the theory of faith development; thereby, the presuppositions for my 'reading' of FOWLER's work could be made explicit from the start. And indeed, I do not claim that my 'reading' of FOWLER's faith development theory was not affected and informed by RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective. However, to start with the inquiry into FOWLER's work and to return to faith development theory after the chapter on RICOEUR appeared to me more convincing, since it allows us to investigate FOWLER's theory in depth without using RICOEUR's terminology too extensively and without entering in a comparison at too early a stage. Thus the inquiry into RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective marks a break or 'creative interruption' in the progression from the explication of FOWLER's theory to the contours of the con-text-ualist model.

Two key terms play an important role in the discussion of FOWLER's and RICOEUR's perspectives and thus circumscribe our theme: 'hermeneutics' and 'faith.' Therefore, it may be necessary to address these concepts and their relation to one another briefly in order to present some of my presuppositions, the critical investigation and discussion of which would lie beyond the scope of the present work.

*Hermeneutics* is the attempt to illuminate the process of understanding. Its prime model, and its historical origin, is the interpretation of written messages, the understanding of texts. However, hermeneutics has widened its horizon: a crucial step in this process has been the recognition that the understanding of texts involves not only the communication with, and understanding of, an author's inner life, but also a common *Lebensverhältnis zur Sache* common to the author and the interpreter. Thus a third reference point comes into play in the hermeneutical field: human existence, *Geschichte als Lebenssphäre*, *Lebenswelt*, our *Being-in-the-*

*world*. This has broadened the scope of hermeneutics, ultimately embracing an ontological perspective.

Here, RICOEUR's work presents an important contribution: his hermeneutical perspective rests on the conviction of the insufficiency of the subject, the impossibility of any immediate self-understanding. Therefore, RICOEUR emphasizes the creative power of the 'text' of the cultural works: the decentering or assimilating impact of the symbol; the creative power of the metaphor to constitute the person; the power of the narrative to remake reality, to transfigure the world. Finally, hermeneutics and faith are most explicitly brought into an essential relationship to one another in the statement that faith derives from 'listening' or 'hearkening.'

RICOEUR's perspective suggests not only a deep understanding of the creative power of the text of symbols, metaphors, and narratives, but he also suggests a hermeneutical approach to methodology; his perspective is part of the so-called 'interpretive turn' (RABINOW&SULLIVAN 1979).<sup>1</sup> Thus, the development in hermeneutics has incisive consequences for methodology as well, especially in the social sciences: we can speak of an 'interpretive turn' in social scientific methodology. From the hermeneutical perspective, the concept of 'truth' exceeds the understanding of 'objectivity' inherent in the positivist paradigm and, hence, 'verification' exceeds the methodological limitation to 'explanation' and 'empirical validation.' Therefore, the methodological procedure takes on a different, more complex form. As we will see, the proposal of the 'interpretive turn' in social scientific methodology suggests, adopting, as paradigm, the *model of the text*, as RICOEUR's article, "The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text" (RICOEUR 1971a), programmatically states; recognizing that understanding involves a dialogical, communicative process; and taking account of the dialectic relation between 'understanding' and 'explanation.'

*Faith.* For a working definition of 'faith,' since this reflection focuses on James FOWLER's theory, I will adopt part of the basic assumptions of FOWLER's thought: First of all, it is a legitimate procedure to focus on a social scientific perspective of faith. The focus of faith development theory on the *psychological* aspect of 'faith' - in FOWLER's terms: on "human faith"<sup>2</sup> - is legitimate. Secondly,

---

1. See chapter 3.2 for detailed reference!

2. FOWLER's terms are: the "*human side of faith*," or, in brief, "human faith" (FOWLER 1981a:1ff;32f). The term "human" is unprecise, because it may suggest the misleading assumption that there exists a side of faith that is other than human; or that there exists a possible counterpart to 'human faith' so far beyond our cognitive faculties that we are advised to speak of an "X-factor" (FOWLER 1981a:33). The term 'human' is correct, however, in the sense that we look at 'faith' from the perspective of the *human sciences*.

the search for a universal concept of faith, a concept which attempts to describe the features, functions or structures common to and pervading all concrete forms of religion or belief systems, is legitimate. Thirdly, faith is a dynamic process with a history - a history of transformations; hence, we can speak of faith *development* and co-ordinate our knowledge of these transformation processes in a theory. Fourthly, faith and its transformations in a person's life cycle do not lie beyond the reach of empirical research, but rather - presupposing we have designed an adequate instrument - *research in faith development is possible*.

To combine 'faith' and 'hermeneutics' and to speak about 'the hermeneutics of faith development theory' means, in the first place, that the problem we have to address in our examination is not that of two separate domains: *Glauben* vs. *Verstehen* or even in the sense of the problem of 'faith' vs. 'knowledge.' On the contrary, recognizing the ontological significance of understanding allows us to move the two terms 'faith' and 'understanding' closer together and to define the relation between them as essential relatedness: As already mentioned, faith, in RICOEUR's perspective, has an essential relation to 'listening,' to 'hearkening.'

The relation between 'hermeneutics' and 'faith' is determined by an essential feature of 'faith:' Faith involves *understanding*; faith is a mode of (a new) understanding of God, a mode of (a new) understanding of the world; faith is a mode of (a new) understanding of oneself, a new self-understanding. With the definition of faith as *knowing*, as '*constitutive-knowing*,' FOWLER appears to describe 'faith' in terms which display the essential relation of faith and understanding.

In a second respect, 'faith' lends itself to the hermeneutical perspective: Faith is dynamic, it is *growing, developing, becoming*. Due to its *temporal* character, faith has a history. Faith 'describes' or 'tells' a story. How are we to arrive at an adequate understanding of this 'faith story'? Here, we find ourselves in the midst of the hermeneutical problem of faith development theory, but especially of faith development research.

The correlation between FOWLER's and RICOEUR's perspectives thus rests on common ground. Such correlative synopsis in the light of a hermeneutical perspective, however, also implies recognizing insufficiencies, and reclaiming lost dimensions. Thus not only can questions and tensions within faith development theory be brought into sharper relief, but also they may lead to an answer, in the light of the hermeneutical perspective. This is particularly true for the tension between the theological and the psychological contribution of faith development theory, and also for the related tension between structure and content: The question of *how faith development theory and research account for the "structuring*

*power of the contents of faith*" (FOWLER) can be addressed as a question about hermeneutics, if it is true that a hermeneutical approach accounts for the constitutive significance of symbols, metaphors, and narratives for faith and its development. And the question as to *how faith development theory and research account for the narrative of a person's faith history*, appears as a question about hermeneutics, if it is true that hermeneutics promotes both, a better understanding of the impact of narratives and an approach toward *Auslegung* in regard to the text of life narrative.

Thus the key problem to which this investigation, especially Part Three, devotes itself, is this: to conceptualize faith development theory in light of the hermeneutical perspective, as we find it in RICOEUR's work. This key problem consists of three aspects: the concept of *faith*, the idea of *development*, and the methodology of faith development *research*. In regard to the conceptualization of faith, it means illuminating the significance of the 'texts,' of the the *con*-texts with which the individual is in interaction. In regard to the idea of development, this means investigating these *con*-texts, investigating the hermeneutics of symbol, metaphor, and narrative so that account can be taken of their developmental significance or "structuring power." In regard to research methodology, this means finding a way to approach our 'object' like a (narrative) text. With the entire thesis outlined here, I aspire to follow the tendencies in the social sciences to integrate a hermeneutical perspective. In my opinion, it is necessary to pursue what has been termed the 'interpretive turn' in the context of structural-developmental theories of faith.

We have some way to go in our reflections, before, in the third part, the attempt to pursue the implications of the 'hermeneutical turn' for faith development theory and research will be concretized in my own proposal for a *con*-text-ualist model of faith, faith development, and faith development research.



**PART ONE:**

---

**THE HERMENEUTICS OF  
FAITH DEVELOPMENT THEORY  
A CHARACTERIZATION OF FOWLER'S THEORY**

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The correlative discussion, as explained already, starts with a comprehensive inquiry into FOWLER's theory of faith development.

Thereby, the hermeneutics of 'faith' and 'faith development' in FOWLER's work will be the first focus (Chapter 1) of our reflection in this part. We will ask what understanding of 'faith' is involved in FOWLER's definition.

Secondly, taking the essential symbolic, narrative, and metaphoric character of the faith messages and faith texts into account, we will address the question: How does 'faith,' in FOWLER's work, relate to the narratives, symbols, and the metaphoric language of faith texts? What does it mean to say that 'faith' itself is constituted by understanding, that 'faith' owes its existence to understanding texts and messages? What does it mean to say that 'faith,' finally, is that process of interpretation by which we are *interpreted* by the texts and messages and led to a new understanding? (Chapter 2)

The hermeneutics involved in faith development *research* will be a third focus. Here we will engage in critical self-reflection of our knowledge, i.e. our theory and research in faith development. We can put this question into the terms of understanding: we will engage in a critical reflection on the hermeneutics involved in faith development theory's perception, on its method of research in (the narrative of) a person's development in faith. (Chapter 3)

A final focus will be FOWLER's *theological* re-interpretation of faith development theory. Here, we have to take the more recent "second genre" of FOWLER's writings into account. In this theological re-interpretation, concepts like 'vocation' and 'covenant' are central, as well as the narrative character of the 'faith' story.

## Chapter 1

### THE CONCEPT OF FAITH AND FAITH DEVELOPMENT

---

To define one's object of theory and research is indispensable, however difficult. Faith development theory presents us with a specific problem, since this theory combines, in an interdisciplinary study, two scientific fields: a field associated with the social sciences, structural-developmental psychology, on the one hand, and theology, on the other. Is the language of these two sciences reciprocally understandable? Are their terms interchangeable? Since this cannot be taken for granted, we need to investigate the terminology very carefully in regard to both psychology and theology.

Faith development theory belongs to the field of *psychology of religion*. Psychology of religion, however, could be modelled according to a paradigm which we could label 'psychology of religion,' or another paradigm which could bare the name 'psychology *and* religion' and hint rather at a correlation between the two domains.

Faith development theory, I contend, is a version of 'psychology of religion,' since the theory's starting point has been the attempt to define a universal concept of religion in accordance with the paradigm derived from structural-developmental psychology, a concept of faith which can be tested in empirical research. FOWLER declares:

"(F)aitth development theory...finds its principal theoretical grounding in the constructivist tradition (of PIAGET and KOHLBERG, H.S.)" (FOWLER 1988b:6)

If the starting point is a universal concept of religion or faith following the paradigm of a psychology of religion - which is a legitimate procedure - the following 'rule of explicability' is necessitated for the sake of scientific consistency and plausibility: *The universal concept of religion must allow explication in regard to the domain of concrete religion.*

This rule of explicability is programmatically formulated by RENDTORFF:

"Eine jede Generalisierung oder Funktionalisierung des Religionsbegriffs bleibt doch als *Religionsbegriff* nur dann plausibel, wenn die allgemein gedachten Funktionen oder Gehalte von Religion noch im Verhältnis zur bestimmten Religion erläutert und erklärt werden können. ... Ohne eine Beziehung auf die ausdrückliche Form des religiösen Ausdrucks oder religiöser Institutionen hört darum die Explikation eines allgemeinen Gehalts von Religion auf, noch als eine Explikation von *Religion* identifiziert werden zu können. Nur in Bezugnahme auf spezifische Formen von religiöser Praxis ist auch die Wahrnehmung eines allgemeinen Gehalts von Religion noch sachlich bestimmbar und inhaltlich identifizierbar." (RENDTORFF 1980:198).

In the second volume of NIPKOW's *Grundfragen der Religionspädagogik*, we find a similar postulate:

"Je allgemeiner der Begriff der Religion gedacht wird, desto mehr entfernt er sich jedoch ein solches abstraktes gedankliches Konstrukt von Zeit, Geschichte und Gesellschaft. ... Um von ihrer Abstraktionshöhe zur konkreten religiösen Praxis und Erziehungspraxis hinunterzugelangen, müssen jedoch alle empirischen religiösen Phänomene und geschichtlich-gesellschaftlichen Erziehungsfaktoren wieder hinzugenommen werden." (NIPKOW 1975a:150)

Given its starting point in a concept of faith which follows the social scientific principle of universal validity, faith development theory needs to show its applicability according to the rule of explicability. Whereas, at the starting point, the theological foundations have to play a subordinate role, as FOWLER states:

"When the focus is on the stage theory as a general social scientific construct, the theological foundations must be stated in largely formal and functional terms, as in *Stages of Faith*." (FOWLER 1987b:1),

the need for a more explicit formulation of these theological foundations has become obvious.

In the interdisciplinary field of faith development theory we thus note that, so far, there is an inherent "tension:" a tension between the attempt to be a general psychological theory of faith development, on the one hand, and to be consistent with Christian theology, on the other hand (comp. FOWLER 1987b:1;7). To become aware of this tension, to work on this tension - and possibly to proceed to 'bridging' and correlative discussions, is the present task of faith development theory.

This 'tension' can be seen as forming an arc. When, in our reflection on FOWLER's concept of faith, we follow FOWLER's movement towards a re-interpretation of faith development theory in terms of our Christian tradition, the 'tension' appears to take the form of an arc which reflects, at the same time, both the contradiction and the 'bridging' in FOWLER's concept of faith. On the one side

- at our starting point -, the concept of faith has its basis in *psychology*: it derives the paradigm for its definition from structural-developmental theory. Here, theological theorems play the rather subordinate role of leading up to the psychological definition - supplying basic assumptions necessary for the definition, as in TILLICH's and NIEBUHR's theology - or: theological propositions have a parenthetical value, as is the case with the features of faith: All that belongs to 'belief' has to put into brackets. On the other side, the arc reaches the ground of *theology*. Here, the re-interpretation in the terms of theology can take place, the fact can be stated explicitly that faith development theory's

"theoretical framework and grounding ... indisputably rest upon theological foundations and reasoning" (FOWLER 1988b:22).

Here, we proceed into the discussion of FOWLER's interpretation of faith development theory in his "second genre" of (more recent) writings which

"treats the theory as a contribution to theological anthropology, and integrates it into a more comprehensive, confessional theological account of the Christian understanding of the human vocation." (FOWLER 1988b:22f)

Then, however, the question arises: Can we speak of an independent and coherent domain of 'faith:' It should be maintained that--despite what the images of bridge and arc may suggest--that 'faith' is more than a bridge or an arc, but is taken as an independent and coherent domain of research and theory building. Despite faith development theory's indebtedness to and dependency on the structural-developmental paradigm, FOWLER's theory does not simply submit to and fit into e.g. KOHLBERG's theory. The series of hierarchies from cognitive to moral and, from there, to religious or faith development<sup>3</sup> is not FOWLER's model.<sup>4</sup> Rather, FOWLER transcends structural-developmental theory in conceptualizing 'faith' as the deepest and most comprehensive domain of human action. This finds its concretization in the assumed unity of all of the seven 'Aspects' of 'faith' which cover a spectrum from logic through perspective-taking and morality to world coherence and symbolic function. In our reflection, this tendency toward defining 'faith,' in implicit or explicit contrast to the PIAGET-KOHLBERG paradigm, as a broad and comprehensive, but supposedly independent domain is consistently

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3. KOHLBERG's theses concerning the relation between moral and religious development can be found in his article written with POWER, "Moral Development, Religious Thinking, and the Question of a Seventh Stage," (KOHLBERG&POWER 1981). See Chapter 9 for a more detailed discussion!

4. FOWLER's article of 1980, "Moral Stages and the Development of Faith" (FOWLER 1980b), though not a direct response to KOHLBERG's article, may indicate that faith development theory has a different perspective. See also Chapter 9!

adhered throughout the whole: the demarcation of 'faith' from 'belief' and 'religion' displays an independent (more inductive) way to arrive at a definition of 'faith;' the definition of 'faith' as "constitutive-knowing" marks an explicit contrast to PIAGET's and KOHLBERG's theory; the models of the multi-dimensionality of 'faith' take a variety of dimensions and aspects into account; the significance of images, symbols and stories as well as the structure-content tension, as openly addressed problem, is only possible in a theory which is not puristically structural; and, finally, the theological interpretation of faith development theory marks the most decisive contrast to the rigidity of structural-developmental theory building and is the most explicit movement toward an independent conceptualization.

### 1.1. The Demarcation of the Definition: 'Faith' and 'Belief'

Since, as its primary background, FOWLER constructed the theory of faith development within the structural-developmental paradigm in the tradition of PIAGET, it was necessary to adopt, for the fundamental definition of faith, the principle of universal human validity. However, already here, FOWLER's independence becomes visible: Though the goal is the definition of a universally valid concept of faith which attempts to meet the criteria of the structural-developmental model, FOWLER does not explicitly adopt a concept of faith which was pre-defined in the psychological science or, more specifically, in structural-developmental theory; he does not, in a hierarchical movement, approach the domain of religion and faith with a concept of faith or religion as defined by PIAGET or KOHLBERG and attempt to discern the features of this pre-defined concept within the domain of religion and faith. (Strictly speaking, the feature of universal human validity then would appear as a derived feature, in the case of such a hierarchical relation: universal validity of the concept of faith would be derived from the universal validity of psychological theory.) FOWLER's line of thought, however, is rather an inductive attempt to search, starting from within the domain of religion, for a construct which would meet the criterion of universal validity. Therefore, the definition of 'faith' starts with a *demarcation*, a demarcation *within* the domain of religion and faith: the demarcation of 'faith' from 'belief' and 'religion.' Consistently, *Stages of Faith* starts with introducing the distinction between 'faith,' 'religion,' and 'belief.'

In this section, we will discuss this crucial demarcation in the definition of the object of faith development theory and research which will already yield some

insight into the hermeneutics of faith development theory.<sup>5</sup> We will proceed from a description of this distinction to an interpretative discussion.

### 1.1.1. *The 'Faith'-'Belief' Distinction in FOWLER's Work*

In *Stages of Faith* (FOWLER 1981a), FOWLER introduces the demarcation in the definition of faith, at the very beginning, in the first chapter: 'faith' is defined in significant contrast to 'religion' and 'belief.'

Though FOWLER aims with this demarcation at a definition of 'faith' which 'fits' into the structural-developmental paradigm, he does not enter into the discussion from within the field of psychology nor does he, as already stated, simply take up the thread of a concept of faith or religion which is implied or explicated in the structural-developmental theories. Rather, in his more inductive procedure which implies this demarcation, FOWLER attempts to provide arguments from *theologians* and from *philosophical* and *historical* perspectives on religion and faith. Therefore, FOWLER's starting point are the works of TILLICH, NIEBUHR, and Cantwell SMITH.

With his reference to TILLICH, FOWLER constructs his demarcation of 'faith' from 'belief' on well respected theological ground. In his famous book of 1957, *Dynamics of Faith*, TILLICH advocates a very comprehensive and fundamental understanding of 'faith' in words which have become classic:

"Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned: the dynamics of faith are the dynamics of man's ultimate concern." (TILLICH 1957:1)

Not only the comprehensive concept of 'faith,' but the distinction and demarcation from 'belief' is developed by TILLICH:

"Faith as being ultimately concerned is a centered act of the whole personality. If one of the functions which constitute the totality of the personality is partly or completely identified with faith, the meaning of faith is distorted. ... The most ordinary misinterpretation of faith is to consider it an act of knowledge that has a low degree of evidence. Something more or less probable or improbable is affirmed in spite of the insufficiency of its theoretical substantiation. This situation is very usual in daily life. If this is meant, one is speaking of *belief* rather than of faith. ... Faith is

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5. For the hermeneutics of faith and faith development, as I will show in the following sections, this demarcation implies that FOWLER's concept of 'faith' is not confined to the cognitive one-sidedness of structural-developmental theory, but rather it involves a hermeneutical perspective. 'Faith' is broader than religious reasoning. It involves *relation* and, therefore, shared centers of value and power, and it involves a *constitutive* feature (constitutive-knowing) and, therefore, *conviction*.

not belief and it is not knowledge with a low degree of probability. Its certitude is not the uncertain certitude of a theoretical judgment." (TILLICH 1957:30f;35)

The other theologian FOWLER adduces to support his definition of 'faith' and its demarcation from 'belief' and 'religion' is H.R.NIEBUHR. *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture* (NIEBUHR 1943) begins with such a broad and universal concept of faith which needs to be *distinguished* from religion.

"A theologian asked to address himself to the subject of contemporary civilization for the purpose of generating constructive thought on its problems, may be expected to speak about the role of religion in modern society. But when I reflect on the present human situation it is the problem of faith that presents itself to me as of the greatest importance; and faith is to be distinguished from religion." (NIEBUHR 1947:11)

Though the interrelation of faith and belief does not allow separation, but presents itself as a dynamic interplay, it is a henotheistic and, therefore, dangerous tendency, when organized Christian religion tends to "become a faith religion and a faith belief" (NIEBUHR 1947:62f); henotheism in Christianity, in both of its forms, the "church-centered" and the "Christ-centered" form (NIEBUHR 1947:58), puts belief into the foreground and, in NIEBUHR's perspective, needs to be developed into radical monotheism.

Thus, FOWLER is in the position to refer to an important part of American theology as the background of his demarcation of 'faith' from 'belief.'

In another scientific field: the history of religion in a cross-cultural perspective, FOWLER finds further support for this demarcation of 'faith' from 'religion' and 'belief.' FOWLER refers to and quotes extensively from Cantwell SMITH. SMITH has done extensive work on the definition and explanation of a universal concept of faith in distinction from any particular religion (Cantwell SMITH 1963; 1977; 1979). FOWLER quotes from SMITH's book, *Faith and Belief* (Cantwell SMITH 1979):

"Faith is deeper, richer, more personal. It is engendered by a religious tradition, in some cases and to some degree by its doctrines; but it is a quality of the person not of the system. It is an orientation of the personality, to oneself, to one's neighbor, to the universe; a total response..." (Cantwell SMITH 1979:12)

To be more precise: The definition of 'faith' which FOWLER adopts from SMITH and which finds its roots in the theologies of TILLICH and NIEBUHR is meant to comprehend the underlying universal construct of any particular religion, including even atheism, but also being applicable to any kind of particular religion. This allows FOWLER to maintain, as a focal characterization of the concept of 'faith,' the feature of *human universality*. This can be summarized in a series of theses:



*The concept of 'faith,' by means of the demarcation from 'religion,' appropriates the definitory characteristics of universality and absoluteness. (Thesis 1)*

The features of *universality*, of *absoluteness*, as they are summarized in the 1981 book (FOWLER 1981a:14f) are the following: 'Faith' is ...

- (1) universal/generic
- (2) universal/cross-cultural
- (3) universal/total, comprehensive
- (4) universal/absolute, true

Thus, thesis 1 can be differentiated and explained according to these characteristics of 'universality:'

(ad 1) 'Faith' is ***universal, i.e. generic***: This comes to expression, when FOWLER states that "faith, rather than belief or religion, is the most fundamental category in the human quest for relation to transcendence" (FOWLER 1981a:14). And explicitly, the attributes 'generic' and 'universal' are combined: "faith is generic, a universal feature of human living" (FOWLER 1981a:14). This can be summarized in a subordinate thesis: *'Faith,' by means of the demarcation from 'religion' and 'belief,' can adopt the definitory characteristic of generic universality. (Thesis 1.1)*

(ad 2) 'Faith' is ***universal, i.e. cross-cultural***: "Each of the major religious traditions studied speaks about faith in ways that make the same phenomenon visible. In each and all, faith involves the alignment of the will, a resting of the heart, in accordance with a vision of transcendent value and power, one's ultimate concern" (FOWLER 1981a:14). This can be summarized as follows: *'Faith,' by means of the demarcation from 'religion' and 'belief,' assumes the definitory feature of cross-cultural universality. (Thesis 1.2)*. This feature of 'faith' arrived at by means of the demarcation from 'religion' includes, however, another, a negative thesis which can be summarized in the following way: *'Faith' is not confined to the 'belief' of a specific 'religion.'* (Thesis 1.2a)

(ad 3) 'Faith' is ***universal, i.e. total and comprehensive***: FOWLER holds that faith "is not not a separate dimension of life, a compartmentalized specialty," but "an orientation of the total person" (FOWLER 1981a:14). This can be summarized: *'Faith,' by means of the demarcation from 'belief' and 'religion,' assumes the definitory feature of universality in the sense of total personal involvement. (Thesis 1.3)*

(ad 4) 'Faith' is *universal, i.e. absolute and true*: This comes to expression, when FOWLER contrasts 'universality' and 'relativity.' He sees "the myriad variants of religions and beliefs" as "relative apprehensions;" and the work "toward a 'universal theory as to the relation between truth itself and truth articulated in the midst of the relativity of human life and history'" representing "a rejection of faith in 'relativism'" (FOWLER 1981a: 14f). This can be summarized: *'Faith,' by means of the demarcation from 'religion' and 'belief,' assumes the definitory feature of universal truth* (Thesis 1.4). In a negative formulation, this feature of universality/absoluteness leads to a definitory claim about 'faith' which can be summarized: *'Faith' is not dependent on or confined to the symbolic expressions of a specific/particular 'religious' tradition.* (Thesis 1.4a)

### 1.1.2. *Interpretation and Evaluation of FOWLER's 'Faith'-'Belief' Distinction*

So far, I have only summarized and quoted FOWLER. Now, since I interpret the demarcation of the concept of 'faith' as the step toward a universal concept which meets the criteria of structural-developmental theory, I will add two theses which, in my understanding, indicate the dimension of this definitory step:

*The concept of 'faith,' due to the features of generic universality (Thesis 1.1) and cross-cultural universality (Thesis 1.2) which are achieved by means of the demarcation from 'belief,' appropriates the definitory feature(s) of an underlying organization and thus meets part of the criteria for an operational structure.<sup>6</sup> This operational structure is seen to underlie all modes of 'faithing' regardless of the content(s) (formalism);<sup>7</sup> it is seen to be universal (universalism).<sup>8</sup>* (Thesis 2.1)

6. Here, I refer to the article of KOHLBERG, LEVINE, and HEWER, "The Current Formulation of the Theory" (KOHLBERG et.al. 1983) which summarizes the philosophical premises and the criteria of the logic of development for the structural-developmental model. Some of the criteria for an 'operational structure' which are important in KOHLBERG's theory, but are not the result of the 'faith'- 'belief' distinction and, therefore, are not mentioned in thesis 2.1, as e.g. "constructivism," "cognitivism," "principledness," and, in regard to the logic of development, "invariant sequentiality" and "hierarchy," will be addressed later; some of them have been adopted by faith development theory, some are ignored implicitly or explicitly.

7. KOHLBERG, LEVINE and HEWER define explicitly, as one of the philosophical premises: "Formalism as defining the nature and competence of moral judgments (as opposed to definitions in terms of content." (KOHLBERG et.al. 1983:277). And the first of criteria for the logic of development claims: "Stages imply a distinction or qualitative difference in structures (modes of thinking) that still serve the same basic function (for example, intelligence) at various points in development." (Ibid:238)

8. As philosophical premise for moral development theory, KOHLBERG, LEVINE and HEWER claim

And FOWLER explicitly refers to 'faith' in terms of an operation:

"Our challenge ..., since faith in some form is necessary and inevitable for human beings, is to describe what kind of knowing faith is and to characterize the operations that constitute it." (FOWLER 1981a:104)

"They (the stages of faith, H.S.) are based on analysis of the structuring operations by which persons compose and interpret their experiences, and construct their understandings of relatedness to themselves, others, and an ultimate environment." (FOWLER 1985c:293)

The feature of universality/comprehensiveness (Thesis 1.3) plays an important role in FOWLER's theory. It has its basis in the 'faith'-'belief' distinction. In my interpretation, FOWLER derives this feature of comprehensiveness primarily from theology which maintains, with NIEBUHR and TILLICH, that 'faith' "concerns" and comprehends the total person, in an ultimate perspective. However, with this feature of 'faith,' faith development theory presents its own understanding of the criterion of an 'operational structure.' 'Faith' can be seen as forming a 'structural whole'<sup>9</sup> at each stage. Therefore, it can be summarized: *The concept of 'faith,' due to the feature of personal-comprehensive universality (Thesis 1.3) which is achieved by means of the demarcation of 'faith' from 'belief,' appropriates the definitory feature of an underlying organization (of 'faith') which encompasses and integrates all other cognitive and affective activities, e.g. those contained in the seven Aspects which are used in research to assess 'faith; 'Faith' can be seen as forming a 'structural whole' on each faith stage.* (Thesis 2.2)

The distinction between 'faith' and 'belief,' as we have seen, is such a foundational part of FOWLER's definition of 'faith' that much of the rest of faith development theory appears to be pre-structured by this key distinction. Therefore, at this point, it is appropriate to address some questions in regard to the consequences of this 'faith'-'belief' distinction for faith development theory in general:

- Is this distinction the incisive definitory step towards establishing the individual as someone who acts, towards aligning faith development theory with the structural-developmental concept of *action*, towards introducing the 'object' of our inquiry: 'faith' in an individualistic focus?

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"moral universality (as opposed to cultural or ethical relativism)" (Ibid:277).

9. KOHLBERG, LEVINE, and HEWER list as the third criterion of the logic of development: "Each of these different sequential modes of thought forms a 'structural whole.' A response on a task at a given stage does not just represent a specific response determined by knowledge and familiarity with that task or tasks similar to it; rather, it represents an underlying thought organization. The implication is that various aspects of stage structures should appear as a consistent cluster of response in development." (KOHLBERG et.al. 1983:238)

- Does the 'faith'-'belief' distinction lead up to the structural-developmental premise of constructivism? This seems to be confirmed by FOWLER's notion that, despite the confusing reversal in the English language, 'faith' has the character of a *verb*, whereas 'belief' has come to mean the 'matter' of a propositional object or content.
- To what extent does the 'faith'-'belief' distinction fore-shadow the structure - content problem?
- Does the 'faith'-'belief' distinction, as a definitory *demarcation*, 'demarcate' 'faith' from the *symbolic world* of cultural traditions; does it demarcate 'faith' from the narrative realm?
- Focusing this concern about the symbolic world and its possible demarcation on the issue of the *image of God*, we will have to discuss NIPKOW's critique of a replacement of the word 'God' by the concept of 'shared center(s) of value and power' (NIPKOW 1986b:43f): To what extent does the 'faith'-'belief' distinction stand behind this replacement?
- Since our concern is with the hermeneutics of symbols, metaphors, and narratives in faith development theory, I will focus my evaluation on this point, when I discuss the question of the symbolic character of 'faith' in chapter two. Since the symbolic world is rooted in communities of 'belief' called 'religions,' I need to address, at least in a brief discussion, the question of whether and how the 'faith'-'belief' distinction affects the relation of the individual's 'faith' to *community*.

Does the 'faith'-'belief' distinction affect the relation of *self and community* as well? This could be imputed to the fact that the concept of faith is meant to be universal in the sense of an inter-faith or even cross-cultural phenomenon. Is this gain of universal/inter-faith validity achieved at the expense of the faithful individual's link and relatedness to a specific religious community? Does a universal concept of faith imply that the origin of faith--the fact that faith arises in response to other members of our faith community--is only of marginal significance? Is 'faith' an operation which operates in abstraction from the particularity of concrete religious communities and their specific traditions?

BROUGHTON, in his article, "The Political Psychology of Faith Development Theory," seems to suggest this. While BROUGHTON also acknowledges that the concept of faith as inter-faith concept is "ecumenical and cross-cultural in nature" (BROUGHTON 1986:107), he criticizes that this has not been adequately dealt with in faith development theory so far. He summarizes his critique in the very critical comment that

"in trying to transcend cultures and their specific traditions, the theory has succeeded only in dispensing with them. ... In faith development theory, the universal is arrived at merely by disengaging from the national, ethnic, cultural, and religious specificities rather than by undertaking the difficult task of 'introducing' them to each other." (BROUGHTON 1986:107)

Most of this harsh critique can be refuted with reference to FOWLER's stress on the importance of images, symbols, rites and creeds of specific religious communities to awaken and to nurture 'faith.' FOWLER's writings contradict this claim, since he speaks of the importance of religious com-

munities which give rise and shape to a person's faith. Faith is defined as *relational* (FOWLER 1981a: 16ff). In the forming of adult faith, community plays a special role:

"As the bearers of religious symbols, of normative images of the human vocation, stories, ethical teachings, and so on, religious communities of faith can and do play a special role in the interaction by which faith contributes to the forming of adults' life structures." (FOWLER 1982d:203)

And it appears utterly incorrect to maintain that FOWLER has succeeded only in dispensing with specific religious traditions, when we take into account FOWLER's "second genre" of writing: the interpretation of faith development theory in the terms of Christian theology<sup>10</sup>:

"(T)he context in which we become selves and form stances and styles of faith is community.

There is no selfhood that is not formed in relation to others and to the culture of shared social meanings and institutions." (FOWLER 1987a:56)

But also, FOWLER acknowledges the necessity for faith development theory to engage in further work on the issue of the relation to the community or communities;<sup>11</sup> some research has already been done<sup>12</sup>.

However, it is exactly those of FOWLER's statements about the importance of community for 'faith' - the "sponsor,"<sup>13</sup> the "context," the nurturing "ecology"<sup>14</sup> for children 'faith,' the 'ecology of

10. This is also one of NIPKOW's objections to BROUGHTON's critique: "Unfortunately, Broughton does not take any notice of Fowler's vital theological and political interests to avoid just that naiveness and blindness which Broughton is faulting him for. Fowler's recent attempts to embed his faith development theory in a concept of practical theology rests upon clear theological criteria concerning God's liberating and transforming praxis." (NIPKOW 1987c:13) Compare also McLEAN's objection to BROUGHTON's critique (McLEAN 1986:163)!

11. "In attempting to characterize the congregation as an ecology of diverse, inter-living styles of faith consciousness, we begin to illustrate the possibility of a more adequate account of the influences of group roles and membership, and of the faith development 'atmosphere' of corporate bodies, upon the faith constructions of individual members. ... This work will operationalize and elaborate the notion of 'modal developmental levels' of faith and moral development mentioned at points in our earlier work... . As we pursue such studies we will need to conceive richer and more complex, and necessarily new, empirical and theoretical approaches to understanding the interaction of persons with the groups, institutions and larger cultures of which they are members." (FOWLER 1988b:18f)

12. The research of SIMMONDS (1986) can be regarded as a first attempt to assess the modal level of development of a community as it affects the faith development of the individual. SIMMONDS attempted to assess "one element of the content issue, the religious community, in which the person participates as it influences the faith structure of that individual" (SIMMONDS 1986:214). Community is seen as "highly influential, if not determinative" (Ibid). He summarizes the result of his research: "This dissertation ... has demonstrated that the contents of faith as embodied in the community of faith, directly effect the stage level of selected adolescents within that community." (Ibid:215) And in terms of research methodology, a suggestion is made by SIMMONDS for operationalizing "those factors which Fowler hypothesizes are important in arriving at a modal level of faith" (Ibid:216). Since the significances are not very high, there may be need for further research, revising and testing SIMMONDS' research design and collecting more data. However, the claim of the dissertation to prove the effect of 'content' on 'structure,' as the title of the dissertation suggests, in my interpretation, is due to an overestimation of empirical research. The expectation to resolve the content-structure problem by such research would be beside the point.

13. "The sponsor or sponsoring community should be able to provide both models and experiences in education and spiritual direction that deepen and expand one's initial commitments and provide the nurture for strong and continuing growth." (FOWLER 1981a:287)

14. When we read one of the most recent papers, "The Public Church as Ecology for Faith Education and Advocate for Children," we see that it is in regard to *infancy* and *childhood* that FOWLER makes the a very powerful statement about the impact of community on 'faith:' "As regards proto-

care and vocation' (FOWLER 1987a:27;97), the ecology of the "reflexive" and relational self<sup>15</sup> -, which, in a careful reading, display that the impact of community is immediately counter-balanced by the primary importance of the *constructive* activity of the person.

From this perspective, BROUGHTON's critique hints at a deficit of faith development theory which needs to be addressed. The problem of the relation of an individual's 'faith' to the community in which it had been awakened, nurtured and shaped can be put in NIPKOW's terms who maintains that

"theories concerning individual growth, if they are not historically contextualized and interpreted, run the risk to serve a functional ego, the major concern of which is self-organization, self-integration, and self-equilibration." (NIPKOW 1987c:11)

To conclude: The 'faith'-belief' distinction had an effect on faith development theory's perception of the self-community relation. In the conceptualization and the perception of faith development theory and research, the impact of the religious community is not dispensed with, but it has been relativized. Community relation has become problematic, insofar as community relation has receded into the background as the helping and nurturing environment for faith development theory's "major concern:" the constructive-operational activity of the individual's 'faith' which, in contrast to the relativity of community, is assumed to be a universal human capacity. To account for the constitutive significance of community for 'faith' is one of the areas of faith development theory in which further reflection and research need to be done.

## 1.2. The Key Definition: 'Faith' as "Constitutive-Knowing"

The definition of the concept of 'faith' so far defined by the means of the distinction and demarcation from 'belief,' i.e. in a negative way, can and must be advanced further by a substantive feature. In the last section, I argued that the distinction of 'faith' and 'belief' enabled the concept of 'faith' to meet the definitory

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covenantal living, which is the quality of mutuality that invites infants to selfhood and faith, we need to see the church as providing holding environments. In German the term is Spielraum, a "play space," a safe place for the dangerous work of becoming a self and forming faith. ... Such a community needs to provide ritual and stories rich enough to form the emotions of children. Faith, hope, and love, are emotions in the deep sense of being profound dispositions and virtues, the orienting strength of personhood. The church can provide rituals and stories sturdy enough to form the emotions and shape virtues. Such a community draws upon and dwells in a tradition, a deep-going language of love and of Other-regardingness. Such a community, when it is faithfully formed, speaks from and acts from a deep structural wisdom that sees that it is in being loved that we learn to love; it is in loving and sustaining others that we find the full measure of self-realization." (FOWLER 1987c:16)

15. "To be a self is a reflexive matter. It is a matter of becoming aware of self as self, and this means in relation to, and with the help of, the responses of others. A major concern of the stage theories ... is with understanding the development of those capacities by which we construct self-other, self-self, and self-Ultimate or -God relation." (FOWLER 1987a:56)

feature of an operational structure. In the PIAGET tradition of developmental theory, operations are *logical* or *cognitive* operations. Hence, for KOHLBERG, one of the philosophical premises is *cognitivism*. In the concept of operation, *knowing* plays a key role.

Also FOWLER takes up this line of structural-developmental theory and defines 'faith' as *knowing*. At least as the point of departure, the influence of structural-developmental theory has led to the fundamental definition of 'faith' as "constitutive-knowing." FOWLER's article of 1980, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning," has been regarded as an important and comprehensive description of faith development theory. It is reprinted, in an updated version, in the 1986 book edited by DYKSTRA and PARKS, *Faith Development and Fowler*. Here, we find FOWLER's definition of 'faith' which is most precise and most comprehensive: Consistent with the precise fundamental definition (of the genus proximum), the localization within the psychological domain, according to which

"Faith is an aspect of the total constitutive activity of the ego" (FOWLER 1980a:26)

FOWLER gives his extensive definition (of the differentia specifica):

"Faith is:

*The process of constitutive-knowing*

*Underlying a person's composition and maintainment of a comprehensive frame (or frames) of meaning*

*Generated from the person's attachments or commitments to centers of supraordinate value which have power to unify his or her experiences of the world*

*Thereby endowing the relationships, contexts, and patterns of everyday life, past and future with significance.* (FOWLER 1980a:25f)

In the two parts of this definition, two basic assumptions of faith development theory are stated very precisely: *constructivism* and *epistemological focus* (faith development theory's version of cognitivism).

*Constructivism* emphasizes the spontaneity and creativity, the activity of the subject. The subsumption of 'faith' under the category of the "constitutive activity of the ego" is very explicit about that. Further, 'faith' is defined as the underlying process of the activity of composing and maintaining meaning. Meaning is the creation of the subject, a composition structured by 'faith.' The context of the life-world, e.g. "relationships" and "contexts," are not seen as the origin or basis of 'faith,' but they are "endowed with significance" by the activity of 'faith.' The only restriction to the constructive activity of 'faith,' stated in this definition, is the fact that 'faith' is "generated from attachments and commitments" to the center(s) of value and power. This, however, does not contradict the basic assumption of the

constructive activity of the ego, since these centers of value and power themselves are predominantly due also to the creative activity of the ego. This is reflected in FOWLER's emphasis on the verb-character of 'faith.'

"The English language handicaps us when we try to speak of faith. It gives us no verb form of the word. As we have seen, the Greek verb *pistuo* and the Latin verb *credo* permitted writers and speakers to say, 'I trust, I commit myself, I rest my heart upon, I pledge allegiance.' All of these paraphrases show us that faith is a *verb*; it is an active mode of being and committing, a way of moving into and giving shape to our experience of life." (FOWLER 1981a:16)

*The definition of 'faith' as constructive activity, the verb-character of 'faith,' brings the concept of 'faith' very close to the concept of an operation in the PIAGETian sense (Thesis 3.1). And FOWLER often speaks of 'faith' as "operation of knowing and valuing" (FOWLER 1980a:27; 1980b:150) and of a faith stage as an "integrated system of operations" (FOWLER 1976b:197f; 1987a: 57). In the article from which the above definition was quoted, FOWLER describes the constructivism of 'faith' very clearly:*

"The attentive reader will have caught our use of such verbs as 'compose,' 'construct,' 'maintain,' 'form,' 'attach,' 'invest,' 'commit' to characterize aspects of the dynamic relationships involved in faith. In this approach to faith, we stand in the structural-developmental tradition pioneered by J. Mark Baldwin and John Dewey, and brought to heightened clarity by Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and their associates. In this tradition, *knowing* means an acting upon and 'composing' of the known. Knowing occurs when an active knower interacts with an active world of persons and objects, meeting its unshaped or unorganized stimuli with the ordering, organizing power of the knower's mind." (FOWLER 1980a:19)

This statement also shows that FOWLER does not intend to demarcate faith development theory from the PIAGETian tradition in regard to constructivism. *Constructivism is an unchallenged and consistent basic assumption in faith development theory (Thesis 3.2).*

*Cognitivism* has become a basic assumption of faith development theory in that 'faith' is defined as "constitutive-knowing." With this assumption, faith development theory is part of the structural-developmental tradition. It is in this epistemological focus of 'faith,' that FOWLER sees the necessity to differentiate the kind of constitutive-knowing of 'faith' from the rest of structural-developmental understanding of cognition and of logical operations.

FOWLER becomes aware of a major deficiency of the PIAGET-KOHLBERG-tradition's accounting for 'faith'-knowing. Due to their focus on logical operations and the limitation of their attention to the "logic of objects and of relations between objects" even if they are "fictive" or "imaginative" as in theoretical physics



(FOWLER 1980a:23), they are primarily concerned with the kind of logic which FOWLER proposes to call "logic of rational certainty" and, therefore, fail to make a crucial distinction between two different kinds of constitutive-knowing:

"between constitutive-knowing in which *the identity or worth of the person is not directly at stake* and constitutive-knowing in which it is" (FOWLER 1980a:22).

Hence, FOWLER termed the kind of logic which is appropriate for 'faith' and its development "logic of conviction." The logic of conviction, FOWLER says, "transcends while including the logic of rational certainty" (FOWLER 1980a:23). Faith development theory, the argumentation in this article from 1980 suggests, has to be defined as *the theory of the operations of the logic of conviction*. Hence, the sequence of stages in faith present the answer to the question, "How does the logic of conviction develop and what are the transformations in a person's developmental journey?" The 'windows' to a person's 'faith,' the various aspects used in empirical research to assess the faith stage (esp. Aspect D to G, comp. HUNT 1985:140) are the measurement of the logic of conviction.

In *Stages of Faith*, this necessary specification of the concept of constitutive-knowing by the reference to personal identity is rather presupposed than developed in an extensive argumentation and elaboration of the concept of the logic of conviction. Here, a new term becomes more important which by definition allows FOWLER to subsume the concept of knowing under the "affective, valuational and imaginal modes of knowing" (FOWLER 1981a:99): the concept of *imagination*. The concept of 'imagination' allows us to define 'faith' as an "active mode of knowing," the "active mode"

"of composing a felt sense or image of the condition of our lives taken as a whole." (FOWLER 1981a:25)

The concept of imagination thus enables us to express more precisely the unifying and holistic activity of 'faith.' While the concept of the logic of conviction rather points towards a specification and demarcation and thus emphasizes more the dimensions of valuing and committing, the concept of imagination describes the *integrative* activity; hence, it is more useful to express FOWLER's notion of 'faith' as the unifying and inclusive mode of knowing which comprehends all of the seven aspects of 'faith.'

"In its imaginal mode, faith, 'forms into one' a comprehensive image of the ultimate environment, an environment of environments in relation to which we make sense of the force fields of our lives." (FOWLER 1981a:28)

Despite the fact that the reference to the German etymology is erroneous,<sup>16</sup> the comprehensive and integrative feature of 'imagination' is contained in the word *Einbildungskraft*; in any case, the holistic meaning of 'faith' can be stated more precisely by the use of the term 'imagination.'

As we have seen and as FOWLER states openly, it is the PIAGETian paradigm with its "epistemological focus" (FOWLER 1981a:98), the focus on the development of logical operations, which resulted in orienting the definition of 'faith' towards the cognitive-constructive domain and thus provided the background for FOWLER's appreciation and interpretation of NIEBUHR's and TILLICH's conceptualization of faith as *seeing* and as *understanding*. Also HUNT makes this observation:

"He (FOWLER, H.S.) has benefited from the structural developmentalists in other ways, as well. First, their attention to epistemology fits conveniently with Fowler's prior appreciation of the epistemological orientation. That they, as well as Niebuhr and Tillich, have focused on how persons know makes the transition from philosophy and theology to psychology, and vice versa, all the more easy." (HUNT 1985:148)

The definition of 'faith' as *interpreting, as knowing and understanding*, however, places the concept of 'faith' in the field of hermeneutics. The question FOWLER has to resolve, therefore, is that of the relation of the two modes of knowing: the relation of the 'logic of conviction' to the 'logic of rational certainty' which neatly have been put side by side in the heptagon of the seven aspects, but, as FERNHOUT observes correctly, display

"a definite sequence, moving from 'pure' logic of rational certainty to 'pure' logic of conviction" (FERNHOUT 1986:85)

The same distinction, however, is still visible and inherent in the definition of 'faith' as imagination. The tension remains the same. This difference is not overcome by the use of the term 'imagination.' Nor has this tension between the two kinds of 'logic' been resolved in a coherent way in *Stages of Faith*, as FOWLER admits:

"(I)n any holistic approach to the human construction of meaning, account must be given of the relations of reasoning to imagination, of moral judgment making to symbolic representation, of

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16. FOWLER refers to PARKS's (1980) dissertation who quotes COLERIDGE: "How excellently the German *Einbildungskraft* expresses this prime and loftiest faculty, the power of coadunation, the faculty that forms the many into one--in-eins-bildung!" (PARKS 1980:215). PARKS takes this quote from HART (1968:338). 'Shaping into one,' however, is not the literal meaning of the German word derived from its etymological origin, but rather it has an etymological origin in the sense of 'putting an image into one's mind.' 'Ein' simply means 'hinein' ('into').

ecstatic intuition to logical deduction. I do not at all mean to imply that we have found adequate ways to model these relationships. But we have found it important to show the correlations we find between Piaget's and Kohlberg's stages (and those of Robert Selman on social perspective taking) with the forms of knowing and valuing that make up a faith stage. (FOWLER 1981a:99)

The suggestion that there may be a *correlation* between the two kinds of logic is a solid basis and an appropriate starting point for faith development theory and research. But FOWLER's statement of the primacy of the logic of conviction - that the 'logic of conviction' includes and encompasses, moreover "qualifies" and "anchors" the 'logic of rational certainty' (FOWLER 1980a:23) - goes further. This displays FOWLER's notion that the 'logic of conviction' is closer to an understanding of the essence of 'faith.' Whether it is possible to define the 'core of the cube' by reference to the *committing* and *valuing* dimension of 'faith,' as FERNHOUT (1986:87) suggests and claims - a claim that is based on the conviction that the 'logic of conviction' is more close to the notion of "faith-in-committing" -, still remains an open question. In my understanding, this would not only involve a challenge to the assumption of faith development theory's version of *cognitivism*, but also to the basic and unquestioned assumption of *constructivism* - and this would involve a further step in the 'hermeneutical turn.' This further step also could be anchored in the understanding of 'faith' as imagination.

However, with the definition of 'faith' as imagination, FOWLER does not integrate into faith development theory a thoroughgoing hermeneutical perspective which would mean to ascribe constitutive primacy to the images, symbols, narratives of religious traditions. The emphasis on the constructivist conviction of the activity of knowing would not allow such step in the 'hermeneutical turn;' Rather the constructivist understanding of the activity of knowing is modified in *another*, however less precise, way by the introduction of the concept of 'imagination:' the *unifying* and *comprehensive* notion of knowing which, for FOWLER's understanding of 'faith,' is central can be stated with greater emphasis, the 'shaping-into-one'-feature of 'faith.' To conclude: *The key definition of 'faith' as 'constitutive-knowing,' despite the modification of the concept of 'knowing' by means of the introduction of the concept of the 'logic of conviction,' does display the great indebtedness of faith development theory to the structural-developmental tradition. FOWLER has not modified the assumption of cognitivism to such an extent, he did not put the concept of the 'logic of conviction' in such terms that would disqualify the concept of 'faith' as operation in the structural-developmental paradigm. The assumption of*

*constructivism*<sup>17</sup> has not been challenged by FOWLER, as far as faith development theory is represented by this 1980/81 definition of 'faith.' (Thesis 4).

### 1.3. The Multi-Dimensionality of 'Faith'

Despite the quite precise definitions - by means of the demarcation from 'belief' and the cognitive-constructive definition as 'constitutive-knowing' - 'faith' is not a one-dimensional and not a definite phenomenon. 'Faith,' as FOWLER states, is a "complex, dynamic phenomenon" (FOWLER 1981a:32). 'Faith' is a multi-dimensional phenomenon.

The multi-dimensionality of 'faith' is multi-perspective: 'faith' appears as multi-dimensional in at least four different perspectives which are stated by FOWLER explicitly. 'Faith' displays its multi-dimensionality in various perspectives, some of which I have already mentioned: the heptagon of the seven aspects; the three dimensions of knowing, valuing, and committing; FOWLER's talk about the four patterns of construing our interactive relations; finally, the most comprehensive 'dynamic model,' in which FOWLER attempted to relate all possible components of the dynamics of adult 'faith.'

#### 1.3.1. Seven Aspects of 'Faith'

'Faith,' as we saw in the previous section, is defined as the constructive activity of unifying the various dimensions of the force-field of our life. This is most explicitly expressed in the definition of 'faith' as imagination. This broad and 'thick' notion of cognition includes a variety of aspects which correspond to the variety of aspects in which the force-field of life presents itself to us. In 'faith' as 'constitutive-knowing,' as 'imagination' or 'meaning-making,' a unique core of a person's con-

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17. To move beyond this constriction would demand a further step in the 'hermeneutical turn' and possibly involve the questioning of the rather one-sided resolution of the assimilation-accommodation relation in the tradition following PIAGET which has influenced FOWLER's faith development theory significantly. Comp. KESSELRING 1981:97; PEUKERT 1979:61ff; FRAAS 1988:167! See also Chapter 8.2.1.!

stitutive activity is assumed and defined. To gain access to this structuring core, we can look through various 'windows:' The form of logical reasoning, it is assumed, displays the structure of 'faith' as well as the construction of interpersonal perspective-taking and the form in which a person constructs his or her moral judgments; further, the person's social horizon, the bounds of his or her social awareness, displays the 'faith' structure as well as his or her way of relating to or construing authority; finally, the way in which a person forms the coherence of what she or he perceives of the world displays 'faith' as well as the way in which she or he understands symbols. Hence, Form of Logic (A), Perspective Taking (B), Form of Moral Judgment (C), Bounds of Social Awareness (D), Locus of Authority (E), Form of World Coherence (F), and Symbolic Functioning (G) are defined as the aspects which are assumed to display a person's 'faith' (FOWLER 1981a:244f).

Thereby, faith development theory and research does not differentiate between the aspects: they are neither put into a sequential, nor in a hierarchical order. FOWLER assumes that they are of equal importance. This is reflected in the graphical figure which FOWLER included in his article from 1980, "Faith and the Structuring of Meaning" (FOWLER 1980a:32), the heptagonal model (Figure 1.).

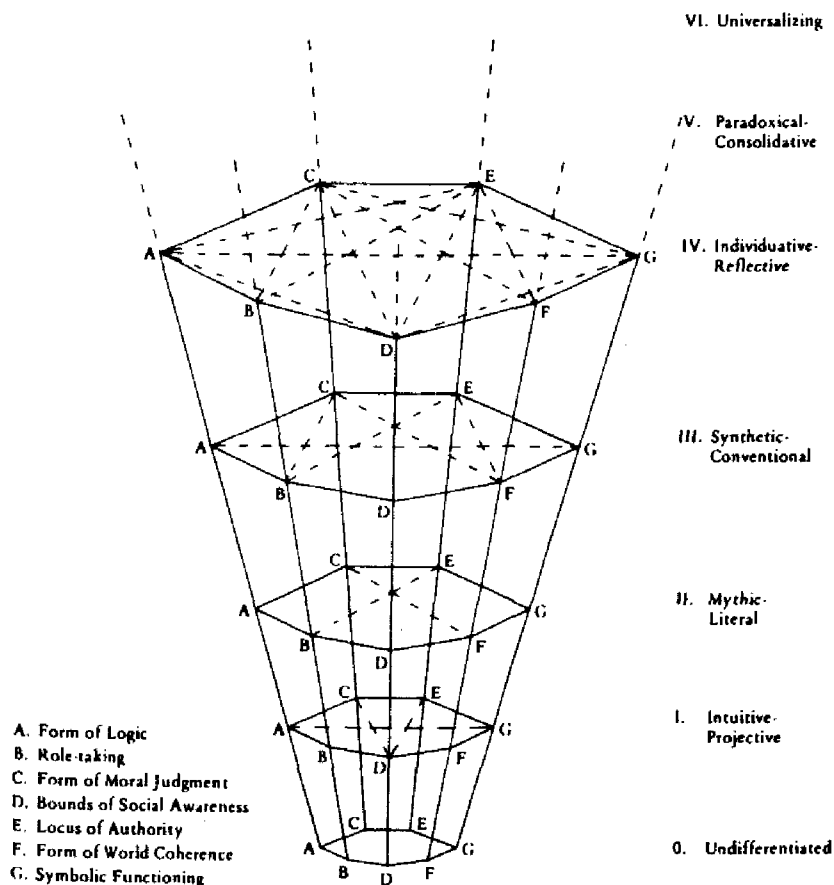


Figure 1. The Seven Structural Aspects of Faith (FOWLER)

No difference is assumed in regard to the two kinds of logic, the 'logic of rational certainty' and the 'logic of conviction.' Some writers have suggested a differentiation between Aspects A to C, on the one hand, and Aspects D to G, on the other: while the former is seen to present rather features of the 'logic of rational certainty,' and are derived from theories which stand more decisively in the cognitive-structural tradition, Aspects D to G are understood as the more important aspects and the more explicit "measurement of the logic of conviction" (HUNT 1985:140;165; FERNHOUT 1986:85). FOWLER, however, does not make a principal difference between the seven aspects. This assumption is consistent throughout FOWLER's work. There seems to be no other reason for FOWLER's assumption of equal importance than the assumption that 'faith' is such a comprehensive constructive activity that it is all-inclusive, that all the other activities are encompassed. This assumption is expressed in the claim that the 'logic of conviction' "transcends while including" the 'logic of rational certainty' (FOWLER 1980a:23):

"(T)he aspects were selected and devised to represent faith as a holistic form of knowing and committing. ... (T)he inclusion of Piagetian categories among the aspects corresponds to the ways in which a logic of rational certainty 'nests' in, or is funded by, the more comprehensive processes of the logic of conviction. The other aspects--moral reasoning, perspective taking, locus of authority, bounds of social awareness, and symbolic functioning--focus on dimensions of that more inclusive knowing that is faith, and serve the student of the dynamics of faith in the work of inferring structures." (FOWLER 1986:288)

Therefore: *The multi-dimensionality of the heptagonal model corresponds to the assumption of a deep, comprehensive and unifying constructive activity which is 'faith.'* (Thesis 5). Thereby, the heptagonal model displays a stronger affinity to and closer relation to the structural-developmental tradition than will the following perspectives of multi-dimensionality, since it incorporates the feature of a unifying *underlying structure* - though FOWLER has modified and defined this feature in terms of his more comprehensive understanding of the 'faith'-operations.

### 1.3.2. *Three Dimensions of 'Faith'*

The three dimensions of 'faith' which I want discuss here as FOWLER's second perspective of multi-dimensionality of 'faith' are *knowing, valuing, and committing*. Most precisely this three-dimensionality of 'faith' is stated in the 1985 article, "Pluralism, Particularity, and Paideia," (FOWLER 1985c:294ff). Here, FOWLER terms

the three dimensions the *epistemological*, the *axiological*, and the *ontological* dimension of 'faith.' Thus, inherent in 'faith,' is the following three-dimensionality:

- (1) 'faith as knowing' (epistemological dimension)
- (2) 'faith as valuing' (axiological dimension)
- (3) 'faith as committing' (ontological dimension).

These three dimensions are presented as of equal definitory importance for the concept of 'faith.' This has not been the case, in earlier states of faith development theory.

As has become clear in the previous section (1.2.), faith development theory, if we take the state of the theory presented in *Stages of Faith*, displays a preoccupation with the epistemological focus. Cognitivism - in the modified version which takes into account the convictional feature of knowing - is the primary focus, the key among the basic assumptions of the theory in regard to the conceptualization of 'faith.'

Surely, conviction does allude to the valuing and committing feature of 'faith;' and definitely, the features of valuing and committing are presented as important features of 'faith,' in the 1980/1981 state of faith development theory. However, in the 1980 definition, valuing and committing are presented as the "generating" sources of 'faith;' hence, they do not (yet) have the prominence as is given to the epistemological focus. In the 1981 definition, valuing and committing appear in the following context:

"Faith is: People's evolved and evolving ways ... of shaping their lives' purposes and meanings, trusts and loyalties ..." (FOWLER 1981a:92)

And FOWLER puts valuing and committing side by side with knowing when he defends his concept of 'faith' against critics:

"There simply is no other concept that holds together those various interrelated dimensions of human knowing, valuing, committing and acting that must be considered together if we want to understand the making and maintaining of human meaning." (FOWLER 1981a:92)

However, in *Stages of Faith*, the feature of knowing, especially in the term 'imagination' is given the most attention. In the preoccupation with the epistemological focus, *valuing* and *committing* are of secondary interest.

This has changed considerably, as we can see, when we look at the three-dimensionality as presented by the 1985 article. To explain the implications of this greater emphasis on valuing and on committing, we can look at the critique e.g. of FERNHOUT who, in his article, "Where is Faith? Searching for the Core of the

Cube" (FERNHOUT 1986), suggested to rework faith development theory, based on the assumption that the core of 'faith' is 'faith as commitment:'

"A focus on the first sense of faith would make it possible to explore whether there are identifiable patterns of *commitment*, and whether they can be correlated with patterns of integration in life. ... (S)uch a focus would, I believe, allow Fowler to provide a much sharper account of the distinguishing features of faith knowing. If it is possible to develop a case for knowing-in-commitment as a unique form of knowing, then the whole discussion of the relation of the two 'logics' could be advanced considerably." (FERNHOUT 1986:87)

While I would agree with FERNHOUT that 'faith' should also be defined in the terms of commitment and not only in the terms of knowing and imagination, I doubt that we then would have found the 'core of the cube.' And FOWLER has advanced the conceptualization of 'faith' by the three-dimensionality of 'faith' involving the epistemological, axiological, and the ontological dimension, all of which have the same degree of importance.

In the ontological dimension, as it is defined in the 1985 article, I note an advancement which goes beyond FERNHOUT's critique in that the ontological dimension incorporates features of the hermeneutical perspective. In explaining the nature of the ontological dimension, FOWLER states the significance of our embeddedness in a 'world,' the significance of our 'en-worlded-ness.' Thus, our 'being-in-the-world,' the ontological significance of *Verstehen* comes into play. This comes close to RABINOW's and SULLIVAN's definition of the 'interpretive turn,' as well as, to RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective. The ontological dimension allows FOWLER to link the embeddedness of 'faith' in community to our embeddedness in a 'world' and, finally, to our embeddedness in an ultimate environment. Furthermore, FOWLER ascribes to the ontological dimension features which will become of focal importance, in his theological re-interpretation of faith development theory: the *covenantal* perspective. Therefore, I regard the ontological dimension as a possible point of departure for further advancements of faith development theory moving toward a contextualist model of faith. And with this approach, which is informed by FOWLER's definition of the ontological dimension of 'faith,' one could pursue FERNHOUT's suggestion further.

To conclude: *There is great value in FOWLER's three-dimensional model. None of the dimensions, the epistemological, axiological and ontological dimensions should be regarded as secondary. FOWLER's explicit incorporation of committing (ontological dimension) into the three-dimensional model has implications for further work in faith development theory toward a hermeneutical perspective.* (Thesis 6).



### 1.3.3. *Four Patterns of Interaction*

"In constructive-developmental research and theory the focus of attention involves the patterns characterizing persons' construals of self-other, self-self, self-world, and self-Ultimate environment relations. The structuring underlying persons' selfhood and faith are identified by a kind of inference from the observation and analysis of certain kinds of behaviors, including speech and self-description. Stages of selfhood and faith, in this perspective, refer to typical patterns of construal that we have come to understand as deriving from systematically integrated operations of knowing, valuing, and meaning construction." (FOWLER 1987a:57)

In this quote we find both a brief characterization of the four patterns of construal and the origin of these patterns. The four patterns of relation or interaction are:

- (1) self-self relation
- (2) self-other relation
- (3) self-world relation
- (4) self-Ultimate environment relation

This quote, however, leaves no doubt about their source and origin: they derive from the operations of knowing, valuing and meaning construction. This again ascribes to the activity of the ego the competence to construct its own 'world.' Nevertheless: *In the four-dimensionality of the four patterns of interactional or relational construals, account is taken of the variety of respects in which 'faith' knows, understands, values and is committed. This four-dimensionality pursues the aspect of the triadic relational feature of 'faith,' but seems to be more comprehensive, since it includes also the self-self relation and heightens the self-world relation.* (Thesis 7).

### 1.3.4. *Six Components of the Dynamics of Adult 'Faith'*

Finally, I would like to refer to what I understand as FOWLER's most comprehensive model of 'faith:' the "Model of the Dynamics of Adult Faith" which we find in the 1982 article, "Stages of Faith and Adults' Life Cycles" (FOWLER 1982d:200); FOWLER presents this model again, in his 1987 paper for the Blaubeuren Symposium (FOWLER 1987b:15)

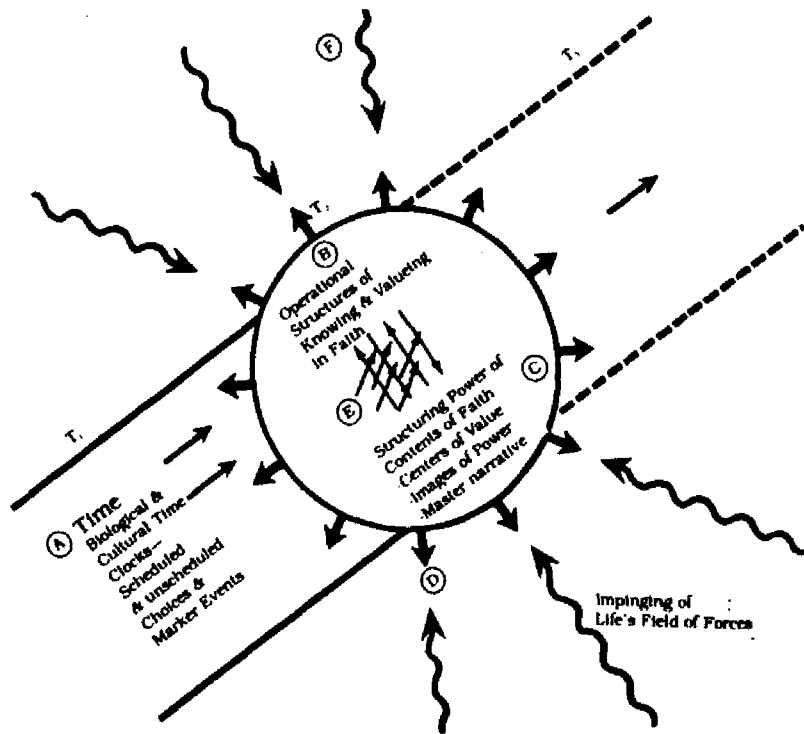


Figure 2. Toward a Model of the Dynamics of Adult Faith (FOWLER)

This model integrates the six components which FOWLER sees as playing a role in the dynamics of 'faith' into a figure. Here, *time* and *marker* events, in the light of which we understand 'what time it is in a person's life' (A), are seen to play a significant role as well as the *operational structures* of knowing and valuing in 'faith' (B). In this model, the 'structuring power of the *contents of faith*' is accounted for explicitly (C). The shape of the '*life structure*' is referred to by (D). The "powerful role of the *dynamic unconscious*" is a distinct component (E); (and is not subsumed under, and integrated into, the operation of 'faith'-knowing). The factor of the *force-field of our lives*, the economic, political, ideological, environmental, and relational influences, as well as the influence of religious communities and their symbolic representation are integrated into the figure (F).

The "Model of the Dynamics of Adult Faith" is FOWLER's most inclusive model of 'faith' in that it includes a variety of contexts and contents. (Thesis 8)

### 1.3.5. **Concluding Remark**

With this presentation of FOWLER's models which display the multi-dimensionality of 'faith' and with brief discussions at some points, I have attempted to sketch a tendency in faith development theory: *The multi-dimensional models of 'faith' tend toward an understanding of 'faith' which encompasses, and takes a variety of aspects and factors into account which play a significant role in 'faith.'* This tendency may indicate that there is another side to the demarcation (from 'belief') and to the precisely focused definition which places its greatest emphasis on the epistemological aspect: *The contexts and contents of 'faith' play a significantly more important role in the models which take into account the multi-dimensionality of 'faith.'* (Thesis 9)

## Chapter 2

### 'FAITH,' 'FAITH DEVELOPMENT,' AND THE STRUCTURING POWER OF CONTENT

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#### 2.1. The Significance of Images, Symbols, and Narratives for 'Faith' and 'Faith Development'

How does faith development theory's focus on the structural side of 'faith' affect the relation of the faithful person to the symbolic world? Does it imply a relativization of the symbolic world? This is a question we have already come up against, when we examined the consequences of the distinction between 'faith' and 'belief.' In our attempt to find an answer to this question, we need to consider two hypotheses:

(a) First, the focus on structure which is made explicit in the 'faith'-'belief' distinction could appear to involve *the demarcation of the concept of 'faith' from the symbolic world* as it has become manifested in concrete historical symbols within the various religious traditions. This demarcation could be seen to imply that, per definitionem, the symbolic world should be excluded from the concept of 'faith.' Though it may be acknowledged that 'faith' is awakened and nurtured by the symbolic world, the impact of the symbolic world may be seen as jeopardized by "relativity." This could be called the *exclusion* hypothesis.

(b) Second, the structuralist concept of 'faith' could be understood to involve *a substitution of the symbolic world with a set of different symbols or metaphors*. This could be called the *replacement* hypothesis.

The concept of 'faith,' when we stress its orientation towards the constructivist structural-developmental terms of knowing, appears to meet the criteria of the exclusion hypothesis. The 'faith'-'belief' demarcation could appear as the point where the demarcation of 'faith' from the *symbolic world* is established. As

stated, however, the fact must not be ignored that, in faith development theory, myths, symbols, ritual and doctrinal propositions are important: 'faith' is seen as arising out of and being shaped by images, symbols and other traditional contents of religious communities; in turn, such symbols, narratives etc. are the expression of the imagination which is 'faith.' This appears to falsify the hypothesis of exclusion.

Though not demarcated or excluded from the world of 'faith,' the various religious contents can be seen as *relativized*: they are, as FOWLER says, "relative apprehensions of our relatedness to that which is universal" (FOWLER 1981a:15) and appear in "myriad variants of religions and beliefs" (FOWLER 1981a:14f). Though 'faith' may be seen as nurtured by, or in "interaction" with (FOWLER 1981a:9), 'belief,' the character of this 'interaction' may be seen as jeopardized by the "relativity" or "relativism" of this 'interaction.' In contrast to the absoluteness and universality of 'faith,' the various forms of 'belief' - which are both the evoking environment and the expression of the *absolute* - leave us with a variety of options; 'beliefs' are *relative*.

But we need to ask further: When we accept the fact that religious symbols etc. are, first, *the awaking/evoking and shaping environment* and, then, *the expression of 'faith'* as imagination, the question which remains open is this: Do symbols belong to 'faith' *essentially*? We can differentiate: (a) Are symbolic expressions the necessary condition for 'faith'? Can we think of 'faith' as not awakened and shaped by symbolic expressions? Are certain symbolic expressions more important than others to evoke 'faith?' (b) Is expression in symbolic expressions essential to 'faith'? Is the expression of 'faith' necessarily symbolic? Are certain symbolic expressions more important than others for an expression of 'faith?' (c) Is 'faith' itself of a symbolic nature? Can we think of 'faith' as non-symbolic?

The questions (a) and (b) will be addressed below and, again in Part Three, when I try to develop my own conceptualization of faith and faith development theory. Since question (c) concerns theological hermeneutics, I will discuss it in Chapter Four. In regard to the questions (a) and (b), I find six characteristics in FOWLER's work which define the significance of symbolic expressions as *condition* and as *expression* of 'faith,' and which point towards an *essential* significance of these symbolic representations for 'faith.' They are summarized in a series of theses.

(1) *Symbols, metaphors, and concepts are "awakening and shaping" stimuli for 'faith.'* In a brief characterization of faith development theory and research,

FOWLER explains how the 'thick' conception of cognition in faith development theory includes symbolic representations:

"Faith understood as a knowing implies a 'thick' conception of cognition--one that includes the structuring power of pervasive and deep-going channels of the emotions, some of which are early in origin and largely unconscious. It also includes the gradually more conscious constructions we make in the dialectical interaction between our experiencing and the shaping power of the stories, symbols, language, and concepts we are offered in our communities of shared meaning. (FOWLER 1985c:294)

In this 1985 statement which speaks of a 'dialectical interaction,' we encounter the function of the symbolic representations which FOWLER has mentioned most often, also in his book from 1981: they *shape* our 'faith.' This can be formulated in a first of a series of theses: *Symbols, metaphors, and concepts are "awakening and shaping" stimuli for 'faith.'* In FOWLER's theory of faith development, the relation of the imagining process of 'faith' to the symbolic representations in Scripture and doctrine most often is defined as evoking and stimulating. (Thesis 10.1)

The significance of symbolic representations for the imagination which is 'faith' is often described this way:

"Faith as an imaginative process is awakened and shaped ... by the images, symbols, rituals and conceptual representations, offered with conviction, in the language and common life of those with whom we learn and grow." (FOWLER 1981a:25)

The symbolic representations to which 'faith' owes its awakening and its shape are not the spontaneous ideas of the people who we communicate with, i.e. their function does not crystallize only within the context of their common use in "our" community, but rather these representations have the feature of a tradition, of a history, of some kind of "classic" character:

"The lasting world religious traditions prove again and again to be the lively custodians of *truthful* images of the ultimate environment. They awaken persons to an imaginal grasp of the ultimate conditions of existence and enable them to celebrate or assent to the visions of transcendent value and power they mediate." (FOWLER 1981a:29)

This is a clear statement of the fact that symbolic representations are *important* for 'faith.' However, it is not, or not yet, the statement that symbolic representations are the necessary condition for 'faith.' We can maintain however that, in FOWLER's theory, symbolic representations have the important function of being evoking stimuli,<sup>18</sup> forming or "shaping" media, media which make possible the

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18. Cf. also the article of 1979, "Future Christians and Church Education:" Christian education "will attempt to honor the hunger of faith for exposure to scripture, tradition, and liturgy as *stimuli* for

celebration of and assent to shared visions. The symbolic representations in particular religious traditions appear as "repositories."<sup>19</sup>

(2) *'Faith' is operating on and "working on" the symbolic representations.* The difference between 'faith' as imagination and the world of symbols, metaphors, narratives and concepts of specific religious traditions does not only consist in the fact that the latter are the important stimuli and media for the former; but 'faith' is thought to play an active part and to operate or work on the symbolic representations as its 'object.' This becomes obvious in the following quote from 1980 which explains what 'faith' does with the symbolic world, how 'faith' operates on it:

"Faith employs images and ontological intuitions. It relies on historical and present experiences of disclosure and 'revelation.' Faith works with elements of religious, philosophical, and ideological traditions. The culture of myths, symbols, and ritual are part of its media. These elements faith interrogates by means of rational operations testing for sense and consistency." (FOWLER 1980b:150)

This defines the concept of 'faith' more precisely in that it ascribes to 'faith' the feature of a distinct and preceding phenomenon. Here, the unifying work of 'faith' as imagination plays its important role. *'Faith' must exist prior to the encounter with the symbolic traditions, if we can speak of 'faith' as 'working with' elements of these traditions or 'faith's' employment of "rational operations" in order to test for "sense and consistency" of cultural traditions. Consistently, FOWLER speaks of the symbolic representation as "media".* (Thesis 10.2)

(3) *Symbols, metaphors, narratives and concepts are the 'expression' of 'faith' in the movement from 'imagination' to symbolic expression* (Thesis 10.3). The term 'media' can also serve to describe the role of the symbolic world, when we ask how 'faith' expresses itself. The understanding of 'faith' as *imagination* is still the key thesis in accordance with the definition of 'faith' as 'constitutive-knowing:'

"Faith forms a way of seeing our everyday life in relation to holistic images of what we may call the *ultimate environment*. ... Faith, as imagination, grasps the ultimate conditions of our exist-

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*faith's imagination.* It will trust the power of the image-evoking elements of biblical narrative and ritual drama, and the language of Christian proclamation when it is used with conviction and congruence." (FOWLER 1979b:109)

19. "Most often, it (faith) comes to expression and accountability through the symbols, rituals, and beliefs of particular religious traditions. The major religious communities are the living repositories of the faith expressions of countless peoples in the past and present. These elements form traditions. They can serve to awaken and express the faith of people in the present." (FOWLER 1980a:15f)

ence, unifying them into a comprehensive image in light of which we shape our responses and initiatives, our actions." (FOWLER 1981a:24)

From this perspective, metaphors, symbols, stories, as well as concepts assume the role of being the *expression* of 'faith' as imagination:

"Metaphors, symbols, concepts - and many other kinds of representations - serve to bring our shared images of an ultimate environment to expression. (FOWLER 1981a:29)

and:

"(F)aitth affects the shaping of our initiatives and responses, our relationships and aspirations in everyday life, by enabling us to see them against the backdrop of a more comprehensive image of what constitutes true power, true value and the meaning of life. This overall image may be largely tacit and unexamined, functioning without one's being aware of or reflective about it. On the other hand, significant parts of it may have found expression or been made explicit in ritual, myth, symbol or story, or in the more systematic conceptual elaboration of a theology or philosophy." (FOWLER 1981a:28)

In these quotes from *Stages of Faith*, we find a confirmation for the thesis that 'faith,' in FOWLER's perspective, must be prior to its expression in symbolic representations. The symbolic expressions and representations, though they may be important, do not belong to 'faith' *essentially*. 'Faith' does not point to a certain, very specific symbolic representation. While the imagination of 'faith' points to a more precisely defined *image*, the expression of this image may take on a variety of forms.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, symbols, metaphors and concepts are important to 'faith,' since they are the unique language and voice of 'faith.'

(4) *Narratives, 'master images' and 'master stories' enable us to ascribe special importance and normativity and the feature of comprehensive orientation of a person's life to certain symbolic representations.* (Thesis 10.4)

"Master image" (FOWLER 1979b:109) is a notion derived from NIEBUHR and HART (HART 1968:300ff) who maintain the feature of normativity and comprehensiveness. Christian education, FOWLER says

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20. "(I)mages are prior to and deeper than concepts. When we are asked what we think or know about something or someone, we call up our images, setting in motion a kind of scanning interrogation or questioning of them. Then in a process that involves both a forming and an expression we narrate what our images 'know.' The narration may take story form; it may take poetic or symbolic form, transforming nascent inner images into articulated, shared images; or it may take the propositional form of conceptual abstractions. ... (N)o narration of a nascent image, whether in story, poem or conceptual form, exhausts the content of the image. ... Faith, in its forming of images of the ultimate environment, never finds analogues that fully or with complete accuracy bring out and express its knowing." (FOWLER 1981a:26f)



*"will be faithful in holding the images so generated accountable to the normativity of the master-images which underlie and find expression in the Scriptures and in doctrine."* (FOWLER 1979b:109)

The term 'master image' enables us to explain the strong relation between the imagination which is 'faith' and its symbolic expression and representation; it enables us to state the affinity between the images of 'faith' and the symbolic, 'imaginal' representations of the religious-cultural tradition.

'Master images' display an affinity to *narrative*: they integrate the symbolic representations into a coherent context of a story. Such stories are seen to be the matrix of a person's life: they give orientation and shape as comprehensive models. FOWLER, in *Stages of Faith*, refers to this with the term "master story" (FOWLER 1981a:277;282; 295).

In his book of 1984, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*, the story becomes a fundamental category for FOWLER's theory (FOWLER 1984a:137). The purpose of the book is summarized as the "convergence," "interplay," "interaction," or "mutual interpenetration" of (a) "personal life narratives", (b) "the web of social interchanges", and (c) "the core story of the Christian faith."

(5) *The evoking, stimulating, shaping relevance of symbolic representations is an integral part of the triadic relational feature of 'faith.'* (Thesis 10.5). The triadic relation of 'faith' is described, in *Stages of Faith* in the following way:

"Faith ... is a dynamic process arising out of our experience of interaction with the diverse persons, institutions, events and relationships that make up the 'stuff' of our lives. Faith as an imaginative process is awakened and shaped by these interactions and by the images, symbols, rituals and conceptual representations, offered with conviction, in the language and common life of those with whom we learn and grow." (FOWLER 1981a:25)

The triadic feature of 'faith,' the relational character of the faithful self to an object/other human being in relation to a 'third:' a shared center of value and power - this triadic pattern makes sense only if we assume that the relation to the 'third,' the symbolic representations in the cultural-religious tradition is an *essential* one. Otherwise, the triangle, would collapse. The relation to the other is mediated by a shared center (comp. IVY 1985:33).

"(O)ur ties to others are mediated, formed, and deepened by our shared or common trust in and loyalties to centers of supraordinate value (CSV)." (FOWLER 1980a:17)

The triangular pattern of 'faith' adds to the understanding of 'faith' as knowing and as imagination an essentially hermeneutic feature: the faithful person achieves self-understanding, achieves identity by means of the relation to other

persons *and*, by the same token, by means of his or her relation to the 'shared center or centers of value and power.' In his book of 1987, *Faith Development and Pastoral Care*, FOWLER emphasizes the essential necessity of symbolic representations and community relation for 'faith' and claims that we cannot think of 'faith' *not* awakened and shaped by relationship and symbolic representation:

"(T)he context in which we become selves and form stances and styles of faith is community. There is no selfhood that is not formed in relation to others and to the culture of shared social meanings and institutions. Similarly, there is not faith which is not awakened and formed in the matrix of relationship, language, ritual, and symbol. (FOWLER 1987a:56)

While the triadic pattern of 'faith' expresses the necessity of the availability of a "scvp," the question of the *essential* necessity of a *specific* symbolic representation for such a triangle of 'faith' is still open. FOWLER's underlying assumption seems to be that the *existence* of "o" (other) and a "scvp" are of essential necessity; but the content of "scvp" does not seem to be essential. Is the content of "scvp" relative?

In my interpretation, FOWLER's 1981 conceptualization of "scvp" goes beyond relativity. If it is true that, as I will argue in Chapter Four, 'faith,' by definition, includes the feature of a symbolic representation, that it includes content, i.e. the very specific symbolic content of an ultimate center of value and power - which, moreover, has a close affinity to the Judeo-Christian symbol of the 'Kingdom of God' - it must be concluded that not only the existence of symbolic representations are essential to 'faith,' but a symbol of specific symbolic content essentially belongs to the triadic pattern of 'faith.' FOWLER points to this 'thickness' of the "SCVP," in his brief characterization of faith development theory from which I already quoted above, when he not only describes the triadic pattern of 'faith' as a "mutually interacting" relation - which seems to foreshadow a *hermeneutical* interpretation -, but also introduces the *root metaphors* as the guiding models for this triadic interaction:

"Epistemologically, faith exhibits a *triadic* pattern of interaction. At the base we have the dialogues between self and others and between self and world. Faith's construing, however, holds its shaping of these 'horizontal' dialogues in *mutually interacting relation* to some apprehension of an ultimate environment. Faith must hold the multivalent, dynamic interactions which it involves in a tensional but integrated unity. To do this it employs--consciously or unconsciously, *root metaphors*--comprehensive images derived from shared experience, that can be made to serve as *generative models* by which to orient and ground ourselves in the vastness and complexity of our corporate and personal human lives." (FOWLER 1985c:294)

As an answer to our questions, therefore, it may be concluded: *Symbolic representations are not only important to 'faith' as its evoking, stimulating, shaping and expressing media, but, by the triadic pattern of 'faith,' they are characterized as being essential.* (Thesis 10.6). *Thereby, a very specific kind of symbolic representation belongs to 'faith' essentially.* (Thesis 10.7)

This tendency toward taking the *essential* necessity of symbolic representations into account presents an answer to IVY's critique of FOWLER's separation of person and story (IVY 1985:67). As I understand IVY, his concern is to bring story and the person's faith closer together which, in faith development theory, are seen to be separated in two domains: the person, on the one hand, and the external symbolic world, on the other. When we take into account the relational character of 'faith' and, definitely when we maintain the hermeneutical character of this triadic relation, we have a response to IVY's concern.

(6) *The relational feature of 'faith' qualifies 'faith' as a hermeneutical phenomenon.* (Thesis 10.8).

The model of the triangle is of special importance for an interpretation of faith development theory in a hermeneutical perspective. The relations in the triangle are *hermeneutical* relations in that they involve communication with the other and understanding of the shared center, the shared symbolic representation. If we follow the argument of FOWLER's already quoted statement, that 'faith' is "arising out of our experience of interaction with the diverse persons, institutions, events and relationships" and evoked by our encounter with "images, symbols, rituals and conceptual representations" (FOWLER 1981a:25), 'faith' appears as a hermeneutical triangle.

However, the statement that the triangle is a hermeneutical triangle is not explicitly FOWLER's own contention. As I understand FOWLER's theory, including his later writings, he does not explicitly define the arrows in the triangle as *hermeneutical* relations. The arrows still could indicate some kind of affinity or, taken as a whole triangle, a certain causal relationship (i.e. *because of / by means of* the relation to "scvp," the relation between "s" and "o" exists). Moreover, if I am understanding correctly, the arrow from "s" (self) to "o" (others), in FOWLER's understanding, is different from the arrows of both "s" and "o" to "scvp" (shared center(s) of value and power). This would indicate that, in FOWLER's own understanding, the arrows in the triangle stand less for a hermeneutical relation, than for one of affinity and, in certain respects, of cause and effect. Nevertheless, for a hermeneutical interpretation of faith development theory - which is my goal -, it is important to take the importance of the relational, triadic character of 'faith' in

FOWLER's theory into account, and to keep in mind that this triangle could suggest a triangular hermeneutical relationship which may be essential to 'faith.'

## 2.2. The "Tension" between Structure and Content

There is a "tension" built into the faith development project. FOWLER speaks of a "tension," but also of a "coexistence," "between the aspiration to be a general theory of faith development" which is guided by the "interest in social scientific research and theory-building," on the one hand, and "the intention to contribute a hermeneutical and normative anthropological perspective for a Christian practical theology" (FOWLER 1987b:1;7;1988b:11). This tension reflects the tension between structure and content: 'structure' refers to the operations of 'faith' which are conceptualized and tested in the structural-developmental tradition of PIAGET and KOHLBERG, while 'content' refers to the content(s) of the narrative, symbolic or doctrinal tradition of a particular religion, in our own tradition: of Christian religion.

Since the primary and most solid pillar of FOWLER's faith development theory has been the structural-developmental perspective in the tradition of PIAGET, the problem of *content* was approached always from the angle of the *structural* perspective. Thus the question which FOWLER had to ask himself and his colleagues who have adopted the PIAGETian paradigm has been: to what extent does the structural-developmental perspective account for the contents of 'faith.' This tensional coexistence in faith development theory, therefore, is not one existing between two equally important aspects, but rather the problem is more complex: The structural aspect appears to be given more emphasis, which becomes most obvious in faith development research.

The fact that, in faith development theory, the structure content relation cannot be managed in dealing with this relation as it were a clear-cut distinction, but that it rather has developed into a "tension," is due to an appropriate characteristic of faith development theory as a structural-developmental theory of 'faith:'

'Faith,' as we have seen, has to be defined in different terms than presented by the concepts of 'logic' and 'cognitive operation,' as they are developed in theory building and research within the PIAGET-KOHLBERG tradition. FOWLER, as shown in Chapter One, could not simply adopt the PIAGETian concept of cognition and the consistent perspective of cognitive development; he did not simply subsume the concept of 'faith' (e.g. as concept of 'religious cognition') under the domain of

cognitive development; but rather, FOWLER indicated a crucial difference to the PIAGETian tradition through the concept of the 'logic of conviction.'

For the domain of the 'logic of rational certainty,' it appears as a legitimate structural-developmental rule to separate the structures from content and view the contents as interchangeable. The *structures* of the 'logic of rational certainty' may yield sufficient account of the development of a person's relation towards the realm of physical, mechanical, and mathematical objects.

However, this is different for the realm of '*faith*,' meaning-making, worth, identity, finally, the person's relation to the Ultimate. 'Faith' owes itself to the contents of symbols, images, narratives, and doctrinal concepts of religious communities. The contents of '*faith*,' even if they appear as being "relative" apprehensions, are not simply interchangeable. They cannot be neglected.

Therefore, the structure content relation appears as a "tensional" relation, when the domain of theory and research is '*faith*.' FOWLER, in the construction of a *structural-developmental* theory of '*faith*,' felt the necessity to speak of the "structuring power of the *contents*" of '*faith*.' Especially, when we want to take the relation of stage change and conversion into account,<sup>21</sup> the structuring power of the contents cannot be ignored.

While thus there are good reasons for the deviation from the strict structural-developmental model as it is designed for the domain of logic, FOWLER, however, as stated in Thesis 4 already, did not conceptualize the 'logic of conviction' in a way that would risk to disqualify the concept of '*faith*' as an operation in the PIAGETian sense. On the contrary, the structural-developmental paradigm is the realm where faith development theory "finds its principal grounding" (FOWLER 1988b:6). This is the reason why the inevitable tension between structure and content has developed into a one-sided tensional relation.

It would be a misinterpretation of FOWLER's work, however, to maintain that it represented a one-dimensional and one-sided interest in (cognitive) structures of faith development. On the contrary, as already mentioned, FOWLER himself 'deviates' from this one-sided focus on structure. This becomes obvious not only by the fact that the reference point of faith development, Universal Faith (Stage Six), cannot be seen in merely structural terms, but implies a very rich and 'content-loaden' image of a particular religious tradition: the Kingdom of God; but the impact of content on faith development is emphasized throughout FOWLER's work.

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21. See Part III, Chapter 9.2!

The importance of 'content' for 'faith' is emphasized in the following quote from the article from 1980 which appears again in *Stages of Faith*:

*"In both faith-knowing and the kind of moral-knowing which gives rise to choice and action, the constitution or modification of the self is always an issue. In these kinds of constitutive-knowing not only is the 'known' being constructed but there is also a simultaneous confirmation, modification, or reconstitution of the knower in relation to the known."* (FOWLER 1980a:23; = 1981a:103)

*The notion of the "structuring power of the contents of faith" (FOWLER 1981a:273;276f;281; 1982d:202f; 1987b: 1;16) reflects the attempt to take the concepts, religious practices, the centers of value, the images of power and also the master stories into account, in their impact on 'faith' transformation. (Thesis 11.1)*

Surely, FOWLER speaks about the "structuring power of the contents," but in the 1981 book, *Stages of Faith*, this notion is not the center of the theory: not of the conceptualization of 'faith' and, less so, of the idea of development, and least of all of the research project. It is only in view of the previous proposal to distinguish structure from content, for the sake of social scientific clarity, that to content in its "structuring" impact is given attention. Stated another way: *The structuring power of the 'faith operations' on the various contents is conceptualized (and tested) thoroughly for the different stages of development, while the structuring power of the contents is only of secondary importance for theory and research in faith development. (Thesis 11.2).*

However: *The significance of metaphors, symbols, narratives, the master stories, the contents of 'faith', has been given attention to an increasing degree, in the development of FOWLER's theory. (Thesis 11.3).* This becomes obvious in that out of a previously combined aspect "Symbolic and Conceptual Functioning" (FOWLER 1976a:187) a Separate aspect "Symbolic Functioning" (FOWLER 1981a:300) was developed and distinguished from "Form of Logic." And more attention was also given to "World Coherence" which was not treated as an explicit aspect in 1976.

After *Stages of Faith*, this tendency continued: In the book of 1984, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*, the Christian story is a central theme, as we have seen. The paper for the Blaubeuren Symposium in 1987 examines the tension between the practical-theological and the psychological-structural aspect of faith development theory; it acknowledges the implications of FOWLER's stronger emphasis on the theological dimension in the recent years: it results in the need to take the dynamic interplay of the structural operations of 'faith' with "the structuring power of the contents" (FOWLER 1987b:1) into account.

In more recent writings, also "the sponsorship of traditions, group membership, and the critical relations and experiences arising from interaction in life" are specified as affecting "a person's ongoing development through the stages" (FOWLER 1988a:30). Here also, FOWLER expands the definition of 'faith' and of faith development theory by balancing activity with passivity: the constructivist-operational feature with the receptive feature; structural aspects with aspects of content:

"Faith development theory attempts to account for the operations of knowing, valuing and committing that underlie a person's construal of self-other relations in the context of an explicitly or implicitly coherent image of an ultimate environment. Faith is understood dynamically as involving both the finding of and being found by meaning; both the construction and the reception of beliefs and commitments; and it is meant to include both explicitly religious expressions and enactments of faith, as well as those ways of finding and orienting oneself to coherence in an ultimate environment which are not religious." (FOWLER 1988a:30)

In this quote, we find both: (a) the description of the object of faith development research defined as the *operations* of knowing, valuing and committing and (b) a more comprehensive and inclusive definition of faith as involving as well the *finding of*, construction of, and *being found by* and *receiving* meaning. Both features of 'faith', the active and the receptive side, are combined in the definition, they are placed side by side. This is an advancement of the theory.

Another advancement, in regard to the structure-content problem, can be seen to follow from the work on early childhood. *In the light of the work on early childhood, certain features of the concept of 'faith' are underscored: The encounter with the environment and the response to it, being in relation, responsiveness towards others, are features of selfhood and 'faith' from the start, from the very beginning of life. The fact that we find it in early childhood development reconfirms and supports the relational character of 'faith.'* (Thesis 11.4).

What does FOWLER's recent work on early childhood have to say on the tension between structure and content? Does the concept of 'faith' which is developed and assumed for infancy focus more on the structural aspect or on the aspect of content? The emphasis on *responsiveness*, on *interaction*, and on *mutuality*, in the attempt to illuminate the genesis of 'faith' and of selfhood, indicates a modification in regard to the *concept of faith*: While the central definition of 'faith' has been "constitutive-knowing," the focus of the concept of 'faith' which FOWLER develops in respect to its genesis, in respect to early childhood, is less the constitutive activity of knowing, (or of valuing, or of committing), but rather the

*interactive* mutuality of 'reading' the other (e.g. the face of the mother) and responding; the focus is on 'faith' as *relational*.

The focal importance of the partners in interaction, the parents and those who primarily take care of the infant in the case of early childhood, suggests a concept of faith which cannot dispense with the "contents" (of the other). Surely, the images of God are *representations*, i.e. the images are internally constructed by the child, but this means also that they are *re-presentations*: real persons, the parents, not only guide this process, but serve as the original models for the re-presentations, they are the real partners in this interaction. The work on early childhood has come to this result: *The focal impact of the parents on 'faith,' the focal impact of the 'con-text' or 'content' of the other, has been embodied in faith development theory more deeply.* (Thesis 11.5).

Thus the more recent writings of FOWLER may help to bring the unequal tension between structure and content into a better balance. For due to the fact that the argumentative structure and the plausibility of the Christian theological perspective appears to be of a different kind, i.e. that it relies on theorems which are based on the contents of the particular Christian tradition, it turns out to be less convincing, since less comparable and understandable, within the social scientific speech-community, and only convincing within theology. Thus, it appears reasonable to claim: *since the publication of the more theological oriented writings in which FOWLER attempts to make "the theological grounding and framework" of his theory (FOWLER 1988b:16) explicit, a more balanced version of this tension has come to emerge which may indicate the necessity for further correlative investigation.* (Thesis 11.6). For the present - as long as theory and research of the "structuring power of contents" have not been developed further -, we can only hope for, and voice the necessity of, a "dynamic interplay;" we probably cannot say much more than FOWLER in a summary statement of 1987:

"When the theory is brought into the context and service of Christian practical theology, the theological foundations of the theory can not only be elaborated in more confessional ways, but there can (and must be) a full accounting for the dynamic interplay, in conversion and re-formulation, of the formal structural operations identified by the Aspects of the theory with the structuring power of the 'contents' of Christian tradition." (FOWLER 1987b:18)

To conclude, I claim that *both components of this "tension" in faith development theory could be brought into yet a better balance.* (Thesis 11.7)



## Chapter 3

# HERMENEUTICS AND METHODOLOGY IN FAITH DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

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### 3.1. Interviewing and Coding as "an Exercise in Hermeneutics"

Our analysis of the hermeneutics of faith development theory would overlook an important aspect, if we were not to include the analysis of research. This is the case for two reasons referring to different respects in which the hermeneutics of faith development theory can be investigated: (a) The hermeneutics of 'faith:' Is the hermeneutical perspective which is involved in the concept of 'faith' and 'faith development' still adopted consistently in research? Is the "structuring power of the contents" a part of the research design? (b) The hermeneutics of research: How does the hermeneutical perspective effect the interpretation of a person's development in faith? What kind of hermeneutics is involved in interviewing and coding the interviews?

Both dimensions or aspects of hermeneutics seem to be connected or related in some kind of affinity: The broader understanding of hermeneutics in the multi-dimensional concept of 'faith' also seems to involve a broader understanding of hermeneutics in research. This becomes obvious when we take a look at the hermeneutics involved in e.g. KOHLBERG's theory and research: the more limited understanding of hermeneutics in the theoretical conceptualization of morality which is focused on a person's justice reasoning seems to also involve a more limited hermeneutical perspective in research which attempts to rationally reconstruct the reasons for a certain hypothetical dilemma resolution.

In any case, faith development research involves a certain kind of hermeneutical perspective; it is "an exercise in hermeneutics," as the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (MOSELEY et.al.1986) states:

"Administering and coding the faith development interview is an exercise in hermeneutics. Language, in the form of verbal response to questions, is the observable datum upon which the interviewer/ coder bases inferences about the mental and emotional processes of the person being interviewed. (MOSELEY et.al.1986:16)

For a delineation of the contours of the hermeneutics of faith development research, therefore, the issues of *multi-dimensionality* and *reconstruction* stand in the foreground. They will be investigated later, in more detail, in respect to the more specific themes: (a) the role which the impact of the 'contents' of symbolic representations have on faith development research; (b) the importance of the narrative of life history.

### **3.1.1.     *Reconstruction and Multi-Dimensionality in Faith Development Research***

Faith development theory, as we have seen, pays attention to the multi-dimensionality of 'faith.' FOWLER claims that his theory's concept of 'faith' displays such a multi-dimensionality: it not only encompasses religious and non-religious forms of 'faith,' but also conscious and unconscious, rational and passional dynamics (FOWLER 1988b:5); a narrow focus on knowing is rejected by introducing the concept of the 'logic of conviction' and by the three-dimensional model of 'faith' as knowing, valuing and committing; the effort to account for the multi-dimensionality of 'faith' is also reflected in the variety of the seven aspects which are seen to display the different aspects of a coherent whole; and an even broader notion of the multi-dimensionality of 'faith' appears in the four 'patterns of construal,' the construal of self-self, self-other, self-world, and self-Ultimate relation. This multi-dimensionality of 'faith' is summarized in the most comprehensive model of 1982, "Toward a Model of the Dynamics of Adult Faith," in which life history and the contents of 'faith' are explicitly included, as well.

How does research in faith development appear in respect to this deep notion of the multi-dimensionality of 'faith'? If viewed against the background of research in the strict PIAGETian model, it appears that research in faith development also takes this multi-dimensionality into account:

"Rather than isolate the developmental from the psycho-dynamic, as is done by Piaget and Kohlberg, we have attempted to integrate these two forms of activity. In so doing, we have heightened aspects of constructivist epistemology ignored or minimized by Piaget, for example,

socio-historical conditions and their impact on the narrative structure of self-understanding."  
(MOSELEY et.al.1986:5)

We need to keep this thesis in mind: *Faith development research claims to include and integrate the psycho-dynamic dimension and to the socio-historical conditions and to take the dimension of life history into account.* (Thesis 12.1)

For the accomplishment of this comprehensive task, therefore, the research instrument appears adequate; it attempts to take a variety of aspects of 'faith' into account:

"... the current, open-ended form of the interview is still the most appropriate research tool given the current stage of our knowledge of faith development. ... The semi-clinical interview enables us to gather a wider range of data than would be possible with a pencil and paper test, dilemma test, or other format designed to measure structure alone. Along with codable structural data, the open-ended interview yields data on the individual's life history, social relationships and images and thoughts about self that could not be gathered from a test that was designed to measure specific structures in isolation." (MOSELEY et.al.1986:12)

Indeed, the research tool, the open-ended interview, reflects the attempt to account for the multi-dimensionality of 'faith' and elicits a broad variety of data. Thereby, the structure-content issue is also affected: Notably, the *Manual* appreciates that *the research instrument elicits the broad variety and depth of 'contents:' images, thoughts, life history, social relations. This suggests that the aspects of content are given special emphasis.* (Thesis 12.2)

The interview structure is very open so as to allow the person who is interviewed to give a full account of his or her self-understanding and 'meaning-making.' However, the interview is "not completely open-ended" (MOSELEY et.al. 1986:16), since "it has a definite agenda" (Ibid.); it has a "semi-clinical" interview structure. The agenda is structured by focal questions which center around four themes: (a) significant relationships in the past and at present, (b) present values and commitments, (c) religion and religious life, and (d) crises and peak experiences in the past and present. For a deeper understanding of the person interviewed and in order to elicit a broad variety of responses, follow-up questions are recommended. The interview may take more than one hour.

Recently, the fourth theme, crises and peak experiences (d), has been strongly emphasized by including, in the interview, as its first part or even in a separate previous arrangement, the *life tapestry exercise* (cf. FOWLER 1988b:19). Here, the person who is interviewed is asked to take time and reflect upon important themes of his or her life history: geographic and socio-economic circumstances; significant relations; uses and directions of the self; events and condi-

tions in society should be written down in a chronological order. But here, very specific issues are included which are directed toward the 'contents' of 'meaning-making:' images of God; centers of value; authorities. (MOSELEY et.al.1986:20f; 1987a:122f)

The interview itself can be viewed to represent a hermeneutical paradigm: *The interview setting, the interview questions through all of the four parts, promote a sensitive and responsive interpretive procedure which does not restrict the flow of communication.* (Thesis 12.3). The interview situation allows the display of a kind of plurivocity of meanings. The *Manual* not only concedes, but it suggests, to ask further questions in order to validate our interpretation. *Especially and explicitly the life tapestry exercise and the open personal questions, the questions on "Crises and Peak Experiences," aim toward a sensitive reconstruction of a person's life story.* (Thesis 12.4)

From this perspective, the interview appears as *more* than a narrowly focussed research interview: it includes features of the structure of communication in pastoral counseling (and, in my interpretation, requires a considerable mastery of skills used in pastoral counseling). And it may appear to the person being interviewed as if she or he were engaged in *more* than in scientific research. In administering the interview, we assume almost complete ignorance in regard to the aims of faith development research (to analyze and code the *structures* of the interviewee's 'faith'). Thus, a second implicit focus appears to gain special significance: the depth and multi-dimensionality of data about the 'contents' and especially about 'life history.' The recommendation of the *Manual*, not to spend too much time on the life tapestry exercise (MOSELEY et.al.1986:25) and to leave the questions on crises and peak experiences for the last (and more open) section of the interview (MOSELEY et.al.1986:35) may indicate the tendency that this second focus of the interview may assume priority at the expense of formality and comparability. This may be another indication for the conclusion that the interview allows not only for flexibility but - and this can be said with emphasis - *The interview elicits "contextual richness"* (MOSELEY et.al.1986:13). (Thesis 12.5).

### **3.1.2. Structural Reconstruction and the Contents in Faith Development Research**

As we have seen, the *Manual* views it favorable that the faith development interview elicits the variety and depths of the 'contents' of 'faith.' With this focus,

research appears to be consistent with the hermeneutics inherent in the concept of 'faith' as it comes to expression in FOWLER's phrase of the 'structuring power of the contents.' Does this perspective still play the same role, when the research process proceeds to the stage of *evaluation*? What hermeneutical rules are inherent in the instruction for coding the interviews?

Faith development research, according to the instructions for coding in the *Manual*, displays a quite precise focus on the structures:

"A key point in learning to code a faith development interview is learning how to think in structural terms. For our purposes here, structure can be defined as those patterns of mental operation that operate on content. In the interviewee's response to the questions of the faith development interview, we are seeking not so much the "what" of content, but the "how" and the "why" that indicates structure. Structures are those patterns of cognitive and affective operations by which content is understood, appropriated, manipulated, expressed, and transformed. As such, the structures of meaning-making are not directly manifest, but must be intuited through the analysis of the actual content of the interview responses."(MOSELEY et.al.1986:42f)

The *Manual* states explicitly - and, thereby, specifies the paradigm which the exercise in hermeneutics should adhere to:

"Administering and coding the faith development interview is an exercise in hermeneutics. Language, in the form of verbal response to questions, is the observable datum upon which the interviewer/ coder bases inferences about the mental and emotional processes of the person being interviewed. In order to do this, the interviewer must interpret these verbal responses and reconstruct them in terms of structural developmental theory. (MOSELEY et.al.1986:16)

'Reconstruction,'<sup>22</sup> as it is used here in the service of structural developmental research, "reconstruction in terms of developmental theory," means something different than reconstruction in a communicative process. To explain more precisely, 'reconstructive interpretation,' as embedded in a communicative process, is the model which faith development research follows to a certain point. As noted above, the interview setting promotes a sensitive and responsive interpretive procedure which cautions against restricting the flow of communication of the rather open-ended interview and suggests asking follow-up questions. This kind of 'reconstruction,' therefore, could be called '*communicative reconstruction*.'

When we proceed to the stage of coding the interview, however, not only the flow of communication has come to an end, but also a possible imagined dialogue with the respondent ceases. *The coding procedure requires of us that we*

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22. The term 'reconstruction' suggests comparison with the hermeneutical perspectives of both HABERMAS and RICOEUR. See section 3.2 in this chapter, for HABERMAS' perspective, and, for RICOEUR's Perspective, see Part II.!

*transcend the interpretation in the terms of communicative reconstruction and that we leave further questions of validity open, in order to focus on the structural aspect of the responses. Another kind of re-construction interrupts the hermeneutical enterprise: extrinsic reconstruction, the "reconstruction of the responses in terms of structural-developmental theory." (Thesis 12.6).*

Part of the problem of leaving the realm of free interpretive communication is due to the entire research design: the fact that the coder analyzes the answers in a way which the respondent is not aware of (and possibly would not agree). Ellis NELSON and Daniel ALESHIRE, in their article, "Research in Faith Development" (NELSON& ALESHIRE 1986), point out that problem. They mention the suspicion

*"that the data supplied by the respondents would have been significantly different, if they had known how it would be used." (NELSON&ALESHIRE 1986:188)*

The interview process, I think, could put a stronger focus on communicative reconstruction from the start, if the respondents to the interview questions were familiar with the theory and knew they would be placed in one of the stages.<sup>23</sup> From this perspective, *the "reconstruction in terms of structural-developmental theory" in the coding procedure involves a curtailment of the broader hermeneutical perspective displayed in the interview. (Thesis 12.7).*

The curtailment involved in transition from the communicative process of interviewing and responding to the stage of coding the transcribed interview can be explained in respect to the two models of 'faith,' the 1980 model and the 1982 model: Reconstruction in terms of structural-developmental theory appears to ground itself in the heptagonal model of 1980. It is obvious that the coding procedure is modelled after the heptagon of the seven aspects. The variety of factors in the dynamic model of 1982: life history and marker events in time (A); the contents of faith (C); the dynamics of the unconscious (E); and the religio-cultural force-field (F) are not evaluated explicitly by coding the interview. These factors are not operationalized. Hence, *the claim, in the earlier quote, that faith development theory incorporates and takes those dimensions into account which are ignored or minimized by PIAGET such as life history, psycho-dynamics or socio-historic conditions cannot be maintained in regard to the explicit operationalization of the coding procedure. (Thesis 12.8).*

This is the point where the discussion about an extension of the number of variables could advance theory building and research in faith development theory.

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23. NELSON and ALESHIRE propose to test this by a comparative research. (NELSON&ALESHIRE 1986:188)

Possibly, the extension of the number of aspects could be the result of such discussion.<sup>24</sup>

The reconstruction modelled after the heptagonal model, it can be added as a last point, is based on the assumption that the seven aspects are of equal importance. Moreover, it is in principle arbitrary which aspect is referred to in coding - though there may be a certain affinity of certain questions to certain aspects, a greater probability that certain questions or themes elicit data which can be scored according to certain aspects. (The aspect key is noted at the end of each of the interview questions in the interview guide in order to indicate the aspect or the aspects of faith in which, most likely, the response will provide data and according to which, therefore, the response, most appropriately, should be coded.) But in principle, faith development research assumes an undifferentiated coherence of these seven aspects. HUNT's presumption that the aspects D to G are designed to measure the convictional aspect of knowing and his related assumption that they are the more important aspects (HUNT 1985:140;165) is rendered obsolete by the basic arbitrariness of aspect reference and the mathematics of coding: to calculate a simple average (MOSELEY et.al.1986:9).

### **3.1.3. *Taking the Narrative Coherence of the Life History in Faith into Account***

In regard to the narrative structure of the life history, faith development research claims to pay due attention to a kind of holistic perspective. As already quoted, faith development research wants to heighten the impact of socio-historical conditions on the narrative structure of self-understanding, and, therefore, appreciates the fact that the interviews yield data on the individual's life history. This importance of life history is also reflected in regard to evaluation:

"When abstracted from the context of life history such 'scores' are meaningless. ...faith development theory takes seriously the narrative structure of life history." (MOSELEY et.al.1986:2f)

Certainly, the life history is important to faith development theory and research: The entire project of faith development theory consists in telling the developmental stories of the individuals' faith, and in recognizing this developmental stories in the respondents' telling of their faith stories. In other words:

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24. See Part III, Chapter 10.2 for a more detailed discussion of the question of extending the number of Aspects, including NIPKOW's proposal!

Research attempts to reconstruct the narrative structure of their life history in faith in terms of the structural-developmental theory of faith. Therefore, it is consistent with the logic of this reconstruction of a person's faith history, to engage in longitudinal research. Follow-up interviews would yield data for further validation of our perception of the developmental narratives.

*The increased importance which, by the inclusion of the life tapestry exercise, has been ascribed to life history indicates a tendency, and may even pave the way toward, investing the domain of the narrative of a respondent's life story with a degree of importance which deserves to be taken into account in the procedure of evaluation of the interview material.* (Thesis 12.9)

When we read the present *Manual's* instructions for the coder, however, we learn that the life tapestry exercise is "optional;" that it is "not coded directly" - though regarded useful for the coding process to provide background. Further, the follow-up questions to the life tapestry, the questions about the "Crises and Peak Experiences" (Section E.) designed for the closing part of the interview, do not seem to be of equal importance, since there is no aspect key ascribed to these questions, as if the coding of this section were optional, as well.

The hermeneutical enterprise to understand a respondent's life history, nevertheless, is of special importance to faith development theory and research. The example of Mary's faith development interview and how it is evaluated may illustrate this point: Employing the perspective of psychosocial stage theory, in a second set of evaluating reflections,<sup>25</sup> FOWLER gives us some insight into the fact that

"Mary's particular combination of strengths and vulnerabilities, which became visible in the interview, have a history that goes back at least to earliest infancy and possibly to prenatal life." (FOWLER 1981a:265)

Reconstruction in terms of structural-developmental theory is one of the ways of gaining access to a person's life history in faith--in my interpretation, it is

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25. NELSON and ALESHIRE, in their critical review of the "Research in Faith Development," comment on FOWLER's evaluation of Mary's story: "... although this may surprise the reader, we like this section of the study because it does not claim to be scientific... . It is interesting, for the writer is trying to make sense out of Mary's story in human terms and from the perspective of one who can sympathize with her struggle. There is a search for underlying themes or traits which exist throughout Mary's life cycle. Perhaps this change in mood is occasioned by the influence of Erikson, who in his epigenetic principle stated that each stage is a development in the light of the way a person managed the previous stages. In Erikson's plan, stages do not signify 'mere succession' but a 'progression through time of a differentiation of parts.' Thus a person has a history with memories, conscious and unconscious, which are factors throughout the lifespan." (NELSON&ALESHIRE 1986:197f)



an extrinsic reconstruction--; a psychoanalytically colored reconstruction would be another adequate way of getting access to a person's development in faith. However, as FOWLER's interpretation of Mary's faith development displays, and as NELSON and ALESHIRE note, reconstruction in the terms of a more psychoanalytically colored approach encounters difficulties in regard to consistency with the rest of faith development research which follow the structural-developmental paradigm.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.2. The Rootedness of Faith Development Research in the Hermeneutics of Developmental Psychology

Investigating the roots of the hermeneutics involved in the methodology of faith development research means paying attention to the methodology in structural-developmental theory in general, since, in this theory, faith development theory "finds its principal theoretical grounding" (FOWLER 1988b:6) Here, the perspective of KOHLBERG - and of HABERMAS - deserves special attention, since it is broadly accepted as a model for structural-developmental theories. KOHLBERG's perspective presents itself as claiming to be the model for a genuine structural-developmental theory. Most obviously, this claim finds expression in the distinction between "hard stage theories" and "soft stage theories" (KOHLBERG et.al.1984; KOHLBERG 1986; POWER 1987).

Despite the critique from moral development theory which is expressed in the term "soft"-stage theory, FOWLER inherited from the structural-developmental tradition the hermeneutical approach as it is incorporated in moral development theory. And moral development theory and research are part of the tradition of social scientific research which has adopted the interpretive approach to a certain extent. As will become more obvious later, FOWLER's research methodology, in some respects, appears to be more advanced in regard to the 'interpretive turn,' but appears as if it were not going far enough, when viewed against the background of RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective.

In order to illuminate the hermeneutical roots of faith development research, in the first place, we need to discuss the hermeneutics of moral development research and its theoretical affirmation through HABERMAS' perspective.

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26. For a discussion of still another model of reconstruction which is more on the side of communicative reconstruction, see Chapter 10.3.!

HABERMAS, in his article, "Interpretive Social Science vs. Hermeneuticism" (HABERMAS 1983b), has given a historical sketch of the incorporation of a hermeneutical perspective in social scientific methodology - the "hermeneutical turn," RABINOW&SULLIVAN 1979<sup>27</sup> - leading up to his own proposal of rational reconstruction. In this article, HABERMAS has given some prominence to KOHLBERG's theory: the second half of the article deals explicitly with KOHLBERG's theory of moral development. In HABERMAS's perspective, KOHLBERG's theory is an example for a social scientific theory which, at the same time, is

"conscious of their <the social sciences', H.S.> hermeneutic dimension and yet remain(s) faithful to the task of generating theoretical knowledge" (HABERMAS 1983b:261).

From HABERMAS' point of view, the structural-developmental theory of KOHLBERG thus does not display deficiencies in regard to the hermeneutical perspective, but it is an example of a successful integration of a hermeneutical perspective, of the hermeneutical turn, into a social scientific theory.<sup>28</sup>

Structural-developmental theories do well to follow the interpretive turn. And we do not find much reservation in the KOHLBERG tradition. In his 1983 reformulation of the theory (KOHLBERG et.al.1984:217ff), in agreement with HABERMAS' (1983b) judgment, KOHLBERG claims that the theory of moral development lies in this interpretive vein; that even after the change to a standardized scoring technique moral development research

"... still rests on the communicative and empathic stance of an interpreter, not on a positivistic stance of someone trying to classify and predict 'behavior' as distinct from meaning" (KOHLBERG et.al.1984:220).

This judgment is the same in 1987:

"This interpretive aspect of assessing the form or structure of moral judgment can also be called hermeneutic. In the hermeneutic approach, stage scoring involves the identification and analysis

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27. According to HABERMAS (1983b:252), RABINOW and SULLIVAN have coined the term "interpretive turn;" The book edited by RABINOW and SULLIVAN, *Interpretive Social Sciences* (RABINOW&SULLIVAN 1979), is a collection of important contributions to the hermeneutics of social scientific methodology, including not only TAYLOR's article, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man" (TAYLOR 1971), and GADAMER's article, "The Problem of Historical Consciousness" (GADAMER 1963 1979), but also RICOEUR's article which will play a key role in this dissertation, "The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text" (RICOEUR 1971a).

28. In the light of RICOEUR's work, it may become clear that HABERMAS' and KOHLBERG's - and also FOWLER's - "turn" does not go far enough. Moreover, against the background of HABERMAS' perspective, the profile of RICOEUR's contribution may become clearer: to what extent RICOEUR's suggestions carry the hermeneutical turn further. But for an investigation of the present state of faith development research and of the hermeneutics inherent in its methodology, reference to KOHLBERG and to HABERMAS suffice, since RICOEUR has not had any explicit influence on it.

of the organization of thought inherent in the individual's responses. That is, stage scoring becomes an act of interpreting a text around some philosophical categories of meaning shared by subject and investigator. ...

Although our approach to assessing moral development can be seen as interpretive or hermeneutic, it should not be seen as a form of the extreme hermeneuticism that denies the validity of the scientific method. Our approach attempts to combine aspects of the interpretive or hermeneutic method with means for minimizing subjectivity in the interpretive process." (KOHLBERG&KAUFFMAN 1987:3f)

KOHLBERG has described the development and advancements of the moral development research instrument as a progressive separation of structure from content.<sup>29</sup> However, his consistent claim still is that this progressive structure-content separation has not affected the hermeneutic or interpretive character of the research method:

"This change maintains the hermeneutic or phenomenological orientation but reflects a change from a view of interpretation as an art to a view of interpretation as a science, i.e. as a research activity employing an objective and reliable method of observation." (KOHLBERG&KAUFFMAN 1987:40)

Since KOHLBERG has accepted the 'hermeneutical turn' and has expressed agreement with HABERMAS' proposal, it would be wise to take a closer look on HABERMAS' perspective; HABERMAS' proposal of reconstructive interpretation which he presents as realization of the hermeneutical turn has informed the methodology of moral development research.

In his article which had such impact on KOHLBERG's theory, HABERMAS gives his arguments in support of and sketches the implications of the interpretive turn within the social sciences. He explains the higher sensitivity which is inherent in the hermeneutical attitude by calling attention to the procedure of text interpretation. In cases where we realize that our understanding is not adequate: we start to ask more questions in order to reconstruct the utterance.

"The interpreters appear at first to understand the sentences of the author; then they have the disturbing experience that they do not adequately understand the text, that is, not to the extent that they can respond to the author. The interpreters take this to be a sign that they are embedding the text in another context than the author did, that they are starting with other questions. This disturbance in communication marks the initial situation. They seek, then, to understand why the author - in the tacit belief that certain states of affairs obtained, that certain values and

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29. "The two interrelated issues that have been most central to the evolution of Kohlberg's model are the differentiation of content and structure and the definition of the unit of analysis. We can view this history as a progressive differentiation of content from structure." (KOHLBERG&KAUFFMAN 1987:37)

norms were valid, that certain experiences could be attributed to certain subjects - made certain assertions in the text, observed or violated certain conventions, and described certain intentions, dispositions, feelings, and the like." (HABERMAS 1983b:258f)

This quote indicates HABERMAS' suggestion to enlarge the number of variables: to take into account the three dimensions inherent in speech: that the "object" of our inquiry is an author's utterance of *his/ her personal* point of view (expressive dimension) *about something* in the world (propositional dimension) *in communication with* another member of the same speech community (interpersonal or regulative dimension).

The hermeneutical turn thus implies that we leave the standpoint of the objective observer and take on the role of the interpreting participant in communication. Is it still possible, then, to gain rational, scientific knowledge, after we have given up the objective position of the observer?<sup>30</sup> HABERMAS proposes a way out of that problematic situation: *reconstructive interpretation*, to be more precise: *rational reconstruction*. HABERMAS gives a very precise definition of rational reconstruction in the following thesis which KOHLBERG repeatedly has quoted in his writings after his 1983 reformulation (KOHLBERG et.al.1984:220; KOHLBERG 1986:503; KOHLBERG&KAUFFMAN 1987:4):

"Only to the extent that the interpreters grasp the reasons that allow the author's utterance to appear rational do they understand what the author could have meant. Thus, the interpreters understand the meaning of the text only to the extent that they see why the author felt entitled to put forward (as true) certain assertions, to recognize (as right) certain values and norms, and to express (as sincere) certain experiences." (HABERMAS 1983b:258)

These sentences indicate very precisely why HABERMAS names his proposal of reconstruction a *rational reconstruction*: Reconstruction following this rule of HABERMAS must exclusively focus on "the reasons that allow the author's utterance to appear rational" and thus must exclude all other interpretations or reconstructions which do not appear to be rational, which cannot be stated in the terms of rationality.

KOHLBERG claims that moral development theory and research already realize HABERMAS' proposal:

"Our stage theory is basically what Habermas calls a 'rational reconstruction' of developmental progress." (KOHLBERG et.al.1984:221)

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30. See HABERMAS 1983b:257, quoted in chapter 7.1.!

Most explicitly, KOHLBERG claims that moral development theory presents a "rational reconstruction of ontogenesis" (KOHLBERG 1986:503) and goes on to explain:

"Our research programme is then linked to (1) a hermeneutic and exact interpretation of the stage of a moral judgment as having an inner logic, and (2) the hierarchy of stages as having a definite logic of hierarchy (though more than one theoretical rationale for the stage structures and their hierarchy may be elaborated)." (KOHLBERG 1986:503)

This may be sufficient indication that KOHLBERG's theory claims to incorporate the hermeneutical turn in HABERMAS' sense of the word, as can be seen in the definition of the concept of rational reconstruction in his article from 1983.

However, HABERMAS' proposal of rational reconstruction itself deserves critical evaluation: While the method of reconstructive interpretation presents itself as a consistent result of the turn to the hermeneutics of the text - we will find this method again as a part of RICOEUR's hermeneutical circle - HABERMAS' exclusive focus on rationality appears one-sided and narrow, since it forecloses other motivating factors which do not consist in rational reflection. Thus, I do not agree with the exclusivity of HABERMAS' claim that the context of an utterance is explained

"by the immanent rationality the interpreters must impute to all utterances insofar as they ascribe to them accountability that they have no reason to doubt. The interpreters cannot understand the semantic context of a text if they are not in a position to present to themselves the reasons that the author might have adduced in the initial conditions." (HABERMAS 1983b:259).

This imputation of an immanent rationality, is a retrospective projection of the interpreter's rationality onto the utterance of the author and precludes other possible factors motivating an author's utterance or action which may involve more than rationality: a certain conviction or belief; the assimilation to (or refusal of) a certain cultural tradition; a certain mood or feeling.

While I appreciate the fact that HABERMAS is well aware that we always impose our pre-understanding on the utterance in the process of interpretation, I think, we need to *extend our pre-understanding* about the ground and motivation for an author's utterance. We should not limit them - with HABERMAS - to the "reasons that the author might have adduced," but include beliefs and convictions, feelings and wants.

Another critical question in evaluating the proposal of rational reconstruction: How can we account for the internal coherence of an utterance or action as it were a coherent text? How can we account for the coherence (or the lack or distortion of the coherence) of the narrative of an individual's development? HABERMAS' proposal of reconstruction of a past author's utterance (despite the notion of the three dimensions of a speech act) does not account for the *context* as the possible *ground* in which an author's utterance is *rooted*. HABERMAS does not propose to account for the fact that a person's self-understanding, her or his world view has been shaped and informed by the context of symbolic and narrative manifestations and representations: neither by the manifestations within our individual story nor by the (classical) texts alive within our life-world. Instead, for HABERMAS, decentration, i.e. *Dekontextualisierung* from the life-world and *Demotivierung* as limitation to rationality, needed in the perspective of communicative action, is one of the key princi-

ples of discourse ethics (HABERMAS 1983d)<sup>31</sup>. Decentration is explicitly proposed as reference point of individual moral development:

"Mit dem Übergang zur postkonventionellen Stufe der Interaktion dreht sich der Erwachsene aus der Naivität der Alltagspraxis heraus. Er verläßt die naturwüchsige soziale Welt, in die er mit dem Übergang zur konventionellen Stufe der Interaktion eingetreten war. Für den Diskursteilnehmer verblaßt die Aktualität des Erfahrungszusammenhangs, verblaßt die Normativität der bestehenden Ereignisse. Von dieser metakommunikativen Ebene aus eröffnen sich nur noch Retrospektiven auf die gelebte Welt: im Licht hypothetischer Geltungsansprüche wird die Welt existierender Sachverhalte theoretisiert, die Welt legitim geordneter Beziehungen moralisiert." (HABERMAS 1983a:172)

Thus, rationality and decentration seem to be the criteria which we "impute" and impose also upon the utterances in rational reconstruction.

The critique of HABERMAS' exclusive focus on rationality for his methodological proposal of reconstruction challenges also his (and KOHLBERG's) model of ontogenetic reconstruction, the reconstruction of individual development in terms of morality (HABERMAS 1976; 1983a). The empirical reconstruction and verification of the logic of development of an individual's morality, according to HABERMAS, should serve as one possibility of validation of his proposed stage of morality for present times, the discursive ethics, if it can be taken as valid result of the course of ontogenetic development. In that sense, HABERMAS argumentation needs KOHLBERG's theory. However, the one-sided-ness of the methodological procedure of rational reconstruction is consistent with and reflects the principles of the developmental logic: rationalization and decentration. This is one of the crucial questions of structural developmental theories which we need to keep in mind. We need to ask whether this developmental scale changes when we adopt the hermeneutical perspective of RICOEUR: Will the developmental logic still be following the principle of rationalization and decentration?

To be sure: This rather brief discussion does not cover all aspects and all sources of HABERMAS' theory. But the aim of this work is not an extensive discussion of HABERMAS' theory, but of his influence on the theory building in moral development theory, especially in regard to the hermeneutics of methodology. Therefore, I have to leave aside some interesting questions: I cannot discuss here HABERMAS' contribution to *psychoanalytic* reconstruction, his thoughts about a "scenic understanding" and the importance of the narrative in the light of a psychoanalytic perspective (Comp. e.g. HABERMAS 1970a). Further, HABERMAS's account of the life-world in the *Theory of Communicative Action* (HABERMAS 1981) is more comprehensive than it may appear in this

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31. HABERMAS grounds the three philosophical assumptions of KOHLBERG's theory, cognitivism, universalism, and formalism, in his theory of discourse ethics. The assumption of formalism, he summarizes as follows: "*Formalismus*. 'U' (the principle of universalism of discourse ethics, H.S.) funktioniert im Sinne einer Regel, die alle konkreten, mit dem Ganzen einer partikularen Lebensform oder einer individuellen Lebensgeschichte verwobenen Wertorientierungen als nicht verallgemeinerungsfähige Inhalte eliminiert und so von den evaluativen Fragen des 'guten Lebens' nur die streng normativen Fragen der Gerechtigkeit als argumentativ entscheidbare Fragen zurückbehält. Mit der Regel von 'U' richtet sich die Diskursethik gegen Grundannahmen *materieller Ethiken*, die sich an Fragen des Glücks orientieren und jeweils einen bestimmten Typus des sittlichen Lebens ontologisch auszeichnen. Indem sie die Sphäre der Sollgeltung von Handlungsnormen herausarbeitet, grenzt die Diskursethik den Bereich des moralisch Gültigen gegenüber dem der kulturellen *Wertinhalte* ab." (HABERMAS 1983a:132)

rather brief discussion. I have to leave open the question of whether, in regard to these issues, HABERMAS has changed his perspective or whether he did not regard them as important in the dialog with KOHLBERG. For my discussion, the concept of rational reconstruction is important in the form as it has been influenced structural-developmental theory building, i.e. as it was received by KOHLBERG.

KOHLBERG's and KAUFFMAN's most recent article, "Theoretical Introduction to the Measurement of Moral Judgment," in *The Measurement of Moral Judgment*, begins with the following definition of one of the basic assumptions of moral development theory, phenomenism:

"A phenomenological approach to moral psychology assumes that moral judgments and rational argumentation are central to moral psychology. It assumes that such judgments must be seen as meaningful in their own terms, in some sense at face value, rather than treated as mere reflections or expressions of irrational feelings, unconscious motives, or external forces." (KOHLBERG&KAUFFMAN 1987:1)

It sounds strange that this prominence of rationality is to be found in the definition of *phenomenism*, the principle which says that

"the researcher must operate phenomenologically by looking at morality from the subject's viewpoint, understanding what the subject is saying in his or her own terms. That is, the interpreter is seeking to understand what the *subject* means when making moral judgments rather than attributing meaning to the judgments from some outside system of interpretation not shared by the subject." (KOHLBERG&KAUFFMAN 1987: 1f)

But this is the angle from which I will evaluate the incorporation of the interpretive turn and the method of reconstruction: If viewed in the light of HABERMAS' analysis of speech-act theory, moral development research does not operationalize the three-fold validity questions which we have to ask in order to engage in dialog with the author of the interview responses. I do not doubt the claim that we, as interviewers, "should be able to put ourselves into the framework of a given stage" (KOHLBERG et.al.1984:219). However, the question is whether the research design allows the interpreter-respondent relation to develop into open, non-purpose communication. To mark the point where to my mind moral development research leaves the realm of un-restricted communication: the exclusive focus on structures, which is imperative in the procedure of research, implies, for the methodological step of evaluation, to attempt to understand the author better than he or she understands her or himself: to explain the responses in terms of the *reasoning structures* of moral reasoning which are pre-defined by moral development theory. The goal of evaluation is not to reconstruct the meaning of the author's (moral) utterance, since the validity questions - 'What feelings and wants are involved?';

'What kind of proposal or intentions do you wish to make?' - are not only less important, but are excluded, since they elicit aspects of *content* and moreover *non-cognitive* aspects. Instead, the evaluating questions are of a very specific nature, since they should reveal the structure of (moral) reasoning: e.g. 'Is the respondent able to adopt the perspective of the other?' 'Does the respondent's moral reasoning meet with rational principles?' Thus it becomes obvious how closely the assumption of phenomenism is connected with the assumptions of structuralism and cognitive constructivism. In my interpretation, the 'interpretive turn' had to give in to the principles of structuralism and cognitive constructivism. Structuralism appears as one of the most important assumptions of KOHLBERG's theory. As already mentioned, KOHLBERG describes the history of moral development research as a progressive differentiation of content from structure:

"The two interrelated issues that have been most central to the evolution of Kohlberg's model are the differentiation of content and structure and the definition of the unit of analysis. We can view this history as a progressive differentiation of content from structure." (KOHLBERG&KAUFFMAN 1987:37)

The assumption of constructivism most obviously contrasts the model of the interpretive turn, as defined by RABINOW and SULLIVAN (1979:5)<sup>32</sup>

With this critical discussion of KOHLBERG's and HABERMAS' understandings of the interpretive turn and of the concept of rational reconstruction with some reference to the other parts of their theories, I have given a rather broad outline of the principles of one type of structural-developmental theory in which faith developmental theory "finds its principal grounding." With this discussion, I have also opened up a field of discussion which will become important in later chapters.<sup>33</sup>

For now, the implications for faith development theory and research need to be made explicit. What did faith development research inherit from structural-developmental theory building, in general, and from moral development theory, in particular. At various points in earlier chapters, the indebtedness of faith development theory to the structural-developmental paradigm became visible: The concept of 'faith' as operation, the assumption of universality, the principle of formalism or structuralism which requires the differentiation of content and structure displayed

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32. See Chapter 8.2.1. for the quote from RABINOW&SULLIVAN! See also this chapter for a more detailed discussion of the concept of constructivism in the structural-developmental tradition!

33. I will take up this thread of the discussion of the interpretive turn later in the inquiry into RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective and in my own proposal for research in faith development, in Chapter Ten.



faith development theory's communication with, and rootedness in, structural-developmental theory. However, this rootedness has not been discussed at length before this chapter on faith development *research*. In my point of view, to have postponed the discussion about these roots till this chapter on faith development research, suggests itself, because it is in the field of research that the influence of, and contrast to, structural-developmental theory becomes most obvious.

Against the background of moral development research, the claim of *Manual*, that interpretation of faith development interviews implies reconstructing the responses "in terms of structural-developmental theory," becomes more distinct. This could either lead one to greater - and more precise - agreement with it, or to greater - and more precise - criticism of this prescription, resp. a more informed falsification of its operationalization.

POWER, in his article "Hard versus Soft Stages of Faith and Religious Reasoning" (POWER 1987), has investigated FOWLER's (and OSER's) research against the background of structural-developmental theory. POWER has posed four questions to the two theories of religious/faith development:

- "1) Do they describe action related rather than reflective reasoning? 2) Are they truly universal?  
3) Are they logical structures of organization or principles of psychological unity and stability? 4)  
Are they reducible to other stage sequences?" (POWER 1987:3)

In regard to the first criterion for a hard stage theory, the criterion of an "organized system of action," POWER refers to the questions in the faith development interview. For FOWLER's theory, he concludes that

"such an approach does not allow a direct focus on how persons actually go about solving problems. The reflective thrust of such questions demands meta-ethical reasoning and heightened self-consciousness, competencies which may presuppose but go beyond logical operations on external objects and their relations." (POWER 1987:8)

POWER also sees the criterion of universality limited, in FOWLER's theory, because of the explicit description of the final stage in terms of Judeo-Christian faith. In respect to the criterion of structured wholeness, the criterion which rests upon the structure-content differentiation, POWER tends to view FOWLER as belonging to the soft stage category, because 'faith' is assessed in the undifferentiated comprehensiveness of the seven aspects of faith, each of which, in truth, "has its own organizing principle" (POWER 1987:14).

The discussion of the last question allowed POWER to state his most explicit - and most interesting - judgment:

"Because they are so inclusive, Fowler's faith stages run two somewhat different risks of losing their distinctive identity. The first ... is the risk that his stages may be interpreted as ego stages or as stages of worldviews. The problem here is that the connection between Fowler's empirically based descriptions of his stages and his theology is too tenuous. The second risk is that the faith stages may be reducible to the aspect components, several of which are elaborations of hard stage sequences. The best evidence for the integrity of the faith stages comes at stages 5 and 6 when there is a clear identification of the stage structures with metaphysical and religious themes." (POWER 1987:22)

As I understand POWER, his final conclusion that FOWLER's faith development theory does not fulfill the criteria for a hard stage theory, but has to be regarded as a soft stage theory, is all but derogatory (as the title may suggest). On the contrary, POWER admits that

"the study of faith must be done through a soft stage analysis" (POWER 1987:24)

POWER's suggestion for an improvement of faith development theory and research in the light of a 'hard stage' structural-developmental perspective does not, surprisingly, present any claims to model the concept of faith more precisely according to the paradigm of an operation, or to engage in a greater effort to separate the structures from any particularity of (Judeo-Christian) content. On the contrary, he states:

"Fowler ought to take Oser's concerns for studying the consciously religious dimension of human meaning-making, if his theory is to gain acceptance in the wider and more secular psychological community as a theory of faith and not ego development or life philosophy." (POWER 1987:24)

In agreement with POWER, I conclude that *faith development research qualifies as a soft stage theory. To use this term means two things: faith development theory and research is rooted in, however has developed beyond, the structural-developmental tradition of psychology.* (Thesis 13)

Faith development theory finds its principal grounding in the tradition of PIAGET and KOHLBERG; this theory has been developed, in the field of morality, or rather of justice reasoning, into a theory which is very cautious about such principles as cognitivism, formalism, structuralism, sequentiality, universalism, and hierarchy. *To term faith development theory and research as a soft stage theory takes into account the effort of faith development theory to meet most of the structural-developmental criteria.* (Thesis 13.1).

*Faith development theory and research, however, is a 'soft' version of this hard stage model in that it is not able to meet all of these criteria.* (Thesis 13.2). Some 'deviations' are stated by FOWLER explicitly e.g. in regard to the principle of cognitivism.

*FOWLER had to modify the principle of cognitivism both in regard to a greater inclusiveness of the affective domain and in regard to the deeper understanding of 'faith'-knowing to include the convictional dimension. (Thesis 13.3).*

*Faith development theory, in the attempt to evaluate a person's life history in faith, would encounter serious difficulties if it were to rely exclusively on the proposal of rational reconstruction. The focal distinction which FOWLER introduced, the distinction between the "logic of rational certainty" and the "logic of conviction," suggests a reference point of development and a logic of development other than rationalization. (Thesis 13.4). Rational reconstruction would yield an only very limited account of faith development. However, not only reconstruction in terms of rationalization, but the entire model of (extrinsic) reconstruction of a person's life history itself may take on a different shape when we take the narrative character of development in faith seriously.*

Even though, for research in faith development, some of the principles of the 'hard' PIAGETian model are explicitly adopted and prescribed in the *Manual*, such as the differentiation of content from structure, *the judgment on faith development theory as representing a soft stage theory is, to a large extent, due to its openness and tendency to account for the 'contents' of 'faith.'* (Thesis 13.5). Especially in the theoretical conceptualization of 'faith,' FOWLER does not follow the structural-developmental rigor to separate structure from content which is indicated by the phrase of the "structuring power of the contents." In research, we find a stronger emphasis on this differentiation; However, as POWER has also shown, research in faith development does not succeed in the assessment of structures in isolation. Thus, from the perspective of a hard stage theory, FOWLER's research must appear as soft, since the faith development research design too extensively aims toward content-loaden issues.

If the aspects of content of 'faith' and the account of a person's life history were not important, the research could be shorter and we could save time in the process of interviewing and coding. Furthermore, if 'content' and 'life history' were to be regarded as factors which cause a falsifying effect on research results, they would have to be eliminated for the benefit of the structures which, then, in purified form, could be obtained. It would be necessary to guard research against those side-effects and refrain from asking those questions. The fact that this is not so may be an indication of the importance which 'content' and 'life history' have for faith development although these aspects are not coded directly. The aspect of life history has been emphasized greatly by including the life tapestry exercise. This

confirms the assumption that *the contextual richness is wanted - though not operationalized explicitly*.

My further reflections on the methodological implications of the hermeneutical turn for faith development research will center around the following question: How is the design of empirical research affected, if we try to understand individual development in terms of the hermeneutics of the *text*. Further reflection and a re-interpretation of the methodological principles of the structural-developmental theory (of KOHLBERG who follows the perspective of HABERMAS' proposal of rational reconstruction) in the light of RICOEUR's proposal for social scientific methodology, may indicate that the project of the 'interpretive turn' still remains a challenging task.

## Chapter 4

# THEOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS IN FAITH DEVELOPMENT THEORY

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### 4.1. Faith Development Theory's Rootedness in Theological Hermeneutics and the Symbolic Character of 'Faith'

Faith development theory is rooted not only in the hermeneutical paradigm of structural-developmental theory, but also in the hermeneutical paradigm of theology. Whether we have to describe the relationship between these two different paradigms from different scientific fields as a successful correlative 'bridging of paradigms' or as an implicit 'mixture of paradigms,' will depend on a final analysis. Which paradigm prevails? Which vein is more prominent? An answer is difficult and seems to depend on the standpoint of the spectator: from psychology, e.g. from a 'hard stage' perspective, it appears different than from a traditional theological perspective.

The search for an answer to this difficult question calls for careful analysis. And we will find a hint if we return to the most fundamental concept of faith development theory: the concept of 'faith.' For most of our analysis so far, the structural-developmental paradigm of operation appeared as prevailing. This reflects the impression we get from most of FOWLER's explicit definitions and interpretations of 'faith.' However, the statement of the 'structuring power of the contents' led us into another vein of investigation. It was in the beginning of Chapter Two that I raised the question as to whether symbols belong to 'faith' *essentially*? And as one of the sub-questions I specified the question as to the problem of whether 'faith' itself is of symbolic character; and whether we can think of 'faith' as non-symbolic. Now, I shall return to this issue.

Is 'faith' itself symbolic? Can we think of 'faith' as non-symbolic? This is a question TILLICH addressed as the problem of the possibility to speak of God non-

symbolically. TILLICH's answer to this question is that all our concrete - non-ecstatic - speaking about God is of symbolic nature; one single exemption is the proposition that "God is being-itself" or the "absolute" (TILLICH, 1951: 238ff). This suggests that faith cannot know or imagine or bring to expression in language anything about the absolute or Being-itself in non-symbolic form. Consistently, TILLICH's theology is fundamentally symbolic:

"Man's ultimate concern must be expressed symbolically, because symbolic language alone is able to express the ultimate. ...The reason for this transformation of concepts into symbols is the character of ultimacy and the nature of faith. That which is the true ultimate transcends the realm of finite reality infinitely. Therefore, no finite reality can express it directly and properly. Religiously speaking, God transcends his own name. ... Whatever we say about that which concerns us ultimately, whether or not we call it God, has a symbolic meaning. It points beyond itself while participating in that to which it points. In no other way can faith express itself adequately. The language of faith is the language of symbols." (TILLICH 1957:41;44f)

In a way that sounds like an interpretation of both NIEBUHR's and FOWLER's theologies, TILLICH says:

"God is the basic symbol of faith, but not the only one. All the qualities we attribute to him, power, love, justice, are taken from finite experiences and applied symbolically to that which is beyond finitude and infinity. ... in the notion of God we must distinguish two elements: the element of ultimacy, which is a matter of immediate experience and not symbolic in itself, and the element of concreteness, which is taken from our ordinary experience and symbolically applied to God." (TILLICH 1957:47;46)

But not only TILLICH presents evidence of the fundamentally symbolic character of faith. NIEBUHR's basic theological concepts - into which FOWLER undertook an extensive inquiry (FOWLER 1974a) - are symbolic or metaphoric, they imply metaphors and "images or analogies drawn from human experience," as FOWLER (1974a:134) explains. Expressions about the 'One God' in terms of value - the 'One beyond the many' is the 'center of ultimate value' or the 'principle of value' (Comp. e.g. NIEBUHR 1943:32) - are symbolic-metaphoric expressions - a fact which becomes even more explicit in the symbol of the 'Creator.' Radical monotheism implies very specific metaphors for God: the expression of 'the One beyond the many' may indicate the movement of this metaphoric thought. The metaphorical name for God - 'God is "the structure of things," or "the structure of the universe" - is paralleled with the expression that God is the "creative will" (NIEBUHR 1932:103, quoted in FOWLER 1974a:136) and implies an even more concrete metaphor for God: the 'Governor.' Finally, to speak of God in terms of 'covenant' and 'redemption' displays again the fundamental symbolic-metaphoric character of NIEBUHR's theology.

This brief reference to TILLICH's and NIEBUHR's thought in mind, we turn to FOWLER's conceptualization of 'faith.' Answering our question in the light of TILLICH's and NIEBUHR's theologies - given the importance of these theologies for FOWLER -, the suggestion is that we cannot think of 'faith' as non-symbolic. But this suggests more: the realm of 'faith,' in FOWLER's theory of faith development, is not 'void' of or 'exempt' from the symbolic; but 'faith' encompasses deep convictional content: 'Faith' is conceptualized by features of the symbol of 'ultimate value and ultimate power.'

This symbol has a very close affinity to the Christian symbol of the Kingdom of God. Moreover, the explicit rootedness of faith development theory's concept of 'faith' in NIEBUHR's theology is not only true for the relational feature of faith - the theme by which FOWLER, in *Stages of Faith*, introduces NIEBUHR's distinctions between polytheistic, henotheistic, and radical monotheistic faith -, but the heritage of NIEBUHRian theology and of the symbolic feature of his concepts are present in the very terms in which 'faith' is defined. And no doubt, NIEBUHR's radical monotheism has its basis in the Judeo-Christian symbolic tradition.

Therefore, it is no surprise that this fundamental Christian symbol suddenly - it seems unexpected only for those observers of faith development theory who have believed the claim that 'faith' is purely structural and does not 'contain' symbolic content - almost irresistibly suggests itself as the interpretation of Stage Six (FOWLER 1981a:204ff).

As we have seen, the key motivation for FOWLER, in his faith development theory, to demarcate his concept of 'faith' from 'belief' from the very beginning - i.e. as one of the foundational presuppositions -, is the attempt to regain or reclaim the *absoluteness*, the *universality* of 'pistis.' As such, it is a fundamentally theological concern: the search for the universal and absolute validity of the religious truth. At this point, the question arises, whether we would not have to say "*Christian*" truth - a question which is of grave consequence.

FOWLER takes up the line of argument which NIEBUHR developed in his theological typology in the terms of value theory. In *Stages of Faith* (FOWLER 1981a:19-23), FOWLER draws extensively on NIEBUHR's distinctions between polytheism, henotheism, and radical monotheism. This language of value leads to the translation of 'faith' into value terminology and to the distinction between *polytheistic 'faith'*, which has a variety of centers of value and power, as diffuse as we see it in consumer society, *henotheistic 'faith'*, which e.g. is loyal and committed to narrow centers of value and power like the "causa sui," the "self," or, as fetishistic faith, based on "certain avoidances," "career" etc., and *radical monotheistic 'faith'*,

which "focuses its supreme trust and loyalty in a transcendent center of value and power;" and "implies loyalty to the *principle of being* and to the *source and center of all value and power*." (FOWLER 1981a:23).

In his article, "Who is the Author of My Biography?," NIPKOW questions whether the NIEBUHRian terminology<sup>34</sup> is adequate for a Christian concept of 'faith:'

"I wonder whether it is adequate, even for the purpose of a general psychological theory which admittedly is intended to cover the empirical data obtained from religious and non-religious, theistic and non-theistic "faith" experiences, to replace the word "God" by other terms. Do we not run the risk of already analytically concealing the issue of God in the life of human beings? Instead of God Fowler speaks of '*shared center(s) of value and power*.' ...

To speak of 'values' allowed and allows to distinguish between the '*relative*' and the '*absolute*' in a situation of growing value pluralism. If *God*, now, is conceptualized in this frame of reference, it stands to reason to define him as *the 'ultimate' value*. The hope is to find in this way an answer to the philosophical problem of value relativism or at least to the theological problem of religious pluralism. ... A value theory inevitably attributes to God those adjectives which a value theory can only think of: 'God' as the absolute and ultimate over against all other things as the relative and the provisional. (NIPKOW 1986b:45)

On the basis of this analysis of FOWLER's replacement operation, NIPKOW states his more explicit critique of and concern about the losses in regard to a Christian theological understanding of God:

"Could it not be that by this framing God is seen as a timeless, ahistoric, and impersonal entity, not any longer as God in history? Does he not become an unchangeable supreme Being, not God in a creation that is conceived of as a dynamic and open process? God as the absolute value can easily be associated with those Christian theologies which emphasize the '*sovereignty*' of God (see Niebuhr's theology) and God's '*power*' (see Fowler's '*centers of value and power*'), but it is difficult to reach the specific meaning of a Christian theology which is essentially *Trinitarian*. Most of all, however, the conceptualization of the '*Ultimate*' in the categories of value theory and terminology might lose sight of those typically *religious* core issues which we met with Martin Luther's faith struggle, the issue of *theodicy* because of God's hiddenness in a world of suffering ... and the emergence of a *world without God* because of God's apparent withdrawal in a world of guilt, sin, and lack of love ... ." (NIPKOW 1986b:45f)

In regard to the symbolic character of 'faith,' we can draw some conclusions: First, whether or not we share NIPKOW's concern about the absence of the Trinitarian concept of God, the Christian "God in history," the definition of 'faith' in

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34. NIEBUHR inherited the value terminology from TROELTSCH, as NIPKOW (1986b:44) maintains. FOWLER acknowledges this: "Perhaps the most decisive theme and pattern of thought that Niebuhr seems to have "learned" with or from Troeltsch is that having to do with value and valuation." (FOWLER 1974a:30).



demarcation from 'belief' appears as *replacement* of one symbol through another. Second, this replacement may be judged, sharing NIPKOW's concern, as a movement away from the Christian concept of faith, a movement to a more general, non-specific concept of 'faith' which NIPKOW suggests translating with the German "Lebensglaube" (NIPKOW 1982:51). Because of its non-specificity, the concept of 'faith' thus may appear as a rather 'thin' concept. Third, since I regard this replacement and movement to a universal concept of 'faith,' as stated in the introductory remarks, as a legitimate scientific procedure (which, however, requires the proof according to the rule of explicability), the concept of 'faith' has to be correlated<sup>35</sup> with and re-interpreted in the terms of Christian theology.

These conclusions can be summarized in some theses. These theses are the necessary supplement to those formulated in the section about FOWLER's conceptualization of 'faith' in Chapter One. These supplementary theses, I claim, are the inherent, however implicit, definitory features of FOWLER's concept of 'faith;' they are implicitly included or pre-supposed.<sup>36</sup>

*The concept of 'faith' includes the definitory feature of a symbolic representation* (Thesis 14.1).

*As essentially symbolic, the concept of 'faith' includes content* (Thesis 14.2). The definition of 'faith' has to include the definitory feature of content-loadeness. FOWLER seems to acknowledge this, when he claims for the reference point of development, Universalizing Faith, both *universality* - with reference to (a new investigation of the theses of) SMITH:

"Universalizing faith has structural features that are truly universal." (FOWLER 1988b:25)

and, at the same time, *content-loadeness*:

35. In his 1983 interpretation of FOWLER's theory, NIPKOW already suggested two correlations: "Steht nicht erstens die ... rechte Glaubenserkenntnis ... in Verbindung mit den sich entwickelnden Erkenntnisstrukturen des einzelnen? Hier wären als Strukturasspekte die logischen Denkformen (1.Strukturasspekt), die gedankliche Systembildung (6.) und die Fähigkeit des Symbolverständnisses (7.). ... Steht nicht zweitens die Auffassung der Reformatoren, daß der Heilige Geist die Bereitschaft zum Dienst in der Liebe schaffe ..., in Verbindung mit der Sensibilität, vom anderen her zu sehen 2.Aspekt, mit der Enge oder Weite der sozialen Wahrnehmung und damit des sozialen Verantwortungsbewußtseins (4.Aspekt) sowie schließlich mit den moralischen Urteilsformen (3.Aspekt)?" (NIPKOW 1983a:182f). SCHWEITZER agrees with this judgment, when he states that a theory of growing *Christian* faith would have to be constructed "von theologischen Kategorien her als Aufgeben der Selbstmächtigkeit des Menschen, als Kampf gegen der Macht die Sünde und als Erkenntnis Gottes bzw. Christi"; and that development, in FOWLER's perspective, is to be understood "eher als eine *Entsprechung* zum christlichen Glauben ..., als eine Entwicklung des christlichen Glaubens selbst - wobei hier freilich die Unterschiede fließen." (SCHWEITZER 1987:158)

36. Do we have reason to suspect that these theses, self-deceptively, have been suppressed or somehow submerged by the overwhelming tradition of structural-developmental theory building?

"However,... we should not expect to find these structural features apart from their integration with the 'structuring power' of the normative 'contents'--the symbols, beliefs, rituals, stories, and ethics--of particular religious or philosophical traditions." (FOWLER 1988b:25)

Since 'belief,' in FOWLER's definition, has a close relation to the world of symbols, we can draw a conclusion which holds, formulated as a bold thesis: *'Faith' includes 'belief.'* *'Faith' includes a specific 'belief'-content: 'Faith' involves the 'belief' in an ultimate center of value and power.* (Thesis 14.3).

Thereby, the conceptualization of 'faith' moves from the 'relative' to the 'absolute' which FOWLER, in agreement with NIEBUHR and TILLICH, puts in the terms of value theory ("ultimate value"), or in terms of environment perspective ("ultimate environment"). The replacement hypothesis seems to be confirmed: the movement is not demarcation in the sense of exclusion (exclusion hypothesis), but rather the movement of replacement (replacement hypothesis). (Thesis 14.4).

In respect to the principles of structural-developmental theory building, I maintain that this content-loadenness and symbolic feature of 'faith' does not make the universality of 'faith' obsolete, but it cannot be elaborated by use of a such a clear-cut distinction or demarcation of 'faith' from 'belief,' as if we could escape or transcend the realm of symbolic representation, the realm of content, the realm of 'belief' simply by introducing a new concept. It would be an illusion to think that we could easily extract the symbolic or content features inherent in 'belief.'

There is, I hold, no way to avoid the painstaking and extensive discussion which traditionally we discussed under the title 'absoluteness of Christian faith.' Instead, the distinction and demarcation has to follow more traditional theological lines of argument. Thereby, lines of argumentation like those of TILLICH or NIEBUHR are to be taken into account and, finally, may provide evidence for the claim of absoluteness; but other theologies need to be taken into consideration, as suggested e.g. by IVY (1985:71) or NIPKOW (1986b). In any case: *The theological argumentative processes of selection and replacement maintain the symbolic character of the 'absolute.'* *The concept of 'faith' cannot escape the metaphoric character of faith language, but we can and must enter into a "conflict of interpretations," to use RICOEUR's terms.* (Thesis 14.5)

When we take these theses into account, the concept of 'faith' in FOWLER's faith development theory appears as anything but a bloodless concept. On the contrary: *'Faith's' indebtedness to a specific, deep-rooted symbolic content of religious quality makes the distinction between structure and content less precise, finally impossible - the claim of a clear-cut demarcation of 'faith' as operational*

structure from all 'content' appears to be either unprecise or self-deceptive - and gives credit to FOWLER's notion of the "structuring power of the contents of faith." (Thesis 14.6).

Here is the key to understanding (and hopefully to grasping a way to resolve) the difficulties faith development theory and, in specific, faith development research, encounters with the PIAGETian concept of operation. *The thesis which cannot remain unmodified is the thesis which would reduce 'faith' to an 'operation.'* (Thesis 14.7).

#### 4.2. Re-interpretation of Faith Development Theory in Terms of Theological Hermeneutics

We have already met, at various points, the "second genre" of FOWLER's writings, the more explicit work on faith development issues in the light of, and as a contribution to a practical theology. These writings are the attempt to reveal what the psychology-rooted theory of faith development has to contribute to theology in regard to a better understanding of the faithful person. On the other hand, faith development theory, in order to be in consistent communication with the theological language community, had to be more explicitly expressed in theological terms, or rather, some theological concepts have been brought into the foreground and have become key concepts to understanding faith development theory. Therefore, it appears as a theological re-interpretation.

In this theological re-interpretation, the 'contents' of faith play a key role. It is an inquiry into the 'structuring power of contents.' Theological concepts and theorems themselves have displayed their 'structuring power' in this re-interpretation. Most important are the concepts of *covenant* and of *vocation*.

In his book of 1987, FOWLER moves toward an advancement and re-interpretation of faith development theory in respect to concepts like 'selfhood,' 'vocation,' and 'covenant.' In a summary statement, FOWLER explains that the advancements are the following: (a) that faith development theory is brought "more explicitly into the theological framework" of 'vocation,' 'covenant,' and 'partnership with God;' (b) that the stages of faith are correlated "with stages of selfhood, particularly as focused in the work of Robert Kegan" (FOWLER 1987a:53f).

Especially since his book of 1984, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian* (FOWLER 1984a), FOWLER placed more and more emphasis on the concept of

'vocation' and worked on a profound notion of this concept. 'Vocation' became a key concept in the more recent writings, as e.g. in his book of 1987. Of course, this reflection on 'vocation' is part of FOWLER's effort to illuminate, in more detail, the *theological* aspects of faith development theory, since 'vocation' is a decisive theological term.

The aspect of 'vocation' enables one to express the theological context and coherence of the concept of faith, especially in regard to the idea of its being connected with and committed to centers of supraordinate value - the third and very deep one of the three dimensions of 'faith.'

*The aspect of 'vocation' serves to bring the three traits of faith, constitutive-knowing, valuing and committing into a better balance, since it emphasizes the third, committing, most. Hence, it serves to counter-balance the focus on (constitutive-) knowing as the pre-eminent characterization of faith in earlier writings. (Thesis 15.1).*

Furthermore, of special importance for a psychological theory, 'vocation' makes it possible to speak of God in human terms: in terms of 'being called...' and 'being intended for some purpose.' In this respect, 'vocation' *indicates a strengthening of the theological perspective in the more psychologically colored theory of faith development which has had to focus more on the human initiative and action, on the constructive activity of the subject. (Thesis 15.2).*

*The concept of 'vocation' leads to and is part of a dialogical model of call and response, of the initiative of the environment (in a last perspective: the ultimate environment) and the responsiveness of the person. (Thesis 15.3).* Such model of faith focusing on human responsiveness I will later call the *con-text-ualist* model of faith. Consistently, FOWLER defines 'vocation' in the terms which theology used to define *Glauben*:

"Vocation is the response we make with our *total selves* to the call of God." (FOWLER 1987a:32)

This definition of 'vocation,' understood in such fundamental theological terms that 'vocation' becomes interchangeable for 'faith,' is central in FOWLER's argument. Therefore, it is quite understandable that FOWLER not only opposes the reduction of 'vocation' to 'job, occupation, or career'(FOWLER 1987a:30), but also wants to move beyond the (already deeper) understanding of 'vocation' as a term for a person's work in society and church. FOWLER wants to include leisure and relations as well, i.e. not only public, but also private life, finally the "*total self*." In investing the concept of 'vocation' with such a comprehensive meaning that 'voca-

tion' comes close to and becomes interchangeable with 'faith,' FOWLER is able to balance the *psychology* of faith by the *theology* of 'vocation.'

It is interesting how FOWLER develops the definitions of 'vocation' in human terms: without using the language of 'partnership with God:' "Vocation is...

"...the pattern of our live's energies and involvements as directed in the service of our strongest love or devotion." (FOWLER 1987a:32)

"...the pattern of our work, our relations, our leisure, and our private and public lives which result from the dominant intention, passion, or drive of our lives." (Ibid.)

but then, FOWLER moves on to the theo-logical description of the 'not-self' (God) in passive voice: Vocation means...

"...that we are intended for some purpose beyond mere survival." (Ibid.)

"...that we are called for some purpose beyond self-aggrandizement or the self-interested pursuit of pleasure." (Ibid.)

"...that we are intended to be about more than mere self-actualization." (Ibid.)

This perspective, which focuses around the concept of vocation, is the basis for FOWLER's understanding of *responsiveness*. To be sure, for FOWLER, 'vocation' is the key term, while 'responsiveness' plays only a subordinate role in his theological re-interpretation; but both terms have common ground: like 'vocation,' 'responsiveness' refers to a *praxis*: to the "*praxis* of human responsiveness" (FOWLER 1987a: 55) which is correlated with "the *praxis* of God." 'Responsiveness' is responsiveness "to God's action" (FOWLER 1987a:53). In combining both terms: 'vocation' and 'responsiveness,' FOWLER can speak of

"our vocation as reflective-responsive members of creation" (FOWLER 1987a:54).

In a summary statement, FOWLER describes faith development theory, now put into the terms of 'vocation' and 'calling to partnership with God,' as

"a conceptual paradigm that can illuminate the paths by which we emerge toward an accountable awareness of ourselves, others, and our action worlds as responsive to God's action" (FOWLER 1987a:53).

The question which faith development theory answers, according to this interpretation, is this:

"How do we human beings, as that species in nature who have special calling to *reflective* partnership with God, develop toward the fulfillment of this calling?" (Ibid.)

In my understanding, the theological interpretation of faith development theory in the terms of 'vocation' and 'responsiveness'<sup>37</sup> is a legitimate and necessary advancement of the theory. When FOWLER interprets faith development theory as illuminating the paths by which we "develop toward the fulfillment of this calling" or by which we emerge as "responsive to God's action" (FOWLER 1987a:53), he places the theory into a firm theological framework.

### 4.3. Conclusion and Synopsis

In my interpretation, FOWLER's faith development theory and research is constructed less in terms of a con-text-ualist model than in terms of the structural-developmental model. Theoretical conceptualization of 'faith' and design and evaluation procedure of empirical research treat faith as an operation rather than as a gift derived from an encounter with 'texts.' Thereby, we see a differentiation, in regard to the importance of these texts, between 'faith,' 'faith development,' and research method in faith development: While, in the definition of the concept of 'faith,' we find explicit statements of the significance of symbol, image, narrative for awakening and shaping 'faith,' at various points, the claim about the 'structuring power of the contents of faith' remains largely unredeemed in regard to the conceptualization of 'faith development' (when we would expect that a conceptualization of development would imply taking 'the power structuring the developmental sequence of faith stages' into account); and, finally, the con-texts of faith are least relevant in the evaluation of interviews in empirical research: the 'structuring power of contents' is not operationalized in the research design, the disregard of the contents of faith is an explicit instruction of the *Manual*.

A careful reading of FOWLER's work with special attention to those statements which most explicitly stress the significance of symbols, images, narratives, and concepts reveals, on the one hand, that all objections against faith development theory are mistaken which focus on the reproach of neglecting the symbolic representations, the 'contents' of 'faith' and of forcing 'faith' into the Procrustean bed of a "hard" and purely formalistic structuralist theory; the concept of 'faith' shows resistance against such rigid attempts to be 'fit' into a one-dimensional framework. On the other hand, it is exactly those most explicit statements of the

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37. As I will argue in Part III, the term 'responsiveness' - taken as a psychological concept - would suggest itself as a mediating link in the move from psychology to theology; and faith development theory should be put in the terms of responsiveness.

significance of symbolic representations which, in a careful reading, reveal the limits of this perspective in FOWLER's theory and the fact that it is placed in a position of secondary importance.

In a general view, the (carefully modified) structural-developmental paradigm appears to be the principal grounding and the dominant model for faith development theory: the concept of 'faith' (more or less successfully) is approximated to the paradigm of a structural operation; research involves the effort to focus on structures formalistically. Thus, in an evaluative general view, the structural-developmental paradigm is now at an advantage and due to this, attention to the constructive-operative activity of the individual has become the key concern. Hence, it becomes obvious that structural-developmental theories of religion, as NIPKOW, SCHWEITZER and FOWLER (NIPKOW et.al.1988:19)<sup>38</sup> state, share the modern appreciation of autonomy, rationality and subjectivity.

However, there is another side to this issue: the intention of faith development theory to overcome just this one-sided focus on autonomy, rationality and subjectivity (NIPKOW et.al.1988: 19) which FOWLER termed "the indebtedness to post-Enlightenment hermeneutics" (FOWLER 1988a:38). The prescriptive delineation of faith development toward the kind of faith *beyond* autonomy, rationality and subjectivity - which FOWLER conceptualized in terms of a "conjunctive," "dialectical," "multi-perspectival," ultimately "universal" faith, a hermeneutical perspective involving, what RICOEUR labelled "second naivete," - displays this intention.

But the very fact that 'faith' has been conceptualized, as mentioned above, with its accounting for the significance of symbolic representations display the attempt to overcome and move beyond the autonomous cognitive-constructive activity of the subject inherent in the perspective of the structural-developmental paradigm.

Finally, for a further advancement of faith development theory to take the "structuring" significance of symbolic representations into account, I see the necessity to turn to RICOEUR's hermeneutic. We can expect from RICOEUR a deeper understanding of the responsiveness which, in my understanding, suggests

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38. "Bei ihren Zielperspektiven folgen die kognitiv-strukturellen Theorien der religiösen Entwicklung der Wertschätzung von *Autonomie, Rationalität und Subjektivität*. Darin zeigt sich, wie sehr sie selbst dem neuzeitlichen - sich selbst weithin säkular verstehenden - Denken verpflichtet sind. Es ist deshalb angemessen, diese Theorien als Ausdruck und Folge eines solchen Denkens zu verstehen - mit der Konsequenz, daß die philosophische und theologische Kritik einer einseitigen Orientierung an *Autonomie, Rationalität und Subjektivität* auch auf die kognitiv-strukturellen Theorien der religiösen Entwicklung angewendet werden muß. Nicht übersehen werden darf jedoch auch, daß diese Theorien gerade in der Absicht einer *Überwindung* solcher Einseitigkeit entwickelt und betrieben werden."

itself for a re-conceptualization of faith. The theme, then, around which further reflection should center is the theme of the constitution of self-understanding.

FOWLER, as has been analyzed and stated throughout this first part, since he grounds his theory of faith development primarily in the structural-developmental tradition of psychology, has adopted, with the basic presuppositions of the PIAGETian tradition, the assumption of *constructivism* which gives primary emphasis to the creative, inventing activity of the subject. This has led to the key definition of 'faith' as "an aspect of the total constitutive activity of the ego." Therefore, I conclude that *faith development theory - even if we take into account the more recent re-interpretations which indicate a modification toward an integration of 'vocation' and 'responsiveness' - in general, stands in the tradition of thought which starts with, and gives primary emphasis to, the construing activity of the subject.*<sup>39</sup> (Thesis 16).

RICOEUR's work presents a fundamental contribution to the interpretive turn, in regard to both the conceptualization of faith and the methodology of research. RICOEUR holds that "it is the text, with its unveiling, which gives a *self* to the ego" (RICOEUR 1981b:193). Self-understanding is derived from the encounter with texts. The quest for meaning is dependent on a *detour*: the "detour" through the text of symbolic, narrative and metaphoric manifestations in our culture. Therefore, symbols present a "*gift of meaning*" (RICOEUR 1960b 1971), the metaphors of Biblical language have the potential of a "creative power of meaning" (Comp. RICOEUR 1974b:45). Can we find a definition of faith which accounts for the fact that "it is the text which gives a *self* to the ego" and which would still be qualified for empirical research?

As a key definition of faith development, I suggest to turn to the terms used in a summary statement of faith development in the *Manual*: it is a

"system of transformations by which the self is constituted as it responds to questions of ultimate meaning" (MOSELEY et.al. 1986:1).

And because I tend to agree with FOWLER's claim that

"(f)ew things could be more important than serious reflection on how we form and commit ourselves to (and through) the *contents* of faith" (FOWLER 1981a:281),

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39. RICOEUR calls this tradition "the tradition of the subject" (RICOEUR 1981b:182), he speaks of "the primacy of the subject in modern philosophy" (RICOEUR 1981b:190) or of "the primacy of the *cogito*" (RICOEUR 1981b:193). See also Part III, Chapter 8.!



I conclude: *Thorough work on a more precise conceptualization, and a consistent evaluation procedure in research, of the "structuring power of the contents," or more precisely: thorough work on conceptualization of the (re-constructive transformation of a person's life story through the) impact of the symbols and narratives, the beliefs and practices of various faith communities deserves a very high priority.* (Thesis 17). This is what I take to be the adequate response to the problem presented by this "tension," resp. this "dynamic interplay" in FOWLER's faith development theory.

**PART TWO:**

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**RICOEUR'S HERMENEUTICAL PERSPECTIVE  
IN REGARD TO ITS CONTRIBUTION TO  
FAITH DEVELOPMENT THEORY**

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Our key figure, in the field of hermeneutics, is Paul RICOEUR. RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective is of special importance for FOWLER's faith development theory: The famous term of "second naiveté" - which FOWLER borrows from RICOEUR's work in order to describe his Stage 5 (FOWLER 1981a:187f; 1987a:72f) - may indicate the relevance and the impact of RICOEUR's hermeneutical thought. Indeed, in regard to the understanding of symbols, metaphors, and narratives, in a faith development perspective, the notion of 'second naiveté' could serve as a model: in this respect, faith development can be put in terms of the development of naiveté.

When we search for the meaning of naiveté in RICOEUR's work, however, we notice its embeddedness in RICOEUR's view about the constitution of the person and his or her self-understanding as the result of an interaction with cultural manifestations. This focal point in RICOEUR's thought, I think, would deserve equal attention.

In regard to the implications of RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective for faith development theory, the concept of faith, of self-understanding, is one of the common foci. Since faith is a dynamic process, this focus can be termed more precisely: the constitution of self-understanding, the awakening and shaping of faith, and the sources of this constitution of self are central themes. Faith development theory - recently put into the terms of a development of "faith and selfhood" (FOWLER 1987a) - deals with the domain of the constitution of the person. This may be sufficient to indicate that there is common ground, a common theme shared by these two scientific domains: the psychology of a person's development in faith and the philosophical reflection on the understanding of symbol, metaphor, and narrative.

The relation between *hermeneutics* and *faith*, as already mentioned, is constituted through an essential feature of faith: Faith involves *understanding*; faith is a mode of (a new) understanding of God, a mode of (a new) understanding of the world; faith is a mode of (a new) understanding of oneself, a new self-understanding. In RICOEUR's perspective, understanding affects faith and its transformation: a new self-understanding emerges from the encounter with texts.

In regard to methodology, I already called attention to the question as to whether RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective may lead us beyond KOHLBERG's and HABERMAS' understanding of the 'interpretive turn.' In this part of the dissertation, this question has to be taken up. RICOEUR's proposal for the methodology of social scientific research, which is based on the model of the text, may support our project to illuminate the hermeneutics involved in faith development research and to draw some implications from RICOEUR's 'interpretive turn' for faith development research.

Therefore, I will proceed in three steps which may help show the implications of RICOEUR's thought for the hermeneutics of faith development theory: (1) in regard to the constitution of self-understanding, we first encounter a negation: there is no immediacy of self-understanding, the subject is not self-sufficient, but is dependent on the mediation by texts; (2) then, we need to look to the other side and attend to RICOEUR's notion of the constitution of self-understanding, of the person, and possibly of her or his development, as the 'gift of the text;' (3) finally, within the dimension of research methodology, the implication of RICOEUR's understanding of the model of the text, as applied to the 'text' of human action, will be discussed.

## Chapter 5

### SELF-UNDERSTANDING, PERSONHOOD AND OUR DEPENDENCE ON MEDIATION

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#### 5.1. The Insufficiency of the Subject and the 'Detour'

RICOEUR's fundamental insight which, as already indicated, grounds the necessity of, and opens up the possibility for, the "detour" and, hence, a hermeneutical perspective about the constitution of self-understanding and faith, is anchored in his philosophy as deeply as is the entire theory of cognition. Thereby, the certainty of 'consciousness,' the Archimedian point of departure for philosophical reflection in the tradition of DESCARTES, has become questionable.<sup>40</sup> In *Fallible Man* (RICOEUR 1960a 1965), RICOEUR takes up the thread of the KANTian transcendental reflection:

"It is 'upon' the *thing* that this reflection discerns the power of knowing, upon the thing that it discovers the specific disproportion of knowing, between receiving it and determining it. Upon the thing it apprehends the power of synthesis. This meditation is transcendental and is a reflection because it starts from the *thing*. An immediate meditation on the non-coincidence of self with self is at once lost in the *pathétique*, and no introspection can give it the appearance of rigor. But reflection is not introspection; for reflection takes the roundabout way via the object; it is reflection *upon* the object." (RICOEUR 1960a 1965:28)

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40. BOLLNOW, in reference to his own work in the theory of cognition (BOLLNOW 1970), locates RICOEUR's point of departure in the context of a philosophical tendency which is displayed in the works of DILTHEY, BERGSON, DEWEY, and HEIDEGGER, when he writes: "(S)obald man erkannt hat, daß sich der Mensch schon immer in einer verstandenen Welt befindet (Dilthey), daß die Praxis ursprünglicher ist als die Theorie (Bergson), daß das Bewußtsein erst aus den Störungen des praktischen Umgangs entsteht (Dewey), daß das Verstehen zur ursprünglichen Konstitution des menschlichen Daseins gehört und der Umgang mit dem zuhandenen Zeug ursprünglicher ist als das theoretische Verhalten (Heidegger), ist jeder Versuch, vom Bewußtsein als einem archimedischen Punkt in gesichertem Fortgang ein System der Erkenntnis zu errichten, fragwürdig geworden, und es ergibt sich statt dessen die Notwendigkeit einer hermeneutischen Begründung der Erkenntnis." (BOLLNOW 1976:227)

The fact that the assumption of a self-sufficient subject of cognition is an illusion, becomes the more obvious in the confrontation with such objects which are "so dense and inexhaustible that we can never pretend to have fully appropriated" them (LOWE 1985:14): Symbols, myths, metaphors, narratives. The work on symbols stands out, in RICOEUR's early work. The dictum of the conclusion of *Symbolism of Evil*, "The symbol gives rise to thought" (RICOEUR 1960b 1969:347), in its two implications - the *giving* and the *positing* - precisely contradicts any notion of a self-closed and self-sufficient subject and maintains the dependency of the subject on mediation:

"This sentence, which enchants me, says two things: the symbol gives; but what it gives is occasion for thought, something to think about. ... A meditation on symbols starts from speech that has already taken place, and in which everything has already been said in some fashion; it wishes to be thought with its presuppositions. For it, the first task is not to begin but, from the midst of speech, to remember; to remember with a view to beginning. ... But what the symbol gives rise to is thinking. After the gift, positing. The aphorism suggests at the same time that everything has already been said enigmatically and yet that it is always necessary to begin everything and to begin it again in the dimension of thinking. It is the articulation of thought given to itself in the realm of symbols and of thought positing and thinking that constitutes the critical point of our whole enterprise." (RICOEUR 1960b 1969:348f)

In this quote, we see how RICOEUR, in investigating the relation of symbol and reflection, maintains the phenomenon of '*distanciation*:' the subject's reflection is dependent on the gift; and "the inexhaustibility will not be reduced, but unfolded and affirmed" (LOWE 1985:14).

Why does RICOEUR see the need to emphasize this insufficiency and dependency? LOWE gives an answer:

"All of the Ricoeurian ventures in *distanciation* are occasioned by the self's tendency to close upon itself, which is simultaneously the tendency to reduce the other to an object which one can effectively grasp." (LOWE 1985:14f)<sup>41</sup>

Another reason may be added in respect to the further development of RICOEUR's work, his inquiry into FREUD: consciousness which would be closed in itself and

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41. LOWE, in his "Introduction" to RICOEUR's *Fallible Man*, points to such understanding of RICOEUR's philosophy: referring to an early essay of RICOEUR "in which he calls for a philosophical 'humanism' which can provide a response to 'the peril of the 'objectification' of the human being" (LOWE 1985:2), LOWE draws our attention to the political concern which stands behind RICOEUR's opposition against "reductionism, which would constrict or deny the reality of human freedom" (LOWE 1985:2) and against objectification which, in philosophy appears most obviously as scientific positivism.

pretend to be self-sufficient has to be unmasked as *false* consciousness. The subject's reflection, in the light of FREUDian theory remains

"a Cogito that posits itself but does not possess itself; a Cogito that sees its original truth only in and through the avowal of the inadequacy, illusion, and lying of actual consciousness." (RICOEUR 1965a 1979:439)

Indeed: the adoption of FREUDian thought lends the skepticism in regard to self-sufficient and closed consciousness a more radical understanding, it is not only a pretension, but a self-deception.<sup>42</sup> This leads to RICOEUR's thesis that *reflection is not intuition*.<sup>43</sup>

The subject, because it is not to be identified with consciousness, is not constitutive of meaning (van den HENGEL 1982:6), it is not the "home of meaning" (RICOEUR 1965a 1979:55). RICOEUR's philosophy, as LOWE puts it, is not a philosophy "which is in any sense self-centered," but RICOEUR "insists upon the strenuous discipline of continually *decentering* human (self-)consciousness" (LOWE 1985:5).

Thus, respective to the way in which reflection takes "the roundabout way," self-understanding takes a "detour" via the cultural works. There is no immediacy of self-understanding. The tradition of the primacy of the cogito is a "pretension" which has been irretrievably shaken through the critique of illusion and ideology by FREUD and MARX. Suspicion toward, and critique of, this "pretension" must be integrated into hermeneutics which, therefore, suggests taking the only way left to self-understanding: the *detour*. This is reflected in the following quote from the article, "The hermeneutical function of distancing":

"In contrast to the tradition of the *cogito* and to the pretension of the subject to know itself by immediate intuition, it must be said that we understand ourselves only by the long detour of the signs of humanity deposited in cultural works. (RICOEUR 1975f:143).

42. BOLLNOW continues: "Trotzdem behält die Orientierung an Freud ihre Berechtigung; denn bei ihm gewinnt die Zurückführung des Bewußtseins auf die unbewußten Mächte insofern noch einen radikaleren Sinn, als bei ihm das Unbewußte durch eine grundsätzliche Schranke allen direkt vorgehenden Verstehensversuchen entzogen ist und das unmittelbare Bewußtsein zunächst ein 'falsches Bewußtsein' ist, das erst durch eine besondere Interpretationstechnik aufgeschlossen, d.h. 'entlarvt' werden kann." (BOLLNOW 1976:227f)

43. "(R)éflexion n'est pas intuition, ou, en termes positifs : la réflexion est l'effort pour ressaisir l'Ego de l'Ego Cogito dans le miroir de ses objets, de ses oeuvres et finalement de ses actes." (RICOEUR 1965a:51)

In these words, we have a condensed statement of one of the key concerns of RICOEUR's hermeneutics. Looking back on his book on FREUD, RICOEUR maintains that the work on symbols is important, since it helps

"to dissipate the illusion of an intuitive self-knowledge by forcing self-understanding to take the roundabout path of the whole treasure of symbols transmitted by the cultures within which we have come, at one and the same time, into both existence and speech." (RICOEUR 1983b:193)

Here, the "intersubjectivity of becoming-conscious" (van den HENGEL 1982:11), the necessity of mediation, hence, the appropriateness of a hermeneutical perspective becomes obvious. The positing of the self, therefore, is not a given, but a *task*. The 'detour' or 'roundabout way' is the 'long way' as opposed to the 'short way' of intuitive knowledge, it is the task of *becoming* conscious as opposed to *being* conscious.<sup>44</sup> And the long way is the way through the interpretation of signs, of symbols, of documents. The detour, the long way thus relies on interpretation; it is the *hermeneutical way*.

The necessity and ground of a hermeneutical perspective is evident. Self-understanding is the outcome of an encounter, of *interaction*. Self-understanding depends on mediation. To understand oneself, to become a self, is not possible with one's eyes closed, so to speak. One has to open one's eyes in order to have a distant view as far-sighted as the view of the *horizon*. In the hermeneutical interaction, the detour or 'roundabout way' arrives at its destination, its goal: in the 'fusion of horizons.'

To summarize: *There is no self-sufficiency of the conscious subject, nor is there an immediacy of self-understanding. But as reflection takes "the roundabout way via the object," self-understanding takes a "detour" via the cultural works.* (Thesis 18).

## 5.2. Mediation to the 'World,' to Truth, to Reality

"The discovery of the precedence of Being-in-the-world in relation to any foundational project and to any attempt at ultimate justification takes on its full force when we draw the positive conclusions of the new ontology of understanding for epistemology. ... I can sum up these epistemological consequences in the following way: there is no self-understanding which is not

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44. RICOEUR 1965d 1973:170f; comp. BOLLNOW 1976:228f.



*mediated* by signs, symbols and texts; in the last resort understanding coincides with the interpretation given to these mediating terms." (RICOEUR 1983b:191)

We cannot arrive at self-understanding with our eyes closed. However, in RICOEUR's perspective, we will not arrive at our destination through an eye to eye encounter: In the encounter with the works of culture, there is no immediacy to another person's subjectivity either, there is no immediate "rejoining of the other person's subjectivity," as DILTHEY wanted to have it.

"I cannot accept the irrationalism of immediate understanding, conceived as an extension to the domain of texts of the empathy by which a subject puts himself in the place of a foreign consciousness in a situation of face-to-face intensity. This undue extension maintains the romantic illusion of a direct link of congeniality between the two subjectivities implied in the work, that of the author and that of the reader." (RICOEUR 1983b:194)

Hence, for RICOEUR, GADAMER's concept of the 'fusion of horizons' becomes a central idea. There is no self-sufficiency, and there is no immediacy either, but there is the need for mediation. The following quote of GADAMER displays his definition of the 'fusion of horizons':

"Es gibt so wenig einen Gegenwartshorizont für sich, wie es historische Horizonte gibt, die man zu gewinnen hätte. *Vielmehr ist Verstehen immer der Vorgang der Verschmelzung solcher vermeintlich für sich seiender Horizonte.*" (GADAMER 1960:289)

Tough there may be a slight difference from GADAMER's notion of the 'fusion of horizons,'<sup>45</sup> RICOEUR admits:

"We owe to Gadamer this very fruitful idea that communication at a distance between two differently situated consciousnesses occurs by means of the fusion of their horizons, that is, the intersection of their views on the distant and the open." (RICOEUR 1975d:62; cf. 1981b:192)

To conclude: *The concept of the 'fusion of horizons,' as a metaphor for hermeneutics, indicates both, our dependence on mediation and the possibility of that mediation.* (Thesis 19).

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45. GADAMER realizes that the "Entwurf eines *historischen* Horizonts" belongs to the hermeneutical enterprise, since the historical consciousness is aware of its difference to the horizon represented by the tradition of the cultural world; but instantly, what has been separated for a moment, is taken together: "Der Entwurf eines historischen Horizonts ist ... nur ein Phasenmoment" (GADAMER 1960:290). This instability of the historical horizon may indicate a difference to RICOEUR.

### 5.2.1. Mediation through Language

This communication at a distance is a *language-event*. The intersection of views is mediated by language. RICOEUR's perspective about the essential dependence of self-understanding on language, on the mediating function of the symbolic and narrative language, becomes visible in the quote from the already mentioned article, "The hermeneutical function of distancing" which continues:

"In contrast to the tradition of the *cogito* and to the pretension of the subject to know itself by immediate intuition, it must be said that we understand ourselves only by the long detour of the signs of humanity deposited in cultural works. What would we know of love and hate, of moral feelings and, in general, of all that we call the *self*, if these had not been brought to language and articulated by literature?" (RICOEUR 1975f:143).

*All self-understanding is the outcome of a mediation, is mediated by language. Our world is through and through language. (Thesis 20)*<sup>46</sup>

"Mediation by *signs*: that is to say that it is *language* that is the primary condition of all human experience. Perception is articulated, desire is articulated; this is something that Hegel had already shown in the *Phenomenology of Mind*. Freud drew another consequence from this, namely that there is no emotional experience so deeply buried, so concealed or so distorted that it cannot be brought up to the clarity of language and so revealed in its own proper sense, thanks to desire's access to the sphere of language. Psychoanalysis, as *talk-cure*, is based on this very hypothesis, that of the primary proximity between desire and speech." (RICOEUR 1983b:191f)

RICOEUR's notion of the verbal character of the world reflects GADAMER's dictum:

"Sein, das verstanden werden kann, ist Sprache." (GADAMER 1960:450)

The world of symbols, this one of the fundamentals of RICOEUR's thought, is mediated by language.

The mediation through language, in RICOEUR's perspective, also means that there is no immediacy. *Only a naive understanding of language would expect the possibility of an immediate encounter. This becomes clear in RICOEUR's opposition to the perspective of "ecstatic imagination." RICOEUR calls this perspective a "naive and uncritical" "ontological vehemence."*<sup>47</sup> (Thesis 21).

While RICOEUR, as we have seen, appreciates GADAMER's notion of *Sprachlichkeit*, he wants also to emphasize *Schriftlichkeit*, the fact that this lan-

46. Comp. VanLEEuwEN 1981:70; GISEL 1974:18.

47. (RICOEUR 1975a 1977:249f) See also Chapter 5.2.2.!

guage has become a *text* (RICOEUR 1975d:62). The impossibility of immediacy is due to a crucial feature of language: *distanciation* - the central theme of RICOEUR's article mentioned above. What is said, comes to us in written form, as text, as 'work.' Taking account of that movement is important for RICOEUR and leads to the definition of hermeneutics (cf. RICOEUR 1971a:197).

The movement from spoken words in discourse to the written text, effects an inevitable loss: *Due to its movement from 'speaking' to 'writing,' the utterance is distanciated from its reference in all of its three dimensions: (a) from the reference to the subjectivity of the author; (b) from the ostensive character of reference-to-a-world; (c) from the relation to the audience of present interlocutors.* (Thesis 22.1):

"Writing opens up new and original resources for discourse. Thanks to writing, discourse acquires a threefold semantic autonomy: in relation to the speaker's intention, to its reception by its original audience, and to the economic, social and cultural circumstances of its production. It is in this sense that writing tears itself free of the limits of face-to-face dialogue and becomes the condition for discourse itself *becoming-text*. It is to hermeneutics that falls the task of exploring the implications of this becoming-text for the work of interpretation." (RICOEUR 1983b:193)

*But with this loss we also have an important gain: the text speaks to anyone who can read; its reference-to-a-world opens up a proposal of 'being-in-the-world.'* (Thesis 22.2):

"If the meaning of a text is open to anyone who can read, then it is the omni-temporality of meaning which opens it to unknown readers; and the historicity of reading is the counterpart of this specific omni-temporality. From the moment that the text escapes from its author and from its situation, it also escapes from its original audience. Hence it can procure new readers for itself." (RICOEUR 1981b:192)

### 5.2.2. *Symbol, Symbolic Truth and Naiveté*

RICOEUR defines symbol:

"(B)y this term I mean those expressions carrying a double sense which traditional cultures have grafted onto the naming of the 'elements' of the cosmos (fire, water, wind, earth, etc.), of its 'dimensions' (height and depth, etc.). These double-sense expressions are themselves hierarchically ordered into the most universal symbols, then those that belong to one particular culture, and, finally, those that are the creation of a particular thinker, even of just one work. In this last case, the symbol merges into living metaphor." (RICOEUR 1983b:192)

The already mentioned phrase, "The Symbol gives rise to thought" (RICOEUR 1960b 1969:347ff), not only displays a dialectical relation between sym-

understood, to be sure, without going through the stage of the 'is not' and thus taking the 'is not' into account).<sup>55</sup>

For an adequate understanding, second naiveté would have to be illuminated, by an important trait of *metaphorical truth*. Surely, second naiveté is not ecstatic imagination, but rather *metaphoric* imagination; not the mere disclosure of the ecstatic moment of language, immediate "ontological vehemence," but rather mediated through the blending of identity ('is') and difference ('is not') in metaphorical language. In order not to succumb again to what RICOEUR calls "ontological naiveté" - which could be interpreted as a 'failure to ask questions' (GERHART&RUSSELL 1984)<sup>56</sup> that arise in the encounter with contradiction -, therefore, we have to take the 'is not' into account:

"There is no other way to do justice to the notion of metaphorical truth than to include the critical incision of the (literal) 'is not' within the ontological vehemence of the (metaphorical) 'is.'" (RICOEUR 1975a 1977:255)

*Taking account of the dialectical relation between 'is' and 'is not' in metaphorical truth, we arrive at a new appreciation of the notion of 'second naiveté.' It hints at the ontological vehemence of the 'is.' But the other side has to be included - or at least kept in mind - the fact that it is mediated through an 'is not.'* (Thesis 25).

### 5.2.3. **Metaphor, Metaphorical Truth and the 'World of the Text'**

Metaphor is the language figure which consists in a planned category mistake. Metaphor confronts the reader or listener with the aporia of the inadequacy

55. Here, I should draw a line from ADORNO who, in his *Negative Dialektik*, in dealing with the philosophy of perception, employs the term *naiveté* in order to describe the "yearning" of philosophy to transcend the concept and to reach the non-conceptual (ADORNO 1966:21;27).

56. In their book, *Metaphoric Process. The Creation of Scientific and Religious Understanding*, Mary GERHART, a theologian, and Allan M. RUSSELL, a physicist, in an interdisciplinary collaboration, undertook the task of searching for a common concept of understanding in theology and physics. The definition they give of the reference point in the hierarchy of religious and scientific understanding is *knowing in process*. Naiveté, then, is the static belief (knowing-for-sure) which is blind to questions and doubts which cause our understanding to take on the procedural character of "knowledge- in-process." In declared, explicit contrast to RICOEUR's concept of naiveté, therefore, they define naiveté in this way: first and second naiveté. In their definition, is the "failure" to ask questions, the failure to ask questions "about our experiences and observations" (first naiveté); the failure to ask questions "about one's questions" (second naiveté). With this definition, GERHART&RUSSELL advance an understanding of naiveté as a fundamentally negative concept: "The individual ought not to fear naiveté if engaged in overcoming it." (GERHART&RUSSELL 1984:65).

of literal understanding: 'it is not so;' on the other hand, it refers to a meaning of a second order: the 'it is so.'

However, in contrast to any understanding which suggests viewing metaphor as merely a substitutable language figure, RICOEUR's careful analysis shows that metaphor is not merely a decorative rhetorical figure. *Since metaphor is more than a rhetorical figure and more than a sign, it cannot be interpreted sufficiently within the lexical system of language, of semiotics, but is defined by the use in speech, and therefore it is properly defined by semantics.* (Thesis 26)<sup>57</sup>

"In service to the poetic function, metaphor is that strategy of discourse by which language divests itself of its function of direct description in order to reach the mythic level where its function of discovery is set free." (RICOEUR 1975a 1977:247)

RICOEUR, therefore, points out that there is a specific truth claim in metaphor, he speaks of *metaphorical truth*.

Distanciation which, as we have seen, affects the referential dimension of the saying to the effect that it abolishes the ostensive character of the reference - the "first order reference" (RICOEUR 1975f:141) -, at the same time, has an important potential: it opens up referentiality on a level of "second order reference" and unfolds a 'world,' it refers to our 'being-in-the-world.'

"On the one hand, as regards its sense, the metaphorical utterance reproduces the form of a movement in a portion of the trajectory of meaning that goes beyond the familiar referential field where the meaning is already constituted. On the other hand, it brings an unknown referential field towards language, and within the ambit of this field the semantic aim functions and unfolds. At the origin of this process, therefore, there is what I shall call the ontological vehemence of a semantic aim, hinting at an unknown field that sets it in motion. This ontological vehemence cuts meaning from its initial anchor, frees it as the form of a movement and transposes it to a new field to which the meaning can give form by means of its own figurative property." (RICOEUR 1975a 1977:299f).

*Inherent in metaphor, as in symbol and narrative, is a truth claim which transcends positivistic truth and is aimed to an authentic truth claim of metaphoric imagination*<sup>58</sup> (Thesis 27). In other words: In regard to the interpretation of poetic texts, a first-order-reference has to be weakened for a second-order-reference of metaphorical truth to emerge. RICOEUR describes this route toward the truth of living metaphor:

57. Comp. RICOEUR 1975a 1977; VanLEEUWEN 1981:95.

58. "As creative, metaphoric strategy entails the collapse of positivist 'reality' and 'truth' definitions" (SCHALDENBRAND 1979:76).

"The entire strategy of poetic discourse plays on this point: it seeks the abolition of the reference by means of self-destruction of the meaning of metaphorical statements, the self-destruction being manifest by an impossible literal interpretation. ... Within the perspective of semantic impertinence, the self-destruction of meaning is merely the other side of an innovation in meaning at the level of the entire statement, an innovation obtained through the 'twist' of the literal meaning of the words. It is this innovation in meaning that constitutes living metaphor." (RICOEUR 1975a 1977:230)

Sure, RICOEUR has to demarcate his perspective of metaphorical truth against

"the inadequacy of an interpretation that gives in to ontological *naïveté*' in the evaluation of metaphorical truth because it ignores the implicit 'is not,'" a "tendency - naive and uncritical -," the tendency of immediate "ontological vehemence."<sup>59</sup>

The concept of metaphor itself contains such precaution, since it requires to also maintain the difference (the 'is not').

However, what can be gained from the concept of metaphor, can be summarized in short: *metaphors reveal a surplus of meaning, they have the potential of a "new disclosure of existence"* (RICOEUR 1974b:45).<sup>60</sup> (Thesis 28).

#### 5.2.4. *Narrative and Narrative Truth*

Narrative - more decisive than symbol or metaphor - directs our attention backwards, directs it to the past. Narrative represents the cultural tradition and thus confronts us with traditionality. In a special way, the theme of narrative is that of "being-affected-by-the-past," as a heading in the concluding chapter of *Time and Narrative* says (RICOEUR 1985 1988:216ff).

"In order to derive this being-affected by the past from the notion of a space of experience, I shall take as my guide the theme introduced by Gadamer, in his *Truth and Method*, of the consciousness of being exposed to the efficacy of history, of our *Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*. This concept has the advantage of forcing us or, as one commentator has aptly translated it, as the 'work of history'." (RICOEUR 1985 1988:217)

Again, the idea of the 'fusion of horizons' becomes important.

"The past is revealed to us through the projection of a historical horizon that is both detached from the horizon of the present and taken up into and fused with it. This idea of a temporal

59. Such is the perspective of COLERIDGE and, in explicit regard to a theory of metaphor, WHEELWRIGHT, according to RICOEUR (1975a 1977:249ff)

60. See also the section on "Receptivity and Person-Constitution" in Chapter 6 (6.1.3.).

horizon as something that is both projected and separate, distinguished and included, brings about the dialectizing of the idea of traditionality." (RICOEUR 1985 1988:221).

To understand some more of the 'work of history' and the 'being-affected' by the narrative, we have to consider again the function of 'productive imagination' and of 'predicative assimilation':

"If we now ask about the reasons behind the privileged role played by metaphor and emplotment, we must turn towards the functioning of the *productive imagination*... . It is here that the productive imagination comes into play as the schematization of this synthetic operation of bringing closer together. It is the 'seeing' - the sudden insight - inherent to discourse itself, which brings about the change in logical distance, the bringing-closer-together itself. This productive character of insight may be called *predicative assimilation*." (RICOEUR 1983b:183f)

Understanding a story thus involves a kind of hermeneutical process which is like that of understanding metaphor: a new meaning is revealed through the encounter with the 'is not' of literal reading:

"We insisted ... on the very particular mode of *understanding* involved in the activity of following a story and we spoke in this regard of narrative understanding. ... The act of understanding which would correspond in this domain to the ability to follow a story consists in grasping the semantic dynamism by virtue of which, in a metaphorical statement, a new semantic relevance emerges from the ruins of the semantic non-relevance as this appears in a literal reading of the sentence. To understand is thus to perform or to repeat the discursive operation by which the semantic innovation is conveyed." (RICOEUR 1983b:184)

It can be summarized: *Narrative displays a productive feature which RICOEUR calls "predicative assimilation" or "productive imagination," through this function there arises, in the language of narrative, the creative power of the "not-yet-said, the unheard-of;" "a new semantic relevance emerges from the ruins of the semantic non-relevance of literal reading."* (Thesis 29).

Inherent in narrative, there is a truth claim: RICOEUR speaks of 'narrative truth.' RICOEUR's notion of 'narrative truth' is displayed in the following quote:

"Poetic language draws its prestige from what Husserl called the *Lebenswelt* and Heidegger *In-der-Welt-Sein*. By this very fact, we find ourselves forced to rework our conventional concept of truth, that is to say to cease to limit this concept to logical coherence and empirical verification alone, so that the truth claim related to the transfiguring action of fiction can be taken into account." (RICOEUR 1983b:186)

This could be summarized in a separate thesis: *Narrative requires us to "rework our conventional concept of truth" in order to take into account the "truth claim related to the transfiguring action" of narrative.* (Thesis 30).

In a final perspective, narrative aims at 'remaking' reality, at the 'transfiguration' of our world:

"Fiction has the power to 'remake' reality and, within the framework of narrative fiction in particular, to remake real praxis to the extent that the text intentionally aims at a horizon of new reality which we may call a world. It is this world of the text which intervenes in the world of action in order to give it a new configuration or, as we might say, in order to transfigure it." (RICOEUR 1983b:185)

In regard to our individual life history,<sup>61</sup> but also in regard to the life of community, narrative has the special function of constituting 'narrative identity:'

"The fragile offshoot issuing from the union of history and fiction is the assignment to an individual or a community of a special identity that we can call their narrative identity. ... The notion of narrative identity also indicates its fruitfulness in that it can be applied to a community as well as to an individual. We can speak of the self-constancy of a community, just as we spoke of it as applied to an individual subject. Individual and community are constituted in their identity by taking up narratives that become for them their actual history." (RICOEUR 1985 1988:246f)

RICOEUR gives two examples for this narrative identity: the (re-)constitution of life history through psychoanalysis and the constitution of the identity of the people of Israel through the Biblical narratives.

RICOEUR is very explicit about the constitutive ground of such identity: identity or self-constancy is constituted by the historical or fictional narratives which we encounter in the works of our culture:

"This connection between self-constancy and narrative identity confirms one of my oldest convictions, namely, that the self of self-knowledge is not the egotistical and narcissistic ego whose hypocrisy and naiveté the hermeneutics of suspicion have denounced, along with its aspects of an ideological superstructure and infantile and neurotic archaism. The self of self-knowledge is the fruit of an examined life, to recall Socrates' phrase in the *Apology*. And an examined life is, in large part, one purged, one clarified by the cathartic effects of the narratives, be they historical or fictional, conveyed by our culture. So self-constancy refers to a self instructed by the works of a culture that it has applied to itself." (RICOEUR 1985 1988:247)

This can be summarized in the following thesis: *Narrative has the function constituting 'narrative identity.'* *Narrative, also fictional narrative, "has the power to 'remake' reality," to 'transfigure' the world.* (Thesis 31).

With the notion of narrative identity - as has been the case, to some degree, with the notion of symbolic truth, naiveté, and living metaphor -, RICOEUR's thought has already led us beyond the limits of the theme of this chapter, media-

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61. The notion of 'narrative identity' will be of special importance for the idea of development which I will outline in the following chapter.



tion; and the theme of the next, person-constitution, has become visible. Thus it becomes obvious that the two are inseparably related: In RICOEUR's perspective, mediation through the language of symbols, metaphors, and narratives, finally, answers the question of the constitution and the identity of the person and the community.

## Chapter 6

### THE GIFT OF THE TEXT AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PERSON

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#### 6.1. Self-Understanding as Gift

##### 6.1.1. *The Ontological Signification of Hermeneutics*

Hermeneutics is the attempt to illuminate the process of understanding. Its prime model, and its historical origin, is the interpretation of written messages, the understanding of texts. However, hermeneutics has widened its horizon: a crucial step in this process has been the recognition that the understanding of texts involves not only the communication with, and understanding of, an author's inner life, but a common *Lebensverhältnis zur Sache* between the author and the interpreter, as BULTMANN (1950:217) maintains - to be sure, still with primary respect to the exegesis of Biblical texts. This advancement in hermeneutics for which BULTMANN is an exponent thus brings into play a third reference point within the hermeneutical field: human existence, *Geschichte als Lebenssphäre* (BULTMANN 1950:228). *The fact that the 'Lebenswelt,' our 'Being-in-the-world,' has become the key concern, has broadened the scope of hermeneutics - finally, to embrace an ontological perspective.* (Thesis 32). In a summary statement on hermeneutics, RICOEUR indicates this in agreement with HEIDEGGER:

"*Verstehen* for Heidegger has an ontological signification. It is the response of a being thrown into the world who finds his way about it by projecting onto it his ownmost possibilities. Interpretation, in the technical sense of the interpretation of texts, is but the development, the making explicit of this ontological understanding, an understanding always inseparable from a being that has initially been thrown into the world." (RICOEUR 1983b:190)

Thus this third reference point within the hermeneutical field also leads beyond a narrow focus of hermeneutics on textual interpretation. Looking back on his work on symbols, RICOEUR maintains that, (despite the "too narrow" limitation

of the definition of hermeneutics to the understanding of *symbols*) this work is important as

"a stage separating the very general recognition of the linguistic character of all experience and the more technical definition of hermeneutics in terms of textual interpretation. (RICOEUR 1983b:193)

The implication of the widening of the scope of hermeneutics - it opened up to encompass an ontological perspective - and of the fact that hermeneutics, thereby, has transcended its limitation to text interpretation also becomes visible in the concept of *appropriation*. In his article "Appropriation," RICOEUR says:

"(I)t will be less an intersubjective relation of mutual understanding than a relation of apprehension of the world conveyed by the work. ... In general we may say that appropriation is no longer to be understood in the tradition of philosophies of the subject, as a constitution of which the subject would possess the key. To understand is not to project oneself into the text; it is to receive an enlarged self from the apprehension of proposed worlds which are the genuine object of interpretation." (RICOEUR 1981b:182)

*Appropriation has an ontological signification.* (Thesis 33). Appropriation has to do with the "revelation of a world" (RICOEUR 1981b:183), with the playful metamorphosis undergone by the subject of appropriation (as by the author and by reality). For an adequate understanding of 'appropriation,' therefore, the 'critique of the illusions of the subject,' both from the viewpoint of the MARXian and the FREUDian tradition, finally, the 'relinquishment of the self,' becomes the necessary path.

"Appropriation will be the complement not only of the distancing of the text, but also of the relinquishment of the self." (RICOEUR 1981b:183)

Thus, some of the remaining themes of this chapter are foreshadowed and displayed in the concept of appropriation: assimilation and decentration, receptivity and listening as the modality to person-constitution--and the constitution of faith.

### 6.1.2. *Assimilation and Decentration*

The world of a text, RICOEUR says, is not "behind" the text, but "in front of the text." *The work 'discovers,' 'reveals; the work "opens up its readers and thus creates its own subjective vis-à-vis" (RICOEUR 1975f:143). This means that the creation of new meaning and new possibilities of existence take place in that the symbol*

'assimilates us to..., ' it assimilates us to what the symbol says - a process which RICOEUR also calls 'symmorphosis.' (Thesis 34).

RICOEUR, as becomes obvious in his works on *The Symbolism of Evil* (RICOEUR 1960b) and *Freud and Philosophy* (RICOEUR 1965a), emphasizes the poetic dimension of the symbol, he speaks of the disclosing power of the symbol, that the "symbol gives, what it says." Moreover, he speaks of *assimilation* in the sense that the movement toward the second meaning of the symbol assimilates us to what the symbol says. It makes us participate in what it says. This resembles the notion of *theoria* of GADAMER who, with respect to the concepts of "*theoros*" and "*theoria*"<sup>62</sup> in Greek metaphysics, claims that the *theoretical* attitude/behavior is defined as forgetting one's own objectives while dealing with something.<sup>63</sup>

SCHALDENBRAND, in her article, "Metaphoric Imagination: Kinship through Conflict," explains RICOEUR's term 'assimilation:'

"Assimilation to' intends a reversal: whereas 'assimilation of' indicates a meaning-movement initiated and controlled by subjectivity, 'assimilation to' indicates a meaning-movement whose beginning and end elude this domination." (SCHALDENBRAND 1979:63).

This notion of 'assimilation to' - or the counterpart thereof, 'decentration' from the ego - is displayed in RICOEUR's already mentioned article on "Appropriation:"

"Relinquishment is a fundamental moment of appropriation and distinguishess it from any form of 'taking possession.' Appropriation is also and primarily a 'letting go.' Reading is an appropriation-divestiture. How can this letting-go, this relinquishment, be incorporated into appropriation? Essentially by linking appropriation to the revelatory power of the text which we have described as its referential dimension. It is in allowing itself to be carried off towards the reference of the text that the ego divests itself of itself." (RICOEUR 1981b:191)

62. GADAMER's definition of the concept of *theoria*: "Theoria ist aber nicht primär als ein Verhalten der Subjektivität zu denken, als eine Selbstbestimmung des Subjekts, sondern von dem her, was es anschaut. Theoria ist wirkliche Teilnahme, kein Tun, sondern ein Erleiden (Pathos), nämlich das hineingerissene Eingenommensein vom Anblick." (GADAMER 1960:118)

63. With respect to the concepts of "*theoros*" and "*theoria*" in Greek metaphysics, GADAMER claims that the *theoretical* attitude is defined by forgetting one's own objectives.: "(A)uch in unseren Augen ist die Fähigkeit, sich theoretisch verhalten zu können, dadurch definiert, daß man über einer Sache seine eigenen Zwecke vergessen kann." (GADAMER 1960:118) From the perspective of subjectivity, *theoria* includes a specific event on the part of the spectator, the human-being-present: *ecstasy*: "Dabeisein als eine subjektive Leistung menschlichen Verhaltens hat den Charakter des Außersichseins. Schon Plato hat in seinem 'Phaidros' die Unverständigkeit gekennzeichnet, mit der man von der rationalen Vernünftigkeit aus die Ekstasik des Außersichseins zu verkennen pflegt, wenn man darin eine bloße Negation des Belsichseins, also eine Art von Verrücktheit sieht. In Wahrheit ist Außersichsein die positive Möglichkeit, ganz bei etwas dabei zu sein. Solches Dabeisein hat den Charakter der Selbstvergessenheit, und es macht das Wesen des Zuschauers aus, einem Anblick selbstvergessen hingegeben zu sein. Selbstvergessenheit ist hier aber alles andere als ein privater Zustand, denn sie entspringt aus der Zuwendung zur Sache, die der Zuschauer als seine eigenen positive Leistung aufbringt." (GADAMER 1960:119)

In RICOEUR's understanding of 'assimilation,' we see not only the contrast to PIAGETian terminology, but also the precise contrast to PIAGET's concept of assimilation.<sup>64</sup> (Thesis 35). Also, RICOEUR's term of *decentration* is in a sharp contrast to PIAGET's perspective. To consider RICOEUR's perspective could have far-reaching implications for structural-developmental psychology and for faith development theory, in particular.

### 6.1.3. *Receptivity and Person-Constitution*

The notion of an assimilating and decentering power of symbols, metaphors, and narratives involves an attitude or a motivation in the subject which can be the ground for the hermeneutical enterprise which constitutes the person: *receptivity*. The notion of receptivity - which is not to be confused with passivity,<sup>65</sup> hence, of an active receptivity -, is a central theme throughout RICOEUR's work:

"(T)he theme of an active receptivity proves to be a thread of continuity running from Nabert's 'primary affirmation' through Ricoeur's early anthropology and on into his subsequent hermeneutical studies, with their quest for a 'second naiveté.'" (LOWE 1985:31)

The notion of an active receptivity involves *attention*. Using the body as metaphoric image: the body which is 'the open,' the instrument of communication, of the senses, RICOEUR's thought prefers not the eye, but the ear: active receptivity involves *hearkening*. The 'will to hearkening' is one of the two motivations for the hermeneutical enterprise (its counterpart is the 'will to doubt'), as we learn from RICOEUR's book on FREUD.<sup>66</sup> 'Hearkening,' 'listening,' as we will see, is defined as the ground of faith.

The focal importance and depth of RICOEUR's notion of 'hearkening' and of 'active receptivity' becomes clear, when we take into account the fact that RICOEUR links this attentiveness to the constitution of the self, to person-constitution. This creative power of the cultural works, to which we are attentive, is displayed in the assimilating power of the symbol, and also of metaphor and narrative, when RICOEUR ascribes to them a 'transfiguring' impact.

To take RICOEUR's theory of metaphor as an example, this potential of *creating* has to do with imagination. RICOEUR's theory of metaphor belongs to his

64. See Part III, Chapter 8 for a more detailed discussion!

65. Comp. LOWE 1985:31

66. RICOEUR 1965a 1974:40; comp. BOLLNOW 1976:241f

philosophy of imagination, or more specifically, to his philosophy of imaginal mediation.<sup>67</sup> In RICOEUR's perspective, metaphor has the power of opening up new possibilities of existence (RICOEUR 1974b:45).

"Poetic discourse brings to language a pre-objective world in which we find ourselves already rooted, but in which we also project our innermost possibilities. We must thus dismantle the reign of objects in order to let be, and to allow to be uttered, our primordial belonging to a world which we inhabit, that is to say, which at once precedes us and receives the imprint of our works. In short, we must restore to the fine word *invent* its twofold sense of both discovery and creation." (RICOEUR 1975a 1977:306)

*The self, in "exposing itself to the text," receives from the text "an enlarged self," hence, "the self is constituted by the 'matter' of the text" (RICOEUR 1975f: 144). Therefore, symbols, metaphors, and narratives are most important in their predicative function: to open up new possibilities of existence; to create new meaning; to reveal a "surplus of meaning." (Thesis 36)*

"Die Metapher kommt in der biblischen Sprache nicht nur als rhetorische Figur ins Spiel, sondern als das zwiefache Vermögen der schöpferischen Kraft von Sinn einerseits, der Neubeschreibung der Existenz andererseits; was also in Frage steht, ist nicht nur das Gleichnis als literarisches Genus, welches der allgemein 'Metapher' genannten rhetorischen Figur nahesteht, und es ist auch nicht nur der Gebrauch der Analogie in der biblischen Sprache; um was es geht, ist vielmehr die Funktion der biblischen Sprache, eine neue Möglichkeit von Existenz zu eröffnen."<sup>68</sup>

*Metaphorical imagination is the origin of the constitution of the person. RICOEUR "joins metaphoric creativity to person-constitution" (SCHALDENBRAND 1979:76). It is the text which gives a self to the ego. (Thesis 37). A new self-understanding emerges from the encounter with texts:*

"To understand oneself is to understand oneself as one confronts the text and to receive from it the conditions for a self other than that which first undertakes the reading." (RICOEUR 1983b:193)

RICOEUR's quote may serve as a summary statement:

"Only the interpretation which satisfies the injunction of the text, which follows the 'arrow' of meaning and endeavors to 'think in accordance with' it, engenders a new *self*-understanding. It is the text, with its universal power of unveiling, which gives a *self* to the *ego*." (RICOEUR 1981b:192f)

67. The philosophy of imaginal mediation, according to the conclusion of SCHALDENBRAND (1979:76), exists in a "unified and coherent" philosophy throughout the major works of RICOEUR, during which he focussed his interest on the noun, the symbol, the metaphor, and the narrative.

68. RICOEUR 1974b:45 (Only the German translation has been available to me, even though it had been translated from an English original.)

#### 6.1.4. *'Listening' and the Constitution of Faith*

Concluding I will point out some implications of RICOEUR's perspective for faith development theory which will be investigated later in more detail; in doing so we will have to depart from the common focus: the concept of faith. If it is true that faith is a kind of self-understanding - the central theme of my inquiry into RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective -, the theme of the constitution of self-understanding, is also the theme of *faith* and its constitution. Hence, RICOEUR's notion of the insufficiency of the subject and of the "detour" via the language of symbolic, narrative and metaphoric manifestations in our culture should also be maintained for faith. *When we hold that it is a pretension to believe that the subject could know itself by immediate intuition, we should be suspicious, as well, in regard to any notion of faith-knowing as brought about by immediate intuition. Faith also has to take the 'detour,' the 'roundabout way.'* (Thesis 38).

Thus, RICOEUR suggests a concept of faith as *gift*. As it is the *text* which gives a *self* to the ego, faith is constituted by, and is indebted to, the encounter with language. Symbols present a "gift of meaning" (RICOEUR 1960b 1971:396). The metaphors of Biblical language have the potential of a 'creative power of meaning' (comp. RICOEUR 1974a:45). This displays the essential relation of faith to reading and, in RICOEUR's words, to 'listening.'

*"Listening," "hearing," "hearkening," "active receptivity" are key terms for any notion of self-understanding and faith.* (Thesis 39a). In his article, "Religion, Atheism, Faith" (RICOEUR 1969a), RICOEUR draws our attention to this task of listening of faith. It is listening to language, to the word, to the language of symbols and stories of faith. *Listening, in that sense, is the ground of that kind of faith which, RICOEUR says, deserves surviving the atheistic critique of FREUD and NIETZSCHE in regard to the God of accusation and comfort.* (Thesis 39b)

*"When we speak of the word as a living and effective word, we evoke a connection between the word and the active core of our existence. We imply that the word has the power to change the understanding we have of ourselves. ... The inner connection between our desire to be and the power of the word is a consequence of the act of listening, of hearkening."* (RICOEUR 1969a:78f)

From this essential relation of faith to 'listening' which also reminds us of the openness in the notion of the 'fusion of horizons' a concept of faith suggests itself which can be put into the terms of language, reading, hearkening, listening, in short, into the terms of hermeneutics: *faith as responsiveness*.

## 6.2. Does RICOEUR Propose a Model of Development?

### 6.2.1. *The Model of the Text and the Idea of Development*

RICOEUR has not engaged in a discussion of structural-developmental psychology. We do not have a structural, psychological perspective of development which could bear the name of RICOEUR as author. In an introductory reflection in *Time and Narrative*, RICOEUR somehow parallels his own approach to the "refiguration of temporal experience by narrative" with the resources developed in psychology, sociology, or genetic anthropology, etc. (RICOEUR 1985 1988:3). However, apart from this modest reservation, RICOEUR justifies his approach as being more comprehensive:

"The problem of the refiguration of temporal experience can no longer be confined within the limits of a psycho-sociology of the influences of narrativity on human behavior. We must assume the much greater risks of a specifically philosophical discussion, whose stake is whether--and how--the narrative operation, taken in its full scope, offers a 'solution'--not a speculative one, but a poetic one--to the aporias that seemed inseparable from the Augustinian analysis of time. In this way, the problem of the refiguration of time by narrative finds itself brought to the level of a broad confrontation between an aporetics of temporality and a poetics of narrativity." (RICOEUR 1985 1988:4)

RICOEUR did not construct a theory of individual development. Thus we would be right in ending this chapter on RICOEUR at this point. But there may be important implications from his hermeneutical perspective for theories of the development of the person.

RICOEUR's already mentioned notion of second naiveté and the implicit development of thought toward a hermeneutical perspective as applied to individual development is broadly accepted, e.g. by FOWLER (1981a) or ENGLERT (1985). Does this indicate the intention to adopt RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective for developmental theories?

To advance the implications of RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective for the idea of individual development, I start with two theses: Since RICOEUR suggests perceiving the *constitution* of a person's self-understanding as due to a mutually creative interplay, its source is the ongoing attempt to understand the 'world,' we can also say: *The development of self-understanding is the fruit of our ongoing interpretation of the cultural environment, of our interpretation of the 'text' of our culture, of our interaction with the symbols and narratives which have*



been handed down to us. (Thesis 40). For: *In this hermeneutical interplay, we ourselves are interpreted by the texts, by the symbols and narratives of our tradition, we as persons, including the development of our self-understanding, appear as a 'text' which is open for modification and change through interpretation.* (Thesis 41).

This focal perspective of the constitution of personal development through the decentering power of the texts, though the interplay by which we are interpreted suggests a paradigm for individual development different from the constructivist paradigm.

Mark FREEMAN, in his article of 1985, "Paul Ricoeur on Interpretation. The Model of the Text and the Idea of Development," suggests such a paradigm. FREEMAN holds that we need to

"conceptualize development in largely dialogical terms ... and include not just the ongoing dialogue with ourselves ... but in addition the dialogue we have with others and with the various cultural symbols and works" (FREEMAN 1985:310).

Hence, FREEMAN unfolds this dialogue in the three dimensions of self - self/life history; self - other; and self - world/cultural work. I will outline his interpretation in following these three dimensions to sketch the idea of development which, according to FREEMAN, can be advanced from RICOEUR's thought.

(a) The *dialogue with ourselves* includes, in the first place, the dialogue with our own life story, with our own narrative. Development could possibly be the outcome of this dialogue, if it is true that creation, as FREEMAN holds with RICOEUR, means

"the constructive figuration through which we continually represent ourselves to ourselves as individuals" (FREEMAN 1985:309).

FREEMAN advances this perspective from RICOEUR's theory of metaphor which holds that creative innovation or invention, the impact of understanding a metaphor, is twofold:

"one of the discovery of what was only implicit in the past; and one of creation, what Ricoeur calls 'predicative assimilation', the synthetic activity of bringing together the old and the new in a work of productive imagining." (FREEMAN 1985:309f)

The dialogue with our own life history leads to the development of a narrative; development displays a narrative structure. An idea of how this comes about is sketched by FREEMAN in the following way:

"As developing individuals, individuals continually in the midst of representing ourselves to ourselves, we might say that self-understanding involves something like a process of distancing

such that we objectify our experience in the form of a text to be interpreted. Yet on account of this very coincidence, the fact that we are not dealing with some outside text but rather the one that is ourselves, the task involves not only interpretation, but in addition, creation. We are in the difficult and precarious position, in other words, of being both reader and author." (FREEMAN 1985:310)

(b) The *dialogue with others*, as well, has to be taken into account as an important factor of development:

"Along these lines being set forth here, fruitful avenues of inquiry might include a greater attention to the ways in which development may be inspired both through interpersonal discourse, especially as concerns its content, as well as through the encounter with written and artistic productions ..." (FREEMAN 1985:310)

The short remark that the interpersonal dialogue may be an important factor "especially as regards its content" implies an aspect which, I think, is in accord with RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective. It may lead us to perceive the encounter with the other not only in terms of the competence of 'perspective taking' or 'account for the right of the other.'<sup>69</sup> In light of RICOEUR's perspective, the interpersonal dialogue, as we know especially from the dialogue with other persons who are significant for us, should also be taken into account in terms of the dialogue with the other person's narrative and with her or his referred-to 'world.'

(c) The *dialogue with the cultural works* is the most explicitly emphasized of the three dimensions of dialogue, in light of RICOEUR. If it is true, as we have outlined above, that self-understanding and the person himself or herself is constituted only by means of dialogue with the 'world' of the cultural symbols, then this dimension of dialogue also accounts for the development of the person's self-understanding. The dynamics expressed by RICOEUR's terms of 'assimilation to,' 'decentration,' 'creation,' 'detour,' 'appropriation,' - note the metaphors of *space* and *direction* in most of the terms! - suggest a notion of transformation in dialogue with the texts of culture. Development thus appears as the work of *appropriation*. Again, in the article on "Appropriation," we find a summary statement of RICOEUR which may indicate such an implication of appropriation for individual development:

"... appropriation is the process by which the revelation of new modes of being - or if you prefer Wittgenstein to Heidegger, new 'forms of life' - gives the subject new capacities for knowing him-

69. When the other person, in the first place, appears as the bearer of a foreign perspective or as the bearer of a validity claim of rightness - and the interpersonal dimension appears predominantly as the "regulative dimension" (HABERMAS) - two other dimensions of discourse may be disregarded in their importance for the interpersonal dialog: the expressive and the propositional dimension.

self. If the reference of a text is the projection of a world, then it is not in the first instance the reader who projects himself. The reader is rather broadened in his capacity to project himself by receiving a new mode of being from the text itself." (RICOEUR 1981b:192).

FREEMAN's understanding and advancement of the idea of development which could be anchored in, or derived from, RICOEUR's thought, can be summarized in two theses:

*The model of development which is implied in RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective is a dialogical or contextualist model which describes personal development as the outcome of a dialogue with the 'text' in the three dimensions of (a) the 'text of life history,' (b) the 'text of the other,' and (c) the 'text of symbols and narratives.'* (Thesis 42).

*It is the implication of the hermeneutical perspective of RICOEUR for our perception of a person's development of self-understanding and faith that we adopt a dialogical perspective, a con-text-ualist model.* (Thesis 43).

### **6.2.2. Life History as "a Cloth Woven of Stories Told"**

FREEMAN's sketch of the idea of development implied in RICOEUR's hermeneutical theory may be an adequate perspective from one possible angle. Another angle, RICOEUR takes himself, at least hints at a perspective of individual development: the idea of development as implied in the analysis of *narrative* and *narrative truth*. In *Time and Narrative*, RICOEUR writes:

"What justifies our taking the subject of an action, so designated by his, her, or its proper name, as the same throughout a life that stretches from birth to death? The answer has to be narrative. To answer the question 'Who?' as Hannah Arendt has so forcefully put it, is to tell the story of a life. The story told tells about the action of the 'who.' And the identity of this 'who' therefore itself must be a narrative identity." (RICOEUR 1985 1988:246)

The notion of narrative identity - which, as we have seen, is also the theme of psychoanalysis in its attempt to restore narrative coherence and identity - is thus applied to individual life history by RICOEUR himself. The following quote displays this effectively:

"Unlike the abstract identity of the Same, this narrative identity, constitutive of self-constancy, can include change, mutability, within the cohesion of one lifetime. The subject then appears both as a reader and the writer of its own life, as Proust would have it. As the literary analysis of autobiography confirms, the story of a life continues to be refigured by all the truthful or fictive

stories a subject tells about himself or herself. This refiguration makes this life itself a cloth woven of stories told." (RICOEUR 1985 1988:246)

To summarize this notion of RICOEUR: *Narrative identity constitutes self-constancy which can also include change and transformation.* (Thesis 44).<sup>70</sup> Further: *For the idea of development, RICOEUR's notion of 'refiguration of the story of a life' through the stories told of one's own life has far reaching implications: life history appears as cloth, the tapestry of one's life, which is refigured by remembering and 'reading' one's life history.* (Thesis 45).

The notion of individual development as 'cloth woven of stories told' may be the most adequate summary statement of RICOEUR's perspective on development. The metaphorical expressions of 'cloth' and 'weaving' and, moreover, the notion of the 'narratives told' - which cannot be grasped easily and which allow for anything but being confined and apprehended in a clear-cut signification - display RICOEUR's notion of multi-dimensionality and plurivocity.

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70. GERKIN, in *Widening the Horizons*, maintains with reference to RICOEUR's theory of narrative, "the narrative structure of human consciousness" and says: "By means of stories of the self and of the world around us we hold together events, persons, and experiences that would otherwise be fragmented. To be a person is therefore to live in a story." (GERKIN 1986:52)

## Chapter 7

### THE PROPOSAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGY: THE MODEL OF THE TEXT

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#### 7.1. RICOEUR's Acceptance of the Hermeneutical Turn: Agreement with and Difference from HABERMAS

As we learn from his article on "The model of the text: meaningful action considered as a text" (RICOEUR 1971a), RICOEUR shares with HABERMAS certain analytical perspectives and certain proposals for the hermeneutical procedure: Both theorists share the view that a text (or action) has to be taken as a lively and creative process which is embedded in discourse; hence, both locate the task of interpretation within the field of communication; both share the perspective of a text or action as more-dimensional and, hence, differentiate, in a similar way, between the different dimensions of a speech act; both see the need to reconstruct the motivational basis.

##### 7.1.1. *Surpassing DILTHEY's Aporetic Dichotomy*

In his article "Interpretive Social Science vs. Hermeneuticism" (HABERMAS 1983b), as we have seen, HABERMAS sketches the implications of the interpretive turn for social scientific methodology. I return to HABERMAS' theory here, because he explicitly wants to put forward the interpretive turn and thereby develops a position which gives rise to decisive questions about this paradigmatic turn toward a hermeneutical perspective. To what extent his theory is part of and proposes the paradigmatic turn toward the integration of a hermeneutic perspective, becomes obvious in the following fundamental thesis, in which HABERMAS suggests the model of the text as being paradigmatic:

"Any meaningful expression - be it an utterance, verbal or nonverbal, or an artifact, such as a tool, an institution, or a scripture - can be bifocally identified, both as an observable event and as an understandable objectification of meaning. We well might describe, explain, or predict a noise that is equivalent to the phonetic utterance of a sentence without having any idea of what this utterance means. To grasp (and state) its meaning, one must participate in some (actual or imagined) communicative actions ...." (HABERMAS 1983b:253).

HABERMAS presents his proposal of (rational) reconstruction as his solution and answer to a dilemma in the methodology of social science: On the one hand, - and this is the tendency of the hermeneutical turn, - the hermeneutical perspective implies a greater sensitivity toward the object of our research, therefore we seek to understand rather than to explain, we seek to interpret rather than to present a verifiable analysis. On the other hand, our concern is with the possibility of verifiable, objective scientific knowledge. How can we arrive at verifiable scientific knowledge and, at the same time, not miss the point: the (depth dimension of) *meaning* the object of our research bears within itself?

According to HABERMAS, this dilemma situation arises, when we want to depart from the exclusiveness of the third-person perspective of a distanced observer who one-dimensionally aims at *explanations*. Then, the necessity of expanding our perspective and engaging in the process of *understanding* becomes obvious, i.e. we realize the necessity of integrating a second-person and a first-person perspective (HABERMAS 1983b:253ff), we realize that understanding emerges within a communication process.

In RICOEUR's terms, this dilemma situation is due to an even more comprehensive multi-dimensionality: it arises out of the "*specific plurivocity* belonging to the meaning of human action" (RICOEUR 1971a:213).

When we have entered this communicative process, resp. the hermeneutical circle moving from guessing towards validation, we are on the way to *understanding*; then, however, we encounter the dilemma of how to regain verifiable knowledge: *explanation*. This dilemma resembles the sharp contrast DILTHEY saw between explanation and understanding - without, however, the necessity of ascribing to this dilemma the character of a dichotomy. HABERMAS takes up this thread of DILTHEY's dilemma demarcating, however, his proposal from DILTHEY's aporetic dichotomy. RICOEUR explicitly takes the dilemma of DILTHEY - and the "perplexity" in DILTHEY's attempt to solve the problem - as the starting point of his perspective. *It is RICOEUR's claim of being able to present "a fresh approach," a better solution to DILTHEY's problem. Hence, RICOEUR (and HABERMAS, as well) does not agree with DILTHEY's dichotomy between explanation and understanding;*

nor with the devaluation of explanation; nor with DILTHEY's exclusive focus on understanding as the rejoining of a foreign psychic life. (Thesis 46).

RICOEUR (and to some extent HABERMAS) has one point in common with DILTHEY: the turn in scientific methodology implies taking an approach of *Auslegung*.<sup>71</sup>

RICOEUR's hermeneutical theory will lead us beyond HABERMAS due to RICOEUR's fundamental recognition that interpretation is not primarily concerned with spoken language, with speech acts, but with writing, written documents, with texts. Nevertheless, RICOEUR departs from an analysis of spoken language, discourse. Therefore, he shares with HABERMAS some perspectives on the nature of, and the analytical approach to, (verbal or non-verbal) utterances. However, as we will see, it is exactly the parallels which allow one to note the differences.

Both, HABERMAS' and RICOEUR's proposals of the integration of a hermeneutical perspective into social scientific methodology coincide in the decisive idea to perceive a text or an action from the perspective of communication. The hermeneutical perspectives of HABERMAS and of RICOEUR maintain that a text or an action has to be taken as a lively and creative process, that it is embedded in discourse.

This is explicitly stated by RICOEUR, in his 1971 article, as the shift of our attention from the sign to the sentence, from *language* to *speech and discourse*. Therefore, the proper place for the analysis and interpretation of texts is *semantics*. Therefore, we do not speak merely of "signs" as the basic units of language, but we speak of "utterances" of speech as an *event*.

For HABERMAS, a text or an action is understood in light of the theory of communicative action (HABERMAS 1981 I:367-452). As the background of this perspective, HABERMAS advances a comprehensive theory of action, of which the theory of the speech act is but the specific case of interaction mediated by speech. The key model and guideline of HABERMAS' perspective is a theory of communication and discourse.

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71. This is true despite the significant contrast between HABERMAS and RICOEUR in regard to the possibility of gaining verifiable knowledge through reconstruction: HABERMAS, more so than RICOEUR, is apt to maintain this possibility and gives more weight to *explanation*. To what degree HABERMAS is anxious to maintain the explanatory feature and to find verifiable knowledge becomes obvious in his question with which he marks the contrast to GADAMER's perspective as an example for a more *radical* hermeneutical standpoint: "Must we conclude that Gadamer's position should also be accepted within and for the social sciences? Is the interpretive turn lethal for the strictly scientific standing of all nonobjective approaches? Should we agree with Rorty's recommendation to put the social sciences side by side with the humanities, with literary criticism, poetry, and religion and with educated conversation in general?" (HABERMAS 1983b:257)

### 7.1.2. *The Multi-Dimensionality of Interpretation*

What both HABERMAS and RICOEUR propose to overcome and depart from is the perception of a text or an action in a one-dimensional perspective which would imply merely accounting for the signifying relation and reducing meaning to the propositional dimension within a lexical system.

Instead, according to both HABERMAS and RICOEUR, our perception (*interpretation or analysis*) has to account for more dimensions, for the multi-dimensionality of a text or action. (Thesis 47). In RICOEUR's perspective, we have not only to account for the more-dimensionality, but the text or action, taken as a coherent whole, has a "plurivocity" (RICOEUR 1971a:213; *passim*), a "perspectivist aspect" (*ibid*: 212). *The multi-dimensionality, according to both HABERMAS and RICOEUR, implies the notion that there is more than merely an objective statement (propositional dimension or reference-to-a world): but that there is, to be taken into account, an author or speaker with feelings and motives (expressive or self-referential dimension) and that there are one or even many addressees or listeners (interpersonal dimension).* (Thesis 48).

HABERMAS wants to discern three dimensions inherent in an utterance, three validity claims inherent in a (communicative) speech act<sup>72</sup>. RICOEUR lists four traits of speech as an event (RICOEUR 1971a:198). RICOEUR arrives at four dimensions, because he wants us to realize that it is the dimension of time, of temporality which marks the difference between language and speech-event in the first place:

"Discourse is always realized temporally and in the present, whereas the language system is virtual and outside of time." (RICOEUR 1971a: 198)

RICOEUR's explicit emphasis on the time dimension may already indicate and prepare us for the point where RICOEUR goes beyond HABERMAS's perspective: it is the temporality of the text or action which implies the notion of fixation which is of importance for RICOEUR.

In RICOEUR's other three traits of an utterance: subjectivity or self-referentiality; reference to a world; the trait of communication or of exchange of messages, we can recognize HABERMAS' three dimensions of speech, the

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72. HABERMAS 1983b:259; comp. HABERMAS 1976:246; HABERMAS 1981:439



expressive, the constative or propositional, and the interpersonal or regulative dimension:

(a) *Trait of Self-referentiality resp. Expressive Dimension.* In the perspective of semantics, we take into account the fact that an utterance in a discourse refers back to the speaker, to his or her motives, intentions, feelings. RICOEUR maintains this perspective in sharp contrast to the perception of a text as if it were merely a language formation which would lack a subject. Correspondingly, HABERMAS wants to discern an expressive dimension of a speech act. It is important to note that it is only the embeddedness of a text or action in a process of communication or discourse which initiates the need and the possibility to take into account the subjectivity of the speaker expressed in a first-person perspective.

(b) *Trait of Exchange of Messages resp. Interpersonal Dimension.* The second dimension in which the one-dimensionality is transformed into more-dimensionality is the interpersonal dimension. RICOEUR maintains that

"... it is in discourse that all messages are exchanged. In this sense, discourse alone has not only a world, but an other, another person, an interlocutor to whom it is addressed. (RICOEUR 1971a:198)

For HABERMAS, this interpersonal dimension is the aspect of communication which we introduce with a phrase like: this message is "being shared *with*." This is the dimension which HABERMAS wants to focus as the coordination of the plans of different actors (speakers') in social action; hence, this dimension - in which we raise the validity claim of 'right'-ness or appropriateness - is crucial for HABERMAS, since it is the basis of the theory of discourse ethics.

(c) *Trait of Reference-to-a-World resp. Propositional Dimension.* In this dimension of speech, according to HABERMAS, we claim validity in the area of *truth*; hence, the cognitive communication or conversation by means of constative speech acts in this dimension rests upon and maintains the signifying mode of language. In RICOEUR's point of view,

"... discourse is always about something. It refers to a world which it claims to describe, to express, to represent. It is in discourse that the symbolic function of language is actualized." (RICOEUR 1971a:198)

RICOEUR's more careful characterization of that dimension (reference, ostentative reference, representation) foreshadows the possibility that the

reference to a world can become non-ostentative, can refer to, or represent, a new and different 'world,' another situation.

This already indicates how RICOEUR will lead us beyond HABERMAS: RICOEUR does not limit his perspective of the more-dimensionality of discourse to a strict three-dimensionality; but due to his fourth dimension, temporality, and due to his fundamental definition of hermeneutics as a theory not primarily of spoken language but of written documents, of texts which have emerged in a process of 'fixation,' he reckons with the possibility that the referential relation becomes extended to refer to larger areas, new situations, new addressees, new 'worlds.' Hence, it is consistent that RICOEUR should speak of *plurivocity*.

What are the implications of this more-dimensionality which RICOEUR and HABERMAS - if we, for a moment, neglect the further development in RICOEUR's theory: the implication of 'fixation,' of 'writtness' - both derive from the theory of the speech act, of discourse? What are the contributions to social scientific theory in general and for structural-developmental theories in particular? A first answer: In comprehending and identifying a text or an action as one and the same it is not enough to ask questions like: What is said? What does it mean? We have to take into account more variables and ask: Who and on what grounds (why? / expressing what kind of intentions and feelings?) intended to communicate what to whom? We ask these questions in reconstructing of the motivational basis.

RICOEUR's proposal, however, leads beyond HABERMAS in various respects. This becomes obvious in the following sections of this chapter, in which I want to point out three issues in RICOEUR's proposal for social scientific methodology from which I will draw the implications for faith development theory below: First, RICOEUR emphasizes the specific plurivocity of the meaning of text and action. Thereby it is of special importance to notice that RICOEUR calls our attention to the referential dimension of text or action: to the dimension of *reference-to-a-world*, even when we are used to perceiving only motives or structures. Second, in proceeding from language to the text, RICOEUR lays stress on the fact that the discourse-event, and the event of action likewise, in the process of *fixation*, become *manifestations* and, hence, in a diachronical perspective, display a coherence, a narrative structure. Third, both of these two features of text and action are possible starting points in the hermeneutic circle which RICOEUR sketches, within the framework of the dialectical relation between understanding and explanation, first as a move from understanding to explanation, and second, from explanation to understanding.

## 7.2. The Plurivocity of Meanings

*RICOEUR maintains a "specific plurivocity belonging to the meaning of human action" (RICOEUR 1971a:213), which resembles the plurivocity of a text. Like a work of art, a sculpture for example, in kinesthetic perception, text and action can be approached from different angles (Thesis 49).*

Therefore, according to RICOEUR, the turn in scientific methodology implies being more conscious of our judgments, being content with the lower degree of certainty which we can expect from social scientific inquiry. Hence, '*Auslegung*,' interpretation, the approach DILTHEY proposed and made the focus of his methodological approach, becomes the key term for interpretation. (Thesis 50).

The fact that RICOEUR explicitly wants to remain

"faithful to the concept of *Auslegung* as it was stated by Wilhelm Dilthey" (RICOEUR 1971a:197)

reflects this greater sensitivity. Hence, we have to start our interpretation process with a guess. And even the next step toward validation, the construction of the motivational basis of that action, still reveals that kind of plurivocity.

Since we are dealing with structural-developmental theories which claim to focus, in their analysis, on structures, while the contents of morality or faith are not of primary importance especially in research, it is the more intriguing that RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective should call our attention to the aspects of content, to the *referential dimension*, even where we presume to be dealing with structures, e.g. within the motivational or intentional basis of an action, or within the field of social structures.

In the attempt to account for the motivational basis of an action, we try to explain the answer to the question "what" in terms of an answer to the question "why;" we have to ask for the reason, the purpose of an action in order to find further access to its meaning. However, these motives and intentions display a *corresponding aspect of content*; and due to these contents they give further access to the meaning of that action. For,

"Wants and beliefs have the character not only of being *forces* which make people act in such-and-such ways, but of making sense as a result of the apparent good which is the correlate of their desirability-character. (...) On the basis of these desirability-characters and the apparent good which corresponds to them, it is possible to *argue* about the meaning of an action, to argue for or against this or that interpretation." (RICOEUR 1971a:214)

For social structures, RICOEUR states respectively:

"In the same way as language-games are forms of life, according to the famous aphorism of Wittgenstein, social structures are also attempts to cope with existential perplexities, human predicaments and deep-rooted conflicts. In this sense, these structures, too, have a referential dimension. They point toward the *aporias* of social existence, the same *aporias* around which mythical thought gravitates. And this analogical function of reference develops traits very similar to what we called the non-ostensive reference of a text, i.e. the display of a *Welt* which is no longer an *Umwelt*, the projection of a world which is more than a situation." (RICOEUR 1971a:220)

To put this perspective of RICOEUR in sharp relief, we contrast it to HABERMAS' point of view. While both theorists, in their analysis of the dimensions of discourse, agree that there is a propositional dimension (HABERMAS) or the dimension of reference-to-a-world (RICOEUR), their further analysis takes different directions: While RICOEUR maintains this dimension and develops it further under the conditions of time and fixation, for HABERMAS, the propositional dimension becomes less important and he develops his theory of discursive ethics - and his interpretation of (KOHLBERG's) moral development theory - in focusing on the interpersonal or regulative dimension. It is this regulative dimension, HABERMAS believes, which is not only open for pure structural analysis, but more: the structures of increasingly principled moral reasoning without consideration of aspects of content are the imperative developmental goal.<sup>73</sup>

### 7.3. Fixation and Reconstruction

RICOEUR begins his article with a hypothesis which already points in a new direction (which is significantly different from that of HABERMAS), he opens up a new perspective which is rooted in a specific definition of hermeneutics, in the interpretation theory of *texts*:

"I assume that the primary sense of the word 'hermeneutics' concerns the rules required for the interpretation of the written documents of our culture. (...) Now my hypothesis is this: if there are specific problems which are raised by the interpretation of texts because they are texts and not

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73. This is explicitly stated in the developmental logic of rationalization and decentration from the life-world and from the "contents" of the idea of the good life (HABERMAS 1983d:118). DÖBERT however, shows that the claim of HABERMAS' (and of KOHLBERG's) structural-developmental perspective--to focus exclusively on structures, while neglecting the contents--is self-deceptive. See Chapter 2.2.!

spoken language, and if these problems are the ones which constitute hermeneutics as such, then the human sciences may be said to be hermeneutical (1) inasmuch as their *object* displays some of the features constitutive of a text as text, and (2) inasmuch as their *methodology* develops the same kind of procedures as those of *Auslegung* or text-interpretation." (RICOEUR 1971a:197)

This quote shows that the model of the text plays a decisive role in RICOEUR's perspective. Therefore, when we speak of RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective we more precisely speak of a perspective committed to the paradigm of the text. On the basis of this fundamental thesis RICOEUR advances basic rules for social scientific methodology, since it is RICOEUR's argument that what we learn from the analysis of texts is also true and can be applied, with the same right, also to the understanding of action.

*In RICOEUR's focus on the model of the text, the four dimensions of discourse, temporality, self-referentiality, reference-to-a-world, communication with an interlocutor, take on a different shape: RICOEUR's progression from speaking to writing, from discourse to the text, implies significant modifications within all of the four dimensions which in semantics have so far been developed within the boundaries of a synchronic perspective. (Thesis 51). The specific features of utterance and action, when they become 'written' manifestations, are summarized by RICOEUR in the following way: Written works are characterized (Thesis 51a)...*

"by (1) the fixation of meaning, (2) its dissociation from the mental intention of the author, (3) the display of non-ostensive references, and (4) the universal range of its addressees." (RICOEUR 1971a:210)

In each of the four dimensions, the event of an utterance and also of an action is "surpassed." The dimension of time, the past of an utterance or action, its relevance to situations in the future - and with this the idea of narration - comes into play. In his proposal, RICOEUR describes the extension and progression from a synchronic perspective of discourse to a diachronic perspective not only of texts, but also of actions.

When RICOEUR sketches the four dimensions of discourse, against the background of language, the first of the dimensions which he brings to our attention is *temporality*, the dimension of time. Discourse is an event in time; it appears and disappears; it disappears altogether, if we are not in the position to fixate it. With fixation, the dimension of time comes into play for a second time. As RICOEUR puts it, the event (of discourse) is surpassed by the meaning: in the field of discourse, this happens by *writing*. RICOEUR maintains that the locutionary, the illocutionary, and even the perlocutionary aspect are

"apt, in a decreasing order, for the intentional exteriorisation which makes inscription in writing possible" (RICOEUR 1971a:200).

In regard to this first dimension of discourse, *temporality*, fixation of an action means *objectification* of that action. It is the noematic structure, the propositional content of the action, RICOEUR states, - which corresponds to the locutionary aspect of an utterance - which may be fixed and detached from the event of interaction. But it is also the illocutionary force of an action which makes an action identifiable as one and the same. Therefore, an action can be identified as an objectified manifestation like a written text. An action "leaves its mark on its time."

In regard to the second dimension of discourse, *self-referentiality*, an action, in the process of fixation, becomes detached from the intentions of the author. It is no longer exclusively and preeminently the author's utterance or action, it takes on the status of an distanciated entity. The relation between the manifest text or action and the subjectivity of its author becomes less direct. Hence, the research questions in reconstructive interpretation for the subjective feelings and intentions etc. become less important, less indicative of the meaning, since we now have to differentiate between the meaning and relevance of an utterance or action in the original situation of its production (uttering-event or action-event) where the intentions and feelings of the author are still of major importance, on the one hand, and the meaning and relevance of an utterance or action in a diachronic perspective after it has become a document which gives rise to unintended consequences, unintended meaning and relevance, on the other hand.

Within the dimension of *reference-to-a-world*, we have to discern between the *relevance* and the *importance* of an action. The progression from speaking to writing, according to RICOEUR, implies that there are *two distinct dimensions of meaning*: The meaning which we try to understand by tracing back an utterance or action to the original event of discourse and taking account of the intentions, feelings, ostentative references, and partners addressed in communication, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the meaning of an utterance or action for our contemporaries other than the group of communication partners in the event of discourse: for a larger surrounding; for the 'world' of our present generation, for the 'world' of future generations. In RICOEUR's terms, we have to discern between the *relevance* of an action, on the one hand, and its *importance*, on the other (RICOEUR 1971a:201f; 207f).

"An important action, we could say, develops meanings which can be actualized or fulfilled in situations other than the one in which this action occurred. To say the same thing in different words, the meaning of an important action exceeds, overcomes, transcends, the social condi-

tions of its production and may be re-enacted in new social contexts. Its importance is its durable relevance and, in some cases, its omni-temporal relevance." (RICOEUR 1971a:208)

It is one of the most important implications of the fact that an utterance or action is a 'written' manifestation that, within social scientific theory and research, we take account of the *time dimension* of an action, the perspective of future, the dimension of consequent effects, the unnoticed, unintentional significance. For an important action, like an important text or work, as RICOEUR maintains,

"constitutes new 'worlds' (...), it does not only mirror its time, but it opens up a world which it bears within itself" (RICOEUR 1971a:208).

The reference-to-a-world dimension advances from ostensive to non-ostensive reference: the reference regards a larger, a new context, another 'world' different from the original world of reference in the situation of the uttering-event or action-event.

The *interpersonal* dimension also takes on a different shape. The progression from the perspective of language-systems to semantics brought to our attention a second-person perspective, an interlocutor; we take into account the addressees, the partners in communication, and we see ourselves - as researchers - as partners in communication. This has become an indispensable part of a hermeneutical theory in regard to the understanding of verbal utterances and, as well, of actions. Now, with the progression from a synchronic to a diachronic perspective, the range of partners in communication, the range of addressees also expands. In regard to verbal utterances, RICOEUR writes:

"... it is one thing for discourse to be addressed to an interlocutor equally present to the discourse situation, and another to be addressed, as is the case in virtually every piece of writing, to whoever knows to read. The narrowness of the dialogical situation explodes. Instead of being addressed just to you, the second person, what is written is addressed to the audience that it creates itself." (RICOEUR 1971a:202)

In regard to *action*, RICOEUR maintains:

"... like a text, human action is an open work, the meaning of which is 'in suspense'. It is because it 'opens up' new references and receives fresh relevance from them, that human deeds are also waiting for fresh interpretations which decide their meaning. All significant events and deeds are, in this way, opened to this kind of practical interpretation through the present *praxis*. Human action, too, is opened to anybody who can read." (RICOEUR 1971a:208)

*The model of the text, the issue of fixation, brings the model of the narrative into play. For, the character as 'document' which speaks to anyone who can read implies that other human beings - in the case of individual development we our-*

*selves later in our life-time - take up the thread of 'written' actions and act in interaction with our past.* (Thesis 52). An action's relevance beyond its time of origin, its importance, then, does not consist in different singular, isolated consequences. But important actions, as Mark FREEMAN, in his article of 1985, "Paul Ricoeur on Interpretation," points out, are defined

"in terms of the contribution they make to the unfolding of the story or history in question, that is (...) the contribution they make to the development of a plot" (FREEMAN 1985:306).

To conclude: For social scientific methodology, RICOEUR's approach suggests handling the "object" of our research with greater sensitivity; going on the assumption that the research 'object' is a whole which we should not easily dissect with our analytical instruments. The relation of the particular parts and dimensions to the whole - the whole taken as an individual coherent entity - asks for a sensitive approach of *understanding*: that we follow a hermeneutical circle or arc, that we start with a guess. The image which RICOEUR alludes to in his article speaks for itself: a group of researchers walking around a sculpture exchanging their first guesses; their engagement in a discussion over their conflicting interpretations indicates that they are on the way to validation.

#### 7.4. A Method of Reading: From Understanding to Explanation

Are we bold enough to state, in an academic setting which is eager to present hard facts and results, that we are content with greater uncertainty? Is, indeed, to HABERMAS' regret, "educated conversation" the most we can achieve? Here, HABERMAS and RICOEUR differ: HABERMAS, in developing a possibility to gain research results that can be called scientific knowledge, resorts to a model of *verification* (his model of rational reconstruction). In contrast (Thesis 53), for RICOEUR, *in this first method of reading, interpretation takes a specific starting point: we need to be content to start with a guess and, in regard to validation - which RICOEUR distinguishes from verification -, we will have to be content with a*

"logic of uncertainty and of qualitative probability, which, by way of conveyance of indices, gives a firm basis for scientific knowledge." (RICOEUR 1971a:212).

*In RICOEUR's perspective, the 'plurivocity of meanings' of human action cannot be overcome by a process of verification as a rationally predeterminable and repeatable procedure, but requires that we enter into a hermeneutic circle.* (Thesis



54). Reconstruction of the motivational basis does not, by itself, produce the final result of explanation; it is but a part of the hermeneutical circle or arc; further, it is only one half of the double movement of the hermeneutic circle: that from understanding to explanation.

What RICOEUR has to remind us, in the first place, is that human action - like texts, have a *plurivocity of meanings*. With this perspective, he differs to some extent from HABERMAS. And RICOEUR's consequences for the methodology, therefore, differ to the same degree: *In RICOEUR's perspective, verification as the rationally predeterminable and repeatable procedure is modified into a process of validation of a guess, a process which requires polemical argumentation: the conflict of interpretations.* (Thesis 55).

RICOEUR's proposal displays similarities to, but also the differences from, HABERMAS' proposal of reconstructive interpretation: RICOEUR agrees with HABERMAS to the extent that, in the attempt to validate our interpretation and to move toward explanation, we need to reconstruct the motivational basis of an action. And further, RICOEUR's emphasis on the reasonable, purposive character of these personal motives (e.g. of wants and beliefs) resembles HABERMAS' insistence on the *rationality of motives and intentions even within the expressive dimension*.

However, RICOEUR differs from HABERMAS in his proposal of rational reconstruction in that he does not expect, from the procedure of construction of the motivational basis, to get the entire explanation, to have the final word; but rather this construction of the motivational basis only

"foreshadows a logic of argumentation. (...) The process of *arguing* linked to the explanation of action by its motives unfolds a kind of plurivocity which makes action similar to a text" (RICOEUR 1971a:214).

*The first method of reading, the movement from understanding to explanation, does not abolish the 'plurivocity of meanings.'* (Thesis 56).

There are good reasons for adopting RICOEUR's approach, because of his approach of handling the 'object' of our research with greater care, with greater sensitivity for its coherence, of going on the assumption that the 'object' may be a whole. There is a specific relation between the whole and the parts, suggesting a circular movement of reconstruction (RICOEUR 1971a:211). This coherence can appear to have a narrative structure in which the particular utterances or events are connected, e.g. in the "tapestry" of the course of individual development. The model of the text, therefore, may suggest that we modify our understanding of reconstructive interpretation into a method of *reconstruction of the narrative*.

### 7.5. A Method of Reading: From Explanation to Understanding

It is one of the characteristics of RICOEUR's thinking that he is not content with pointing out one aspect, one dimension, but always takes the other dimension, the reverse approach into account. Thus conflict and contradiction are often the starting point and the philosopher's work is to discover the relation, the possibility for mediation, the dialectical relation; "kinship through conflict," as SCHALDENBRAND interprets RICOEUR's thinking (SCHALDENBRAND 1979; comp. LOWE 1985:4), pervades RICOEUR's whole work.

This is also the case for the 'methods of reading:' Despite his emphasis on *Auslegung*, on understanding, RICOEUR's attempt is to present a most comprehensive picture of reading, of the hermeneutical enterprise. Thus he perceives a dialectical relation between the two methods of reading, understanding and explanation. Both methods are related, however, in that they belong to one hermeneutical circle.

This means that in the one half of this hermeneutical circle, before any attempt has been made to bring the other side into play, the method of explanation is given as much attention as possible. Thus, RICOEUR underscores the legitimacy and fruitfulness of explanation and, explicitly, of structural analysis.

*To go the "reverse way" and take explanation as the starting point of our analysis is a procedure of equal value; because of the semiological character of social phenomena, this method of reading is adequate not only for texts, but also for the whole field of human action. Thereby, structural analysis could proceed without consideration of any kind of referred-to world and engage in structural analysis. (Thesis 57).*

Because of the dialectical relation between explanation and understanding, the other side has to come into view as well: *'Explanation' requires 'understanding.'* *Structural analysis has to move from a 'surface semantics' to a 'depth semantic' which reveals the ultimate 'referent,' the 'referred-to world' (respective to the non-ostensive reference of the text). It is 'depth semantics' which gives meaning to the whole process. (Thesis 58).* Here, RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective suggests engaging in the movement from 'surface' to 'depth,' a suggestion which leads hermeneutics beyond, or rather beneath, structural analysis and explanation.

Finally, though we have started from the distanced, objectifying standpoint of structural analysis, the hermeneutical circle leads into an encounter which does not leave the observer, or rather the interpreter, uninvolved. Finally, appropriation comes into view.

"The meaningful patterns which a depth interpretation wants to grasp cannot be understood without a kind of personal commitment similar to that of the reader who grasps the depth semantics of the text and makes it his 'own.'" (RICOEUR 1971a:220)

*'Explanation,' as structural analysis, can be the starting point for the interpretive movement in the hermeneutic arc which - through 'depth semantic' - finally leads to appropriation. (Thesis 59).*

**PART THREE:**

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**TOWARD A CON-TEXT-UALIST MODEL  
FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT THEORY**

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## INTRODUCTION:

### The Limits and Strengths of Both FOWLER and RICOEUR

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In this third part, both contributions to our perspective on a person's transformations in faith, that of the philosopher and that of the developmental psychologist and theologian, have to be evaluated in regard to their strengths and their limits:

While the philosopher focuses his interest on the theoretical foundation of *imaginal mediation*, which recognizes the essential and proper function of symbol, of metaphor, and of narrative, and hence, puts a correct understanding in sharp contrast to a false understanding, the developmentalist's focus is on explaining the mis-use of symbol, metaphor, and narrative and on the *developmental emergence* of an adequate understanding and use of the meaning revealed in them.

While, for example, RICOEUR focuses his attention on the progress from '*distanciation*' to '*second naiveté*,' FOWLER's theory can be read as an account of a *broader* spectrum of '*naiveté*' and its sequence of reconstructions and transformations in individual development. On the other hand, the structural-developmental paradigm, which is very helpful in the explanation of development of faith brings with it, however, a limitation to the constructive activity of subject which, in my point of view, needs to be brought into correlation with a hermeneutical perspective.

The idea, that understanding ourselves and the (symbolic) world changes, may be common to both a philosophical-hermeneutical and a psychological-developmental perspective. However, the philosopher deals with contradictions, the contrast which emerges when "looking back" from the laboriously worked out correct understanding on a less adequate perception. The developmental psychologist is "closer" to the human reality, in the sense that she or he listens more closely to the every day understanding and experience of many persons, listening

to the variety of stories told by people on the street, listening to the *stories* in the sense of *developmental* stories which may yield some insight into 'how' and 'why' a person's perception and understanding have changed in the course of time.

An example of the limitation of RICOEUR's theory becomes obvious in regard to the common mis-use and mis-understanding e.g. of metaphoric language. RICOEUR's merit is the theoretical analysis of metaphor in the terms of language analysis, a clear-cut hermeneutical perspective which is concerned with illuminating the inherent processes involved in the proper use and adequate understanding of metaphor. With the vehemence of philosophical argumentation, he rejects any improper understanding and speaks out in favor of the new world of meaning opened up by this language event. The limits and weakness of RICOEUR's clear-cut analysis are that it does not provide for an explanation of the very common mis-use and mis-understanding of metaphor in common language. Nor does his theory take the development of metaphor production and comprehension into account, how we learn and grow in using and understanding metaphors or suggests an explanation for why and how undeveloped (not yet developed) competence leads to mis-use and mis-understanding. To be sure: a developmental theory of metaphor comprehension and production is not what RICOEUR had in mind. But this also marks the limitation of the usefulness of RICOEUR's theory for our topic. In the class-room, for example, we need, in addition and supplementation to RICOEUR's theory of the *living* metaphor, a theory to explain why metaphors do not become living and self-constitutive phenomena, why they remain latent or dead despite the endless effort of teachers and despite the fact that the child has the metaphoric text before its very eyes.

To sum it up in a thesis: *Both theories, that of the philosopher RICOEUR and that of the developmental psychologist and theologian FOWLER, have to be evaluated in regard to their strengths and their limits (Thesis 60)*

However, the line of our argument in this part suggests more than a correlative discussion. The theme is faith development, or more precisely: hermeneutics in faith development theory. Thus, in the line of my argument, the problem is, in a general formulation, how we are to conceptualize faith development theory in light of the hermeneutical perspective as it is presented in RICOEUR's work. How is the hermeneutics of symbol, metaphor, and narrative to be incorporated into faith development theory so that it takes its important place and can play its significant role? The hermeneutical perspective brings the significance of the *con-text* into play, the *con-text* of symbols, metaphors, and narratives. Therefore, in this third section we will be searching for a *con-text-ualist* model. How are we to define a

con-text-ualist understanding of faith and its development? How can research deal with the *con-text-uality* of faith?

This third part, therefore, will proceed in three steps: from 'faith' through 'faith development' to 'faith development research.' First, the concept of con-text-ualist faith will be illuminated, adopting the hermeneutical perspective and demarcating from the structural-developmental paradigm. Secondly, the conceptualization of faith development needs to be investigated, as it follows from the adoption of a con-text-ualist perspective. Finally, I will indicate implications for faith development research in a con-text-ualist perspective which then is discussed in light of RICOEUR's dialectics between understanding and explanation.

## Chapter 8

### TOWARD A CON-TEXT-UALIST MODEL OF FAITH

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The question which guided our reflections on RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective has been the theme of the constitution of self-understanding. RICOEUR's notion of the '*detour*' through language, through the text of symbolic, narrative and metaphoric manifestations in our culture, declared every notion of self-sufficiency of the subject as mistaken. Every notion of immediacy of self-understanding has also been rendered impossible together with the notion of the primacy of the subject through the criticism of ideology and illusion.

Recalling FOWLER's perspective, his notion of the constitutive significance of images, symbols, narratives, concepts, and rites comes to our attention. In a first attempt to obtain a synoptic view, some parallels already catch our eye: FOWLER's definition of 'faith' as "dynamic process arising out of our experience of interaction," e.g. with the Others and with the world, may parallel RICOEUR's notion of the interactive character of the *detour*; Symbols and narratives play a constitutive role in 'faith;' FOWLER's notion that 'faith' is "awakened" and "shaped" by images and symbols, possibly reflects RICOEUR's notion that symbols present a "gift of meaning", that the metaphors of Biblical language have the potential of a "creative power of meaning;" FOWLER's conviction that there is an "interaction," or "mutual interpenetration" of life story, social interaction, and "the core story of the Christian faith" may parallel RICOEUR's dictum of the life history as a "cloth woven of stories told."

Recalling FOWLER's perspective, however, means also to call to our mind the fact that there is another side to faith development theory: In his key definition of faith - which is the framework especially for research, FOWLER, taking up one of the fundamental presuppositions of the PIAGETian tradition, defines 'faith' as "an aspect of the total constitutive activity of the ego." In Part One, I concluded



that the concept of 'faith' in faith development theory, due to its adoption of the assumption of constructivism, in a general view, stands in the tradition of thought which starts with, and gives primary emphasis to the construing activity of the subject - in RICOEUR's terms: the tradition of the primacy of the *subject*.

Does this indicate a devastating criticism of faith development theory from a philosophical-hermeneutical standpoint? I do not think so. Rather, I hold that these standpoints can be seen as different points in the spectrum of the interpretive turn.

To adopt such an integrative, general perspective as suggested by the model of the interpretive turn, however, does not mean neglecting the inherent tension between the two sides of faith development theory mentioned above: the tension in faith development theory which is, at the same time, the tension between the psychological and the theological aspiration of the theory *and* the tension between structure and content.

The question which, therefore, was posed at the end of the reflection on FOWLER's work in Part I, was as follows: Can we find a definition of faith which accounts for the fact that, as in the perspective of RICOEUR, "it is the text, with its unveiling, which gives a *self* to the *ego*" and which, at the same time, takes developmental transformations in a person's life into account and is adequate for empirical research?

In this chapter I will take up these issues and questions and point toward a concept of faith which might possibly be in keeping with these implications which we derive from a hermeneutical perspective. Thereby, the steps taken in this brief introductory remark will be formulated in more detail: first, the concept of faith in a hermeneutical perspective, as constituted by symbols, metaphors, and narratives - starting with RICOEUR, but drawing on a broader variety of works - will be illuminated; second, a reconsideration of faith development theory and of the 'tension' between constitutive-knowing and symbolic-narrative constitution will be taken up; thereby the contours of a concept of faith as responsiveness can be outlined and, as the result of my inquiry into faith development theory, suggestions for further research can be advanced.

## 8.1. Metaphor, Symbol, Narrative and the Constitution of Faith

### 8.1.1. 'Listening' to Symbolic Representations as the Ground of Faith

So far in investigating the implications of the hermeneutics of symbol, metaphor, and narrative in philosophical-hermeneutical theory for a faith development perspective, I have focused on the work of RICOEUR. The parallels and the affinity of FOWLER's theory to certain ideas of RICOEUR, as e.g. the concept of second naiveté indicates,<sup>74</sup> may justify this focus. And the fact that RICOEUR's concept includes an extensive inquiry into the world of symbol, metaphor, and narrative may be an argument for focusing on RICOEUR's work. We do not need to illustrate the fact that the tradition of hermeneutical thought in which RICOEUR stands is broader--we could try to present a more comprehensive analysis of contemporary hermeneutics and engage in a discussion between the different philosophies, since RICOEUR's thought originates in, and has developed from an encounter with the long history of hermeneutics. Later on I will try to give some idea of this broader spectrum, but in the first place, I will focus on and reiterate RICOEUR's perspective in regard to the constitution of faith, since it is RICOEUR to whom I owe the decisive ideas for a reformulation of the concept of faith and faith development.

The decisive idea which caught my attention has been RICOEUR's notion of the fundamental distinction between activity and passivity in the act of knowing and (self-) understanding, his idea that we have to emphasize and set the course for a philosophy of *hearkening*, as it contrasts with any (self-deceptive) assumption that the subject "would possess the key," and in sharp contradiction to any - ultimately, very dangerous - assumption of knowing as "taking possession." This may be an illuminating possibility for understanding RICOEUR's attraction to symbol, metaphor, and narrative, since their double meaning, that is: their plurivocity does not allow "taking possession," but rather these linguistic phenomena resist assimilation in the sense of *being* assimilated. RICOEUR goes as far as to claim the necessity of a "relinquishment" of the subject, of "forgetting" oneself, in order to receive from the symbolic, metaphoric, narrative text a new, an enlarged self, to

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74. FOWLER explicitly refers to RICOEUR's hermeneutical theory when he tries to clarify the new responsiveness toward the symbols on Stage Five (FOWLER 1980a:30; 1981a:187f; 1984a:65; 1985c:299; 1987a:73).

view the self as "given by the text," as suggested by the striking dictum, "is is the text which gives a *self* to the ego." And it is no surprise that, in this context, RICOEUR speaks of *revelation*, the *revealing power*, the "universal power of unveiling" inherent in the *text*.

In the striking and pointed statements about the relinquishment of the subject and the revealing power of the text, RICOEUR turns to metaphorical language to describe a fundamental philosophical conviction. On the one hand, these statements reflect metaphors used in theological language, like "*kenosis*," "*losing oneself*" in order to find oneself. On the other hand, these metaphorical statements do not make a comparison and discussion of psychological theories easier. In psychology, the subjective activity cannot easily be viewed as 'relinquished' and 'lost.' This may be an indication that any correlative discussion between philosophical hermeneutics and (developmental) psychology has to pay special attention to these different conceptual perspectives. Metaphors like the "detour" or the "arrow" may indicate more of a continuity and similarity of the subject and may be more convenient for a correlative discussion. But I think we would lose the benefit of an important contribution to a better understanding of faith, if we were to disregard RICOEUR's pointed statements and refrain from the laborious effort to correlate them with the psychological language about meaning-making, self-understanding and its development, just because they are metaphorical.

What does this mean for the conceptualization of faith? If we focus on RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective, the concept of faith need to assume certain definitory features which I will try to summarize in the following theses.

The skepticism in regard to the self-sufficiency of the subject in creating self-understanding, the disenchantment in regard to the subject's pretension that it possesses the key to self-understanding, also concerns the domain of faith, without restriction. *Faith, according to RICOEUR's perspective, cannot be regarded as created, produced, or constituted by a self-sufficient subject.* (Thesis 61). But, as noted already, RICOEUR would suggest a conceptualization of faith which holds that *faith is a gift*. If there is any truth in the metaphorical statement which holds that it is the *text* which gives a *self* to the ego, then faith has to be seen as constituted by, and indebted to, the encounter with language. Faith language, faith texts, the metaphors of Biblical language, RICOEUR says, effect a 'creative power of meaning.'<sup>75</sup> *Faith has the definitory feature of being a gift.* (Thesis 62).

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75. Comp. RICOEUR 1974a:45

In RICOEUR's perspective, faith has an essential relation to reading, to active receptivity, to 'listening.' In his article, "Religion, Atheism, Faith" (RICOEUR 1969a) RICOEUR draws our attention to the act of listening in regard to faith. As I already summarized in Thesis 39, for RICOEUR, 'listening,' 'hearing,' or 'hearkening,' are key terms for an understanding of faith. Even without explicit reference to the letter to the Romans in which we find Paul's statement that faith derives from listening (Rm 10,17), but in striking resemblance, RICOEUR states that faith derives from listening to the *word*. Listening, in that sense, is the basis of that kind of faith which, RICOEUR says, deserves to survive the atheistic criticism of FREUD and NIETZSCHE in regard to the God of accusation and comfort.

Thus in regard to the discussion of a correlation between a hermeneutical and a psychological perspective of faith and its development, the conceptualization of faith can be advanced further: *Adopting RICOEUR's notion that faith is grounded in the act of 'listening,' of 'hearkening' to the language of symbols and stories of faith, the key definition of the concept of faith is responsiveness.* (Thesis 63).

Proceeding further and approaching a more material definition of contextualist faith, the source and origin of faith need to come into view. My thesis is indebted to RICOEUR's hermeneutics, especially to his conviction that the *detour* is the only and necessary way toward understanding oneself, understanding love and hate, morality, and, I contend: faith. My thesis agrees with RICOEUR: The con-texts of symbols, metaphors, and narratives are the mediators for the subject of faith. We cannot imagine a form of self-understanding - or faith - "which is not mediated by signs, symbols and texts," as RICOEUR (1983b: 191) says. Therefore, these (con-)texts are the necessary condition for the origin of faith. This concept of faith can be adequately called the contextualist model of faith. *The con-text toward which faith is responsive is the con-text of symbols, metaphors, and narratives; these con-texts play an essential and significant role in the constitution of faith: symbols, metaphors, and narratives are the mediators of faith, more precisely: they are the mediating 'conditio sine qua non' for faith.* (Thesis 64)

The defintory features of faith as *gift* and as *responsiveness* which, as the summary in Theses 62 and 63 notes, are convictions derived from RICOEUR's hermeneutics, are propositions which are also rooted very deeply in the tradition of theology. This fact is expressed e.g. in the *Systematic Theology* of TILLICH who defines faith in a very similar way:

"(F)ait h is the state of being *grasped* by the transcendent unity of an unambiguous life." (TILLICH 1963:129)

Or in his "material concept of faith:"

"Faith is the state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence and opened to the transcendent unity of an unambiguous life. In relation to the christological assertion, one could say that faith is the state of being grasped by the New Being as it is manifested in Jesus as the Christ." (TILLICH 1963:131)<sup>76</sup>

The 'being grasped' by the Spiritual Presence is mediated by the openness toward the symbols of faith (comp. Thesis 64). This is expressed e.g. in TILLICH's *Dynamics of Faith* (TILLICH 1957), where he states, as the third and fourth characteristic of the symbol:<sup>77</sup>

"The third characteristic of the symbol is that it opens up levels of reality which otherwise are closed for us. ... (The symbol) unlocks dimensions and elements of our soul which correspond to the dimensions and elements of reality." (TILLICH 1957:42)

As is expressed in the third characteristic, TILLICH also emphasizes the referential feature of the symbol; the symbol has an essential relation to a referred-to reality. If faith is dependent on the responsiveness for symbols, it goes without saying that faith is dependent on responsiveness for the *content*, e.g. the image of God, expressed symbolically.

Thus TILLICH's theological perspective rests on the conviction of the essential necessity and significance of symbolic expressions for faith, as the following statement highlights:

"(F)ait h cannot remain alive without expressions of faith and the personal participation in them. ... Without symbols in which the holy is experienced as present, the experience of the holy vanishes." (TILLICH 1957:121)

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76. "Such a description, however, bears little resemblance to the traditional definitions in which the intellect, will, or feeling is identified with the act of faith." (TILLICH 1963:131). Should we refrain from further inquiry into the psychology of personal development in faith - a reservation which could be justified with respect to this statement? I do not think so; but TILLICH's distinction points to a difference which no inquiry must lose sight of: the difference between the receptivity of faith and human activity.

77. In *Dynamics of Faith* (TILLICH 1957:41ff), TILLICH summarizes the characteristics of the symbols of faith as follows: (1) "Symbols have one characteristic in common with signs; they point beyond themselves to something else." (41). (2) "It (the symbol) participates in that to which it points." (42). (3) "The third characteristic of the symbol is that it opens up levels of reality which otherwise are closed for us." (42). (4) The symbol "unlocks dimensions and elements of our soul which correspond to the dimensions and elements of reality." (42). (5) "Symbols cannot be produced intentionally." (43). (6) "Like living beings, they grow and they die. They grow when the situation is ripe for them, and they die when the situation changes." (43).

Taken together, the key definition of faith as responsiveness and its more material definition, the statement about the essential necessity of mediating representations, imply a more precise delineation of this responsiveness for the symbolic text in the face of the the destructive yet very common approach to the symbol: the explanatory attempt to 'take possession,' to demythologize, to reduce the symbol to an explainable object, to fall into the dangerous trap of ideology. Therefore, RICOEUR developed an idea of 'going *beyond*' these confinements and, at the same time, 'going *back*' and 'recollecting' the original meaning, and regaining some of the original power of the symbol. The concept which, in the context of our modern, Western culture with its tendency to reduce, demythologize, to fall back into ideology, served to express the hoped-for adequate understanding, in 'going beyond' and in 'recollection or retrieval' of the symbol, is called 'second *naiveté*.'

*With the concept of 'second naiveté,' the (return to an) adequate relation of faith as responsiveness toward the symbolic world can be defined further in regard to the development of the enlightened mind, since 'naiveté' means being open to the impact of the symbolic content and con-text of faith, to the "ontological vehemence" (which, to be sure, in 'second naiveté,' cannot be obtained through a short-circuit avoidance of the critical distance of the 'is not' and presupposes the enlightened mind). (Thesis 65)*

This means, indeed, that in first and second *naiveté* there is somewhat of an absence of questions. But it is not adequately understood, as stated earlier, when we take it as mere '*failure to ask questions*,' as GERHART & RUSSELL<sup>78</sup> want to define *naiveté*. There exists, indeed, a condition in which we have no more questions: when we *are grasped* by the meaning of the symbol, when it displays its revealing power. Therefore, as I already concluded in chapter five, the idea of 'second *naiveté*' has to be illuminated by the concept of 'metaphorical truth,' which holds both aspects together: the 'is' of an 'ontological vehemence' and the 'is not' of distancing and contradiction.

The concept of *naiveté*, however, presents us with a complex set of problems which would call for further reflection. In particular, for the historian and the psychologist - the more they search for an empirical documentation of *naiveté* the more problems the idea of *naiveté* presents: At which point can 'first *naiveté*' be located? If 'second *naiveté*' is a recollection, 'first *naiveté*' should be somewhere in the past. Is it the phylogenetic past of so-called "primitive" cultures, "primitive" reli-

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78. See chapter 5.2.2. for a more detailed presentation of GERHART&RUSSELL's perspective on *naiveté*!

gion? Is it in the ontogenetic past, somewhere in our infancy or childhood, hence, in a deeper layer of our psyche? RICOEUR's notion of the three modalities, the cosmic, oneiric and poetic, does not help to decide this question, but rather hints at the multi-perspective notion of first and second naiveté. For our theme, the development of a person's faith in the perspective of an individual biography, this means that the philosopher is dependent on the contribution of the psychologist in order to trace the individual's development of naiveté.

### 8.1.2. *The Narrative Constitution of Faith*

Faith as responsiveness has an essential relation to the domain of narrative. In regard to narrative, his most recent domain of inquiry, RICOEUR illuminates the creative power of the con-text of narrative, which may be seen as a kind of summit in RICOEUR's account of the 'poetic function' on his way to analyzing the function of linguistic expressions (symbol and metaphor). Narrative, as has also been discovered anew in narrative theology, is the constitutive ground for faith. *Faith as responsiveness consists in narrative identity: The responsiveness of faith, in a pre-eminent way, is responsiveness toward narratives, when, according to RICOEUR, the narrative has the "power to 'remake' reality," to "transfigure" the world.* (Thesis 66).

Narrative theology rests on the conviction that a person's faith originates in and is constituted by the con-text of stories. A concept of faith as responsiveness to the world of narratives and symbols, therefore, can find strong support in narrative theology. Before I go on to present some contributions of more recent narrative theology, however, I want to refer to H.R.NIEBUHR.

*NIEBUHR's notion of the responsive and responsible self responding to the events in history reflects both of my conclusions: that faith is responsiveness and that it is responsiveness for narratives.* (Thesis 67). The fundamental anthropological recognition that any understanding of the self must include the feature of responsiveness is central to NIEBUHR's definition of the responsible self: It means

"understanding ... ourselves as responsive beings, who in all our actions answer to action upon us in accordance with our interpretation of such action." (NIEBUHR 1963:57)

The responsible self, however, is a self which is embedded in the narratives of our history and our personal life history:

"This time-ful self in encounter responds to actions upon it in accordance with interpretations that are themselves time-ful. Not with timeless ideas, recollected in Platonic recall of the soul's participations in the eternal; not with timeless laws of never-changing nature or of a pure human, unhistorical reason, does the self come to its present encounters. It comes rather with images and patterns of interpretation, with attitudes of trust and suspicion, accumulated in its biographical and historical past. It comes to its meetings with the Thou's and It's with an a priori equipment that is the heritage of its personal and social past; and it responds to the action of these others in accordance with the interpretations so made possible." (NIEBUHR 1963:95f)

This heritage of the past does not consist only in interpretation and reinterpretation of the particular past events, but in the reinterpretation of an "ultimate context" - a notion which refers to narratives as comprehensive core stories or "myths:"

"Yet all of these social and personal reinterpretations of remembered pasts and anticipated futures do not radically change either our general pattern of understanding of action upon us or our general mode of fitting response so long as our sense of the ultimate context remains unrevised. Deep in our minds is the myth, the interpretative pattern of the metahistory, within which all our histories and biographies are enacted. It has variant forms. (NIEBUHR 1963:106)

Of these forms, NIEBUHR first lists the variety of stories which are expressions of the "mythology of death;" then, he goes on and states that the religious and Christian story brings with it a different kind of reinterpretation:

"The great religions in general, and Christianity in particular, make their not least significant attack on this universal human ethos by challenging our ultimate historical myth." (NIEBUHR 1963:107)

This impact of the past through remembering and the narrative is not external history, but "inner history." 'Inner history' is such a fundamental concept in NIEBUHR's theology that it becomes a central feature in the definition of revelation. My thesis about the essential relation between faith and narrative seems to find solid ground in NIEBUHR's notion that revelation and faith are related to the creation of meaning and intelligible coherence in individual history:

"By revelation in our history ... we mean that special occasion which provides us with an image by means of which all the occasions of personal and common life become intelligible. ... (T)he revelatory moment is revelatory because it is rational, because it makes the understanding of order and meaning in personal history possible. ... Through it (the revelatory moment) we understand what we remember, remember what we have forgotten and appropriate as our own past much that seemed alien to us. In the life of an individual a great occasion may make significant and intelligible the apparently haphazard course of his earlier existence; all that has happened to him may then assume continuity and pattern as it is related to the moment for which he knows himself to have been born." (NIEBUHR 1941: 81)



In a short and precise statement, NIEBUHR links 'inner history,' the narrative identity of the responsive and responsible self, to faith:<sup>79</sup>

"An inner history, life's flow as regarded from the point of view of living selves, is always an affair of faith." (NIEBUHR 1941:56)

GERKIN, in his book, *Widening the Horizons* (GERKIN 1986), as already mentioned, suggests a dialogical paradigm, a "narrative hermeneutical perspective" which resembles my understanding of faith as responsiveness. With reference to NIEBUHR's talk about *responsible action* which is "action *in response*" and involves interpretation, GERKIN wants to explore what it means for pastoral care, to be faithful to

"a hermeneutical frame of reference and response rooted in the narrative structure at the core of the Judeo-Christian tradition." (GERKIN 1986:21).

This implies an understanding of practical theology in which he, "in expansion and elaboration of James Fowler's definition" of practical theology (Gerkin 1986:34), wants to underscore the importance of the variety of contexts of Christian praxis. GERKIN wants to define practical theology as involving "a process of fusion of horizons" (GERKIN 1986: 61):

"Practical theology, seen from a narrative hermeneutical perspective, involves a process of the interpretive fusion of horizons of meaning embodied in the Christian narrative with other horizons that inform and shape perceptions in the various arenas of activity in which Christians participate." (GERKIN 1986:61)

The hermeneutical perspective which GERKIN is suggesting is a *narrative perspective*: it rests on the conviction of the "*narrative structure of human consciousness*" (GERKIN 1986:50ff) which draws on RICOEUR's "basic hypothesis:"

"that between the activity of narrating a story and the temporal character of human experience there exists a correlation that is not merely accidental but that presents a transcultural form of necessity. To put it another way: *time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence.*" (RICOEUR 1983 1984:52)

The narrative structure of human consciousness implies, as GERKIN says, that

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79. NIEBUHR's conviction of the essential relation of faith to narrative, however, is limited, to some degree, and focused on his interpretation of theology in the terms of value theory: the narrative of 'inner history' is closely related to the unifying power of a value system: "A nation has an internal history so far as its members have some common center of reference, some good for which they live together. ... A man has one internal history so far as he is devoted to one value." (NIEBUHR 1941:57).

"By means of stories of the self and of the world around us we hold together events, persons, and experiences that would otherwise be fragmented. To be a person is therefore to live in a story."  
(GERKIN 1986:52)

But the individual stories are embedded in "larger stories:"

"So when I speak of the human structuring of time as narrative, I am speaking both of individual human consciousness and of corporate modes of living within time and living out a narrative of what is to live in time." (GERKIN 1986:52)

GADAMER's concept of the 'fusion of horizons' proves to be a fruitful idea for a narrative hermeneutical perspective. We could also speak of a 'fusion of narratives' or we could use another metaphor, that of weaving or knitting, and speak of our (narrative) identity with RICOEUR as a 'cloth woven of stories told' or as "being entangled in stories." *The constitution of faith in narratives implies an understanding of the subject, including the activity of reflective thinking, as "entangled in stories"*<sup>80</sup> (Thesis 68). Such 'being entangled' stands in contrast to the tradition of the 'I think,' the constitution of consciousness and self-understanding in the reflective activity of the subject.<sup>81</sup>

Such close interrelatedness with the narratives, however, must not conceal the distance, the critical 'difference,' the innovative power which has traditionally been attributed to enlightened reason. The possibility of leaving our self-caused immaturity behind, however, can also be put in the terms of narrative identity: We can speak of the power of the narrative to 'transform' and to 'remake' reality, as we learned from RICOEUR; or to recall what NIEBUHR said, the interpretation and reinterpretation of our narrative can and must proceed in light of the "attack" and "challenge" of the Christian faith, it means "revising our mythology of death into a history of life" (NIEBUHR 1963:107).

*Transformation of life rests on, and is effected by, change and reinterpretation of narratives and the encounter with new narratives.* (Thesis 69). To quote one of the earlier contributions to narrative theology in the U.S.:

80. SCHAPP, Wilhelm: *In Geschichten verstrickt. Zum Sein von Mensch und Ding*, Wiesbaden:B.Heymann 1976, (SCHAPP 1953)

81. With reference to SCHAPP's (1953) book, JÜNGEL (1977:414), in the section, "Die Menschlichkeit Gottes als zu erzählende Geschichte" in *Gott als Geheimnis der Welt*, notes this contradiction to the Cartesian tradition through the essential dependency of faith on narrative: "Das Denken, das Gott verstehen will, wird ... immer wieder auf das Erzählen zurückgeworfen. Der Gottesgedanke kann nur als - begrifflich kontrollierte - Erzählung von Geschichte gedachte werden. Will das Denken Gott denken, muß es sich im Erzählen versuchen. Auf diese Weise lernt es sich allerdings auch *als Denken* neu kennen, insofern das Bewußtsein nun nicht mehr nur als durch die Egoität des 'Ich denke', sondern zugleich als durch Geschichte konstituiert erscheint und sich selber als ein 'in Geschichte verstricktes' Bewußtsein entdeckt." (JÜNGEL 1977:414)

"If experience has the narrative quality attributed to it here, not only our self-identity but the empirical and moral cosmos in which we are conscious of living is implicit in our multi-dimensional story. It therefore becomes evident that a conversion or a social revolution that actually transforms consciousness requires a traumatic change in a man's story. The stories within which he has awakened to consciousness must be undermined, and in the identification of his personal story through a new story both the drama of his experience and his style of action must be reoriented. Conversion is reawakening, a second awakening of consciousness. His style must change steps, he must dance to a new rhythm. Not only his past and future, but the very cosmos in which he lives is strung in a new way." (CRITES 1971:307)

The concept of faith as responsiveness to narratives thus involves both the creation of a stable (narrative) identity *and* change or transformation. It may be no surprise, therefore, that we find this notion of the constitutive significance of narrative for the subject of faith and a strong notion of the *transformative* impact of the narratives in METZ's theology, when we know that METZ is not only a decidedly political theologian, but has been one of the originators of the discussion about narrative theology in German speaking theology.<sup>82</sup>

METZ's phrase of "becoming a subject before God," which for FOWLER has become increasingly important in the writings of the last few years,<sup>83</sup> also points to the important feature of responsiveness in faith.<sup>84</sup> METZ's theology is deeply convinced of the mediating function of the context of narratives which brings about the emergence of faith, for the becoming of the subject. METZ's theology is a *narrative* theology: the becoming of the subject is mediated by memories and narratives. Even if we, on our first reading, blend out the decisively political character of METZ's theology--the thesis that we become subjects by remembering *dangerous* memories, remembering the stories of the *victims*--we can discern, in his theology, a basic structure of how we become subjects: by remembering *stories*, by the encounter with *texts*, by being responsive to memories.

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82. One of the focal events which started the discussion about narrative theology in German theology was the paper by METZ, given at a conference of the journal *Evangelische Theologie* in 1972, which is entitled "Ein Gnadengesuch für eine narrative Theologie bzw. Christologie" (METZ 1973b) and reprinted in the Catholic journal *Concilium* (METZ 1973a); METZ later included this article in his book, *Glaube in Geschichte und Gesellschaft* as Paragraph 12 (METZ 1977:195ff). Also WEINRICH's article, "Narrative Theologie," (WEINRICH 1973) belongs to the origin of narrative theology in Germany; comp. WACKER (1983:14)!

83. See e.g. FOWLER 1985d:56ff; 1987a:53ff; 1987b:10; 18 for the adoption of METZ's phrase in FOWLER's faith development theory!

84. 'Responsiveness,' for METZ, means, in the first place, the kind of 'human' responsiveness which is all too easily left behind when 'responsiveness' and 'subject' are precipitantly interpreted *theologically* as in FOWLER's use of these terms.

"Die Glaubensgeschichten des AT und NT treten nicht zu einer in ihrem Subjektsein bereits konstituierten Menschheit hinzu, als Überbau oder feierliches Akzessorium. Sie sind vielmehr Geschichten der dramatischen Konstitution des Subjektseins der Menschen - eben durch ihr Gottesverhältnis. Menschen werden herausgerufen aus den Zwängen und Ängsten archaischer Gesellschaften; sie sollen zu Subjekten einer neuen Geschichte werden. (METZ 1977:58)

We become responsible persons, acting as subjects, according to METZ, by remembering; the subject is constituted by stories; we fulfill our vocation in a "community of story-telling and remembering" (METZ 1977:189;passim). Thus, METZ's phrase '*becoming a subject before God*' brings along with it a strong notion of how the subject is constituted: by responsiveness to stories. (Thesis 70a)

However, inherent in METZ's definition of 'subject' and its 'becoming,' there is the criticism of any assumed, pre-defined subject, as justified in "transcendental subject theologies" (METZ 1977:62); these theologies uncritically adopt an understanding of 'subject' which has become the privatized 'subject' of bourgeois ideology (METZ 1977:29ff). Historical eschatology has become privatized eschatology.<sup>85</sup>

It is obvious that for METZ this responsiveness to others and to the stories has a very specific focus: it means remembering those human beings who are in danger of falling prey to oblivion and annihilation and those stories which are suppressed and therefore dangerous - which are also in danger of falling prey to oblivion and annihilation. METZ talks about "solidarity of remembering" as being concerned about the possibility of the human being to become a subject - to be sure: the concern for the *other* human beings, in particular for the suffering, to become subjects in history:

"Die christliche Erinnerungssolidarität mit den Toten ist nicht bestimmt von einem abstrakten Interesse und auch nicht primär von der Sorge: was ist 'mit mir' im Tod?, sondern was ist 'mit dir' im Tod?, also mit den anderen, speziell den Leidenden... . In ihrer mystisch-politischen Doppelstruktur ersteht Solidarität daher als Kategorie der Rettung des Subjekts, dort, wo dieses bedroht ist: vom Vergessen, von der Unterdrückung, vom Tode; als Kategorie des Engagements für den Menschen, Subjekt zu werden und Subjekt zu bleiben." (METZ 1977:207).

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85. With reference to METZ and also to LINDBECK, LOWE, in his article, "Dangerous Supplement/Dangerous Memory: Sketches for a History of the Postmodern," (LOWE 1986), has marked the contrast and contradiction between a psychological "three-part life-story of innocence, conflict, and reconciliation" (LOWE 1986:50) for which TILLICH's and JUNG's thought may be the exponents, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the conviction that the subject is secondary in that it depends on a covenantal relationship (LINDBECK), that subjectivity is a derived one (METZ). The latter perspective attempts to move towards a postmodern position which "will need to proceed by way of an authentic reclaiming of history" (LOWE 1986:53).

This political definition of the concept of 'subject' in METZ would suggest a major change<sup>86</sup> in the perspective of faith development theory, since 'subject' in METZ's definition is not an individual, but a *collective* and a *political* concept. With the adoption of METZ's phrase, we not only have to take into account the fact that, in METZ's perspective, the subject is constituted by narratives, but also the innovative and *dangerous* character of these memories.

*METZ's theological position, I think, implies a perspective on faith development theory which will remain critical and cannot easily be integrated.* (Thesis 70b)

Yet, because of its strong emphasis on the constitution of the subject by a genuine, religious event, - the remembering of dangerous stories, - and by an authentic reclaiming of history - which, therefore, implies understanding subjectivity as competency to act within the framework of the "yet unfinished narrative"<sup>87</sup> -, we are strongly encouraged to move toward a hermeneutical reinterpretation.<sup>88</sup>

## 8.2. The Concept of Faith Between Constitutive-Knowing and Symbolic-Narrative Constitution - Faith Development Theory Reconsidered

If we now approach and reconsider faith development theory, in this section, on the basis of such a profound notion of the constitutive significance of symbol, metaphor, and narrative, the specific concern of a contextualist model of faith can be formulated in the following key question: How can a structural-developmental theory of faith adequately maintain that focus on the constitutive significance of the symbolic representations? What price has already been paid, what price will have to be paid, and what forfeiture can be avoided, in regard to the

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86. Whether faith development theory, in light of LOWE's article, has to be regarded as rooted in the Romanicist position (LOWE 1986:43f), is dependent on how much its idea of the 'life-course,' the 'development of self' is dependent on TILLICH's and JUNG's notion of the three-part life-story with a 'synthesis'(LOWE 1986:54) and on the concept of 'life' which escapes or suppresses history (LOWE 1986:53).

87. "The identity of Christian individuals and communities is finally rooted in and dependent on the yet unfinished narrative in which God has his identity in relation to the world." (STROUP 1981:258)

88. As LOWE's conclusion in regard to our search for the shape of a (postmodern) position suggests: "If ... we regard the field of hermeneutics as a contemporary extension of the discovery of the interrelatedness of subject and history, then we can appreciate much of contemporary discussion as an effort to extricate this discovery from its various entanglements with ontologized conceptions of the subject and/or of history." (LOWE 1986:54)

contents of faith? Thus the focus of the theme emerges: the inter-relation between the structural and the con-text-ualist perspective, the relation of structure and content has to be illuminated further.

There may be three suggestions to modify the structure content relation:<sup>89</sup>

(a) *Substitution of structure with content* - Would it be adequate to abandon the structural perspective, the form, altogether and attempt to substitute it with the contents?

(b) *Search for new structures* - Could we find new structures, new operations, i.e. genuine faith operations?

(c) *Different understanding of the structure content interrelation* - Is there the necessity and the possibility to redefine the structure content interrelation?

Which one of these possibilities would be the most appropriate, if we are convinced that there are good reasons for giving more emphasis to the aspects of content in conceptualizing *faith* (and in the conceptualization of *development* and for further efforts to account for the contents in *research*, as we will see in chapter nine and ten)? Could the consideration of the contents be developed into a second pillar of equal solidity as is the first pillar of faith development theory, the structural development paradigm?

### 8.2.1. *The Structural-Developmental Paradigm: Valuable, but Insufficient*

The implications of a more decisive move in the interpretive turn and the consistent concrete proposal to consider more closely the contents inherent in, and constitutive to, faith contrast the unreserved adherence to that paradigm which presents itself as the "hard-stage"-model. The principles for "hard"-stage theories are developed in KOHLBERG's theory, in order to mark the boundaries of what this theory understands to be the proper structural-developmental model which is assumed to be consistent with PIAGET's principles; to mark the difference for "soft stage" theories such as KEGAN's, FOWLER's or LOEVINGER's which then appear as deviating from the proper model and developing into a mixture of models, e.g. under the influence of ERIKSON's idea of ontogenetic development (KOHLBERG 1986; KOHLBERG&LEVINE&HEWER 1984; POWER 1987).<sup>90</sup> Moral

89. I thank Walt LOWE for the suggestion of these alternatives for a redefinition of the structure content interrelation.

90. In chapter 3.2, I already discussed the hard vs. soft stage distinction in some detail.

development theory represents the structural-developmental paradigm to which faith development theory, whether in agreement or disagreement, has a strong relationship: it comes as "hard"-stage model.

Why should it be insufficient? What is the insufficiency of the structural-developmental paradigm? Is it this kind of insufficiency which is conceded by KOHLBERG, when he maintains that cognitive, moral, and religious development stand in a relation of 'necessary,' but 'not sufficient' conditions? Indeed, in this respect, on the part of "hard" structural-developmental theory, its own insufficiency is admitted: cognitive development is 'not sufficient' to account fully for moral development; moral development is 'not sufficient' to account for religious development. On the other hand cognitive development, it is assumed, is the 'necessary condition' for moral development, as moral development is the 'necessary condition' for religious development.<sup>91</sup> As already mentioned and as will be discussed in more detail later, KOHLBERG not only assumes a 'necessary condition,' but also sees sufficient evidence for a temporal 'prior' of cognitive for moral, and of moral for religious development. The 'insufficiency' which is admitted is of a minor degree.

But this is not the kind of insufficiency I mean. I do not simply want to agree to the hierarchical relation of 'necessary , but not sufficient' conditions which admittedly also imply a certain kind of insufficiency. As will become clear, this notion of 'insufficiency' of cognitive and moral development theory is different from the kind of 'insufficiency' which appears in light of a hermeneutical perspective: in light of the concern for the contents and con-texts of faith. For, as is not and cannot be acknowledged by moral development theory:<sup>92</sup> *The insufficiency of the structural-developmental paradigm is the insufficiency to fully take the contents into account.* (Thesis 71).

Thus, once more, we arrive at the theme of the relation between structure and content which presents a fundamental problem for faith development theory. I think the structural-developmental criteria of *operation* and *universality* are

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91. In his 'hierarchical' understanding of the progression from cognitive development to social perspective taking and moral reasoning, and finally to religion, KOHLBERG explicitly relies on PIAGET, and behind him, KANT. KOHLBERG therefore attempted to find the specific *religious* realm in a hypothetical and metaphorical stage "beyond the domain of normative morality" (POWER&KOHLBERG 1980:371).

92. However, involving a kind of irony, the admitted 'insufficiency' of moral (or cognitive) development theory could be at least a hint that moral development theory somehow is aware of its limitation in regard to consideration of content, while, on the surface, the admitted 'insufficiency' stands in the shadow of the pride of a theory which is - almost! - able to serve as explanatory framework for the others (e.g. for religion), and without any doubt presents the temporal 'prior' domain.

responsible for the structure content problem. Therefore, we could expect some clarification from an investigation of the concept of 'universal structural operation' as it is proposed in the structural-developmental paradigm.

The following reflection may prepare the basic distinction which, to be sure, already deviates from the structural-developmental paradigm: It may be sufficient, within the world of concrete objects, including the logic of physical, mechanical, and mathematical relations between objects, to focus exclusively on *cognitive operations* which we assume to be *universal*. Contents here are interchangeable. And contents have to be interchangeable, as it is the nature of a logical, cognitive operation to consist in the achievement of a structure which, in transferring from one logical problem to another, is able to perform the operations consistent with the achieved level.

In contrast to cognition, for the world of meaning, of imagination, of higher symbol systems, of morality, and of religion,<sup>93</sup> it is not sufficient to consider universal<sup>94</sup> (cognitive) operations, to focus on structures. Within these dimensions of reality, the *contents* of religious or moral imagination and experience play a decisive role. Also the conceptualization of *domain specific operations*, as I will explain below drawing on DÖBERT's perspective, is not developed well enough.

Even the domain of morality cannot be adequately described, if we focus exclusively on structure and disregard the contents. The claim of KOHLBERG, in regard to the possibility of an exclusive structural description of morality and moral development, is an illusion: it leads one to believe that moral development theory has succeeded in defining domain specific '*moral operations*' in the same fashion as, in cognitive development theory, logical operations are defined. DÖBERT, in his article, "Wider die Vernachlässigung des 'Inhalts' in den Moraltheorien von Kohlberg und Habermas" (DÖBERT 1986), shows that the claim of HABERMAS' and KOHLBERG's structural-developmental perspective to focus exclusively on struc-

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93. FOWLER's way of taking this contrast between the religious and the cognitive domain into account has led to the distinction between the 'logic of rational certainty' and 'logic of conviction.' See Chapter 1.2.!

94. It is DÖBERT's thesis that, in contrast to what KOHLBERG and HABERMAS believe, universalism cannot be claimed, for moral development theory (DÖBERT 1986:86). The falsely assumed universality, DÖBERT (1986:86) explains, rests on "systematischen Fehleinschätzungen der Bedeutung von Inhaltsmomenten" which led (1) to the attempt to eliminate the contents; (2) to the false (self-deceptive) assumption that research would measure the development of *structures* of justice, but, in fact, what was measured was the '*morally right*;' (3) that the dilemma decision has been subsumed under the contents which led to a vacillation between unwanted relativism and unjustified universalism.



tures, while neglecting the contents is rather self-deceptive. We cannot avoid the contents, when we progress from the field of logic, in strict PIAGETian terms, into the field of morality. The contents are in interplay with the structures of morality at the different stages, since the field of morality cannot be filtered or reduced to so-called operations of justice reasoning, of a pure procedural justice, and also, in decision making (which is the focus of research using the dilemmata), the role of content cannot be neglected.

Structures always occur together with content as '*structured content*.' In regard to structural-developmental theories which are related to cognitive development theory, but focusing on distinct domains, as is the case with moral development theory and faith development theory, the question is whether we can discern domain-specific operations. In disagreement with this proposition of domain-specific justice operations, DÖBERT maintains that the proposed justice operations are not only poorly defined, as regards their number,<sup>95</sup> but also, they are not *unconscious* operations, as claimed by PIAGET, but are conscious decision criteria which, moreover, have to be coordinated from a higher level (DÖBERT 1986:90f). In a bold thesis, DÖBERT questions whether there are *moral* operations at all:

"Ich gehe davon aus, daß die bislang vergebliche Suche nach einleuchtenden, spezifisch moralischen Operationen den Schluß nahelegt, daß im interpersonellen Bereich keine prinzipiell anderen Strukturen gefunden werden können als im Umgang mit der Natur. *Spezifisch moralische Operationen gibt es nicht!*" (DÖBERT 1986:92)

This thesis does imply questioning whether there are genuine faith operations.

DÖBERT makes an important point which, to be sure, cannot expect much agreement in structural-developmental theory; however, if his critical observations make any sense, they would also imply major questions in regard to faith development theory. Therefore, I draw from DÖBERT's account some questions and suggestions for faith development theory:

(1) *As long as we do not possess a precise and validated definition of faith operations which can be evidenced to be identical with, or different to, PIAGETian conceptualization, the domain of 'structural operations' should be primarily the domain for which it was originally defined: cognitive development. (Thesis 72)*

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95. While KOHLBERG lists five "justice operations:" "equality, equity, reciprocity, prescriptive role-taking, and universalizability" (KOHLBERG 1984a:624), HABERMAS mentions only three: "die vollständige *Reversibilität* der Standpunkte, von denen aus die Beteiligten ihre Argumente vorbringen; *Universalität* im Sinne einer Inklusion aller Betroffenen, schließlich die *Reziprozität* der gleichmäßigen Anerkennung der Ansprüche eines jeden Beteiligten durch alle anderen." (HABERMAS 1983a:133)

(2) *The dangerous misunderstanding which could result from a short-circuit transference of the principles defined for an (PIAGETian) operation to the concept of faith--the erroneous assumption that faith is purely structural and has no essential relation to the contents, could be avoided by (a) the return to the PIAGETian definition of operation and (b) by a conceptualization of faith which includes, in its definition, the content relatedness of faith. (Thesis 73)*

(3) *(Con-text-ualist) faith, though it requires certain cognitive competences which can be defined adequately in terms of PIAGETian operation, transcends the domain of operations. (Thesis 74)*

Thus the insufficiency of the structural-developmental model in regard to an adequate consideration of the contents in general and the contents of faith in particular can be stated more precisely, since a reason for this insufficiency has become obvious. What I label 'insufficiency' is a decided - though rarely questioned - (self-) restriction of structural development theories to focus on structure and disregard the contents. This is expressed in the conceptualization of 'operation:' designed for the domain of cognition, this concept of 'operation' is transferred into the domains of morality and faith without hesitation; and it brings with it the pre-defined principles of content-irrelevant structuralism. But a way to get out of this dilemma has also emerged: to return to the concept of 'operation' in order to illuminate its strengths, but, more important, its limitation: to reckon with the possibility that it may bring to light only half of the truth; to admit its insufficiency.

Also, the question posed in the introductory remark as to the three possibilities of modifying the structure-content relation, - (a) substitution of structure with content; (b) search for new structures; (c) different understanding of the structure-content interrelation; - can be answered now, in light of the above reflection: It would be inadequate to abandon the structural perspective, the form, altogether and pretend we could simply substitute it with the contents (a). The first task, I think, is to redefine the structure content interrelation (c). This requires, in the first place, a precise differentiation between the two; and necessitates showing each its proper place: the operations which also play a role in faith, on the one hand, and the relatedness and responsiveness to the contents of faith, on the other. The search for new structures, for new operations, i.e. the genuine faith operation (b) could come into question only as a secondary task. (Here, however, I would suggest also considering concepts like 'hearkening' or 'responsiveness,' 'relatedness to life history,' or 'historical consciousness' in general, as candidates for faith operations).

The insufficiency of the structural-developmental paradigm to fully account for faith becomes even more obvious when we recall the con-text-uality faith. If, indeed we are to define faith as not only including aspects of content, but as being constituted by the *texts*, then the idea of interaction with the contexts which is implied in the structural-developmental concept of 'operation' appears to be insufficient. This possibly suggests even more strongly putting structural-developmental theory in its proper place. The consideration of the constitutive significance of the *con-texts* of faith implies counter-balancing the 'hard' structural-developmental model, in another regard, i.e. to counter-balance the exclusive focus on the *construing activity of the subject* which is basic for the concept of structural operation.

When KOHLBERG defines the assumption of *constructivism*<sup>96</sup> for moral development theory, the notion of an interaction with, and of a response to, the situation encountered comes into view, but the weight is shifted in favor of the inventing, construing activity of the subject; the response is determined by the subject's constructive competence on her or his current developmental level:

"In the constructivist view, functioning is creative in that the individual is always inventing or construing anew responses to each situation encountered. However, although each response is a creation of the moment, its form is constrained or determined by the person's current developmental level." (KOHLBERG&KAUFFMAN 1987:4f)

In RICOEUR's terms, we would have to ask whether such assumption of the construing activity of the subject does not reveal the rootedness of the structural-developmental paradigm in the "tradition of philosophies of the subject," (RICOEUR 1981b:182) or "the primacy of the subject in modern philosophy" (190). RICOEUR's definition of *appropriation* holds that:

"In general we may say that appropriation is no longer to be understood in the tradition of philosophies of the subject, as a constitution of which the subject would possess the key." (RICOEUR 1981b:182).

If we recall RICOEUR's definition of 'assimilation' and 'decentration,' we can illuminate this point further. RICOEUR's understanding of 'assimilation' as being 'assimilation to....,' as mentioned earlier, has far-reaching implications in regard to

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96. Despite the fact that PIAGET often uses the term *constructivism* in combination with 'dialectics' and speaks of "dialectical constructivism" (PIAGET 1965 1974:68;78; cf. KESSELRING 1981:50f) and thus accounts for the interaction between subject and environment, I suppose, PIAGET also shifts the weight in favor of the constructive activity of the subject. This is also displayed in his understanding of assimilation and decentration, as I will state below. We have to ask whether PIAGET did not tend toward a one-sided solution of the dynamic between assimilation and accommodation, as e.g. PEUKERT (1979), KESSELRING (1981:97), and FRAAS (1988:167) note.

structural-developmental psychology. RICOEUR's understanding of 'assimilation' not only contrasts PIAGETian terminology, but also precisely contrasts the PIAGETian paradigm. This expressed in the following quote from PIAGET:

"J'étais parvenu à deux idées, centrales à mon point de vue et que je n'ai d'ailleurs jamais abandonnées depuis. La première est que, tout organisme possédant une structure permanente, qui peut se modifier sous les influences du milieu mais ne se détruit jamais en tant que structure d'ensemble, toute connaissance est toujours *assimilation* d'un donné extérieur à des structures du sujet... La seconde est que les facteurs normatifs de la pensée correspondent biologiquement à une nécessité d'*équilibre* par autorégulation : ainsi la logique pourrait correspondre chez le sujet à un processus de déséquilibre." (PIAGET 1965:15f)<sup>97</sup>

Although the concept of an equilibrium is important for PIAGET, as this quote shows, the pre-eminent significance of assimilation in PIAGET's perspective becomes obvious.

Also, RICOEUR's term of *decentration* is in a sharp contrast to PIAGET's perspective. The contrast between the two perspectives which I have been discussing throughout my reflection on faith development theory here, can possibly be pinned down as the difference in understanding the term 'decentration.' KESSELRING defines PIAGET's concept of decentration:

"Die Überwindung eines egozentrischen Zustands erfolgt nach Piaget durch 'Dezentrierung': Dabei objektiviert sich das Subjekt zunehmend als das aktive Koordinations-Zentrum der eigenen Handlungen, indem es sich mit seiner natürlichen und seiner sozialen Umgebung auseinandersetzt und die eigenen Handlungen auf die Gegebenheiten der Umwelt abstimmt. Dezentrierung und Objektivierung laufen also stets mit einer Koordination des eigenen mit fremden Standpunkten parallel." (KESSELRING 1981:161)<sup>98</sup>

The fact that faith development theory has not subscribed to this notion of 'decentration,' is expressed in FOWLER's notion of "decentration from the self."<sup>99</sup> Though applied only in his description of Stage Six - it seems to resemble RICOEUR's understanding.

97. "In mir hatten sich zwei in meinen Augen zentrale Ideen festgesetzt, die ich übrigens bis heute für richtig halte. Die erste Idee: jeder Organismus besitzt eine dauerhafte Struktur, die sich unter den Einflüssen der Umwelt zwar modifizieren kann, aber niemals als Gesamtstruktur zugrundegeht; daher ist Erkenntnis immer *Assimilation* eines in der Außenwelt Gegebenen an Strukturen des Subjekts... Meine zweite Idee: die normativen Elemente des Denkens entsprechen der biologischen Notwendigkeit eines sich durch *Autoregulation* erhaltenden *Gleichgewichts*; die Logik könnte also einem *Äquilibrationsprozeß* entsprechen." (PIAGET 1965 1974:19)

98. HABERMAS uses this concept in the same sense, to describe the increasing cutting-off of the individual from its life-world (HABERMAS 1983a:148ff;172). As HABERMAS rightly perceives, KOHLBERG also sketches moral development in terms of increasing decentration.

99. E.g. FOWLER 1987a:75

This brief inquiry into the concepts of 'constructivism,' 'assimilation,' and 'decentration' as the groundwork of structural-developmental theory further explains the insufficiency of the structural-developmental paradigm, when we would have expected from it an adequate consideration of con-text-ualist faith or faith as responsiveness, as I defined the concept in light of RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective.

This implies suggesting for faith development theory to counter-balance the one-sided heritage from structural-developmental theory, and to move on in the hermeneutical turn. As RABINOW and SULLIVAN write:

"The interpretive approach emphatically refutes the claim that one can somehow reduce the complex world of signification to the products of a self-consciousness in the traditional philosophical sense. Rather, interpretation begins from the postulate that the web of meaning constitutes human existence to such an extent that it cannot ever be meaningfully reduced to constitutively prior speech acts, dyadic relations, or any predefined elements. Intentionality and empathy are rather seen as dependent on the prior existence of the shared world of meaning within which the subjects of human discourse constitute themselves." (RABINOW&SULLIVAN 1979:5)

The second kind of insufficiency of the structural-developmental paradigm and the proposal for counter-balancing its one-sidedness can be summarized in the following theses:

*Constructivism is an assumption which, for the concept of con-text-ualist faith, describes only part of the picture: the underlying organization of pre-supposed competences: but the constructivist perspective does not adequately capture the interactive process in the sense that "it is the text which gives a self to the ego" (RICOEUR). (Thesis 75)*

*RICOEUR's strong focus of the con-text-ualist basis of person-constitution suggests counter-balancing any one-dimensional and reductive focus on the constructive-constitutive activity of the subject. (Thesis 76)*

### **8.2.2. Con-text-ualist "Growing Edges" in Faith Development Theory**

In a general perspective, faith development theory can be seen as motivated by the concern to show a way which hopefully could lead beyond the modern preoccupation with autonomy and subjectivity. As NIPKOW, SCHWEITZER and FOWLER state,<sup>100</sup> structural-developmental theories of religion and faith do not

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100. In the introduction to the German publication of the contributions to the Blaubeuren conference in June 1987 on "Religious Development and Education" (NIPKOW et.al.1988).

merely display a focus on autonomy, rationality and subjectivity, but they are also attempts to open up a way beyond the one-sided focus on autonomy, rationality and subjectivity (NIPKOW et.al. 1988:19).

Faith development theory, as FOWLER says, in a recent reflection on "The Enlightenment and Faith Development Theory," is part of a post-Enlightenment move (FOWLER 1988a:39f). This can be affirmed with respect to the prescriptive delineation of faith development toward the kind of faith which goes *beyond* autonomy, rationality and subjectivity. This could mean that faith development theory follows the tendency to transcend the tradition which RICOEUR called the tradition of the "primacy of the subject." FOWLER claims this for faith development theory, when he refers to the importance of philosophical and theological attempts to define the modes of "post-Enlightenment" consciousness and, among others, explicitly mentions RICOEUR and says:

"In the examination of their work ... we find characteristics that call for the 'second naïveté,' and the dialectical, multi-perspectival structures of knowing and valuing which descriptions of the Conjunctive stage of faith have tried to capture." (FOWLER 1988a:39)

While this general concern of faith development theory has to be honored, in the realization of this project, in regard to the conceptualization of basic concepts (and the design of research), faith development theory remains behind this aspiration, as I tried to show in Part I. Especially in the light of a contextualist model which I take from RICOEUR's perspective, faith development theory does not appear to be coming to terms with the *constitutive significance of the contexts for faith*. This becomes visible in the definition of the relation between structure and content in faith development theory which not only appears as a "tensional" relation, but, as I said earlier, as an *asymmetric* tension in that the structural aspect is given more weight and is developed more solidly. In other words: the conceptualization of 'operation' accounts for the colourization of faith development theory, but with the adoption of most of the definitory assumptions for an 'operation' and their penetration into most of the theoretical framework, the structural-developmental aspect tended to become predominant.

I do not mean to say that faith development theory has submitted to the structural-developmental model. FOWLER has repeatedly expressed his conviction that the structural aspects of 'faith' present only *half* of the picture. Moreover, in his more recent theological reinterpretation, FOWLER accentuated another side of faith development theory. Thereby, faith development theory appears to be moving

in the direction I am concerned with: the responsiveness toward the con-texts of symbolic representations. To summarize in theses:

*The tradition of thought which puts primary emphasis on the construing activity of the subject - the tradition in which, according to Thesis 16, FOWLER's faith development theory in general stands - can and need to be balanced, and brought into correlation with, the notion of the "structuring power" of the contents and con-texts of faith; faith development theory can and should be taking the 'interpretive turn' one step further. (Thesis 77)*

*Faith development theory displays a 'growing edge' in coming to terms with the constitutive significance of the con-texts for faith. (Thesis 78)*

Thus, in my proposal for an advancement of faith development theory, I am attempting to point to issues which have been considered as being of marginal significance, because of the great emphasis on the "hard" structural-developmental paradigm. As should have become clear by now, I do not mean to say that these issues I am concerned with were not taken up by FOWLER's work; on the contrary: they are explicitly stated in his writings. But they have receded into the background, because of the pre-eminence of the structural-developmental theory. Thus I see the task in expanding these issues which are stated, in FOWLER's recent writings, more explicitly and in attempting to integrate them into the theory and research methodology of faith development.

Thus, not only in the more recent, theological contributions, but already in the earlier conceptualization of 'faith,' the significance of symbolic representations is important: FOWLER's conceptualization of faith as relational, from the start, has given the faith development project the potential for understanding faith in the terms of an interactive, hermeneutical process; his statements about the "dialectical interaction" between our experiences and the world of symbolic representations<sup>101</sup> strongly support this notion.

In the following theses, therefore, I will try to summarize the points of departure for an advancement of a con-text-ualist model in faith development theory. Therefore, I will emphasize the parallels with and reflections of RICOEUR's perspective.

*FOWLER's concept of the 'logic of conviction' which, as he states, transcends the 'logic of rational certainty' parallels RICOEUR's concept of metaphorical truth which, as he states, transcends the truth claim of positivistic truth. (Thesis 79)*

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101. E.g. FOWLER 1985c:294

FOWLER's triadic pattern of 'faith' supports the assumption of the essential significance of the symbolic content of faith. (Thesis 80)

RICOEUR's perspective, that it is the work which 'discovers,' 'reveals,' and 'opens up' its readers, his view that it is the text which constitutes the self, finds its equivalent and point of departure in FOWLER's dictum of the "structuring power of the contents of faith". (Thesis 81)

FOWLER's heptagonal model expresses his view that faith needs to be conceptualized as a multi-dimensional and holistically coherent concept. Such a concept of faith contradicts any hierarchical relation between logic, morality, and faith which tends to reduce the multi-dimensionality and risks subsuming faith to the one-dimensionality of one aspect. (Thesis 82)

The definition of faith as responsiveness is prepared through FOWLER's emphasis on the concept of 'vocation,' in his theological re-interpretation of faith development theory. (Thesis 83)

While I cannot elaborate, in detail, all of the 'growing edges' of faith development theory here, I will say a word about the last thesis which indicates a decisive advancement of the theory in the direction in which I am pointing.

Since his 1984 book, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*, and in the more recent writings, FOWLER has put the concept of *vocation* more and more in the foreground and worked on a profound definition of this concept. 'Vocation' became a key concept, since it allows one to illuminate the *theological* aspects of faith development theory. Of special importance for a psychological theory is the fact that 'vocation' allows one to speak of God in human terms: in terms of 'being called...' and 'being intended for some purpose.'

As *dialogical* model of call and response, the concept of vocation suggests and prepares a model of faith which I suggest calling the *con-text-ualist* model of faith. 'Vocation' is defined by FOWLER in such fundamental theological terms that it becomes interchangeable with 'faith.' In doing so, FOWLER is also able to balance the *psychology* of faith by the *theology* of vocation.

In FOWLER's writings, 'faith,' defined with help of the concept of 'vocation,' is explicitly connected with 'responsiveness:' Like 'vocation,' 'responsiveness' refers to a *praxis*: to the "*praxis* of human responsiveness" (FOWLER 1987a: 55) which is correlated with "*the praxis* of God." 'Responsiveness' is responsiveness "to God's action" (FOWLER 1987a:53). In combining both terms: it is "our vocation" to become "reflective-responsive members of creation" (FOWLER 1987a:54).



In my understanding, the theological interpretation of faith development theory in the terms of 'vocation' and 'responsiveness to God's action' is a considerable advancement of faith development theory.

When FOWLER interprets faith development theory as illuminating the paths by which we "develop toward the fulfillment of this calling" or by which we emerge as "responsive to God's action" (FOWLER 1987a:53), he places the theory into a firm theological horizon.<sup>102</sup> This horizon is the "interaction of the human and the divine, and of creation and the divine" (FOWLER 1987a:55). What has to be shown, however, is a profound psychological analysis of how we are and become responsive and how we develop as persons being responsive: an analysis of the constitution and development of responsiveness. The consideration of the development of 'responsiveness' may start with a careful analysis of the development toward a person's openness for, and capacity to respond to, his or her contexts. For 'responsiveness' is the general psychological concept by means of which we finally find a way to describe a person's responsiveness to God's action, responsiveness being the capacity, readiness and willingness to respond to one's environment, to the con-text surrounding us. Therefore, I suggest that faith development theory's concept of faith should be put in the terms of responsiveness. A person's responsiveness to God's calling is mediated by her or his responsiveness to the world of symbols and stories, to other persons, and to his or her own self, including life history.

### 8.2.3. *Contours and Dimensions of Further Developments*

The reconsideration of faith development theory in the previous section also has implications in regard to further advancements of the conceptualization of faith. To investigate them, further research is needed. However, certain implications result from the perspective I have developed so far. In the following section, I will present suggestions and theses in which I will attempt to capture some of

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102. The terms 'vocation' and 'responsiveness' are distinct in some respect. 'Vocation' is rooted in *theology* and FOWLER regards it as important to reclaim 'vocation' as a comprehensive theological concept. 'Responsiveness' is a concept which belongs rather into a *psychological* context. However, FOWLER, in this theological re-interpretation, uses this term only in conjunctions like 'responsiveness to God's action' so that it becomes a decisive theological concept. For FOWLER, 'vocation' is the key term, while 'responsiveness' plays only a subordinate role in this theological re-interpretation.

these implications. These theses, therefore, deviate from the previous theses in that they tentatively present hypotheses, suggestions and points of departure for further investigation.

**(a) Faith in Terms of Responsiveness and Aspect Descriptions.**

The key definition of faith which I propose--*faith as responsiveness*--suggests emphasizing the aspect of the contents of faith and faith language. In my view, implications ensuing from RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective suggest such modification: a conceptualization of faith which gives due emphasis to the *referentiality* in all of the various aspects and dimensions involved. To tentatively explicate the *con-text-ual reference* as a feature, which is inherent in the various aspects of faith, I have tried to sketch the seven Aspects in terms of responsiveness (Figure 3).

**(b) The Distinction Between Faith and Belief.**

From a more balanced conceptualization of faith, from a definition of faith as con-text-ualist faith, it follows that faith cannot, and does not need, to be distinguished from belief in such a decisive way, as it is the case in *Stages of Faith*. The necessity for this rigor of distinction appears, in light of my analysis, as resulting from an inadequate weight having been given to the assumptions inherent in the definition of universal 'operations' which in turn has "coined" the concept of faith.

*Because of its essential and constitutive relation to specific con-texts and contents, faith cannot, and does not have to, be defined in rigorous demarcation from belief or religion. (Thesis 84)*

*Other symbolic content, hence, theologies other than NIEBUHR's interpretation of faith in terms of value theory (which led to the construct of "SCVP") can and should be taken into consideration. (Thesis 85)*

**(c) The Universality of Faith & The 'Truth' of Faith.**

In *Stages of Faith*, we met a four-fold claim of the universality of 'faith' which is related to the distinction of 'faith' and 'belief' (summarized in Part I in the a series of theses, Theses 1. to 1.4a). Because I have called the precise distinction between faith and belief into question, we need to look for another way to ground the claim of universality of faith.

FOWLER's Aspects of Faith	The Aspects in Terms of Responsiveness
A. Form of Logic	?103
B. Social Perspective Taking	Responsiveness to (the Perspective of) the Other
C. Form of Moral Judgment	Responsiveness to the Right of the Other Person & to Justice
D. Bounds of Social Awareness	Bounds of Social Responsiveness & Social Concern
E. Locus of Authority	Locus of Responsiveness to Authority
F. Form of World Coherence	Responsiveness to, & Concern for, the Coherence of the "World" (Suffering because of its Incoherence)
G. Symbolic Function	Responsiveness to Symbols

Figure 3. The Aspects of Faith (FOWLER) in Terms of Responsiveness

103. With the Aspect of logic, we encounter problems in identifying a con-text, a certain responsiveness. This is not surprising, when we take account of the interchangeability of contents in logic. It is impossible to assign logical reasoning to a certain dimension of content reference. In logic, the structure of reference, i.e. the structural-operational competence to appropriate contents, is the issue, not the referred-to content. The other Aspects - evidence of this has been shown, as DÖBERT (1986) has done for moral development - also embrace aspects of content or, as RICOEUR says, the feature of "reference to". The operational structure of logical reasoning appears to be an underlying structure in all of the Aspects. This may be true for the faith stages one to four, i.e. as far as cognitive development theory has succeeded to define a developmental sequence. Beyond the stage of formal operational logic, however, the PIAGETian ground becomes less solid. Thus development in faith beyond stage four, as stated already, may be more dependent on the contents of faith than on a well definable structural development. Therefore, research is also well advised to focus on the more content-revealing aspects, in the attempt to assess a person's faith development beyond Stage Four.

The question of the universality of faith could be put in the following alternative: the concept of faith is a priori universal or faith is rather related to the contents of specific religious traditions and thus nothing but particular (thus we have to relinquish the claim of universalism and be content with delineating particular developmental journeys). That this would be a too narrow alternative, becomes clear when we introduce a different way of achieving universality: universality could also be the outcome of a comparative investigation, the goal of a communicative and correlative elaboration of a commonly held conviction. Such road to universality, to be sure, rests on an assumed or hoped-for universality which GADAMER (e.g. 1960:269ff) and TRACY (1981) have put in terms of the "classic." Universality, in this second meaning, is the universality which we also have met in RICOEUR's notion of the 'conflict of interpretations.' In kinesthetic movement, the group of researchers engage in discussion and debate on how the object is to be understood best. Such debate rests on the assumption that this object is one whole object, but can be viewed from different perspectives.

Faith development theory, adopting a similar approach which is suggested by the image of the group discussion in the exhibition, could adopt the claim of universality as an *assumption* or a *hypothesis*.<sup>104</sup>

To summarize this reflection about the feature of universality of the concept of faith in two theses which attempt to capture two aspects of the universality (and call for a correlative mediation):

*The definitory features of cross-cultural universality and absoluteness/truth, for the concept of con-text-ualist faith, are not grounded in the definitory demarcation of universal faith from particular belief or religion, but universality should be seen as the hoped-for outcome of a "conflict of interpretations."* (Thesis 86)

*For the concept of con-text-ualist faith, we can assume the definitory features of generic universality and universality/total personal involvement, since 'listening' to, 'hearkening' to, or 'reading' the 'text' or the WORD as the constitutive ("operational") activities of selfhood and faith can be assumed to be generic universal and involve the total person.* (Thesis 87)

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104. Though not as a proposal for faith development *theory*, but only in regard to faith development *research*, such an approach and perspective may be what NELSON&ALESHIRE (1986:191) have in mind, when, - as will be discussed more in the chapter on research - , suggest that it would have been even more adequate, if faith development research would have, first, focused on development within the particular religious traditions and in terms of that religious tradition, and, in a second step of research, engaged in a comparison of the research results of the first step.

(d) *The Multi-Dimensionality of Faith.*

With the theoretical construction of the Aspects, FOWLER accounts for the kind of multi-dimensionality which we also find in RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective: the starting point of interpretation, a perception of a coherent whole; his notion of the 'plurivocity of meanings' which requires a kind of kinesthetic perception; the different dimensions or references. However, the con-text reference of the various aspects may indicate a way to differentiate between the dimensions and aspects of faith.

*FOWLER's heptagonal model (FOWLER is not explicit about that) displays the multi-dimensionality of references of faith to its various contents and the relation of faith to various con-texts. (Thesis 88)*

*FOWLER's model of the "Four Patterns of Interaction" prepares a conception of the multi-dimensionality of con-text-ualist faith as being in interaction, in a hermeneutical interplay of 'reading' and 'responding,' with the various con-texts. (Thesis 89)*

*In this respect, the seven Aspects in FOWLER's heptagonal model can and need to be differentiated: in regard to the content they refer to and, hence, require 'reading' and 'responding'; in that respect, the seven Aspects display a spectrum which begins, on the one end, with logical operations and includes, at the other end, the most content-loaden Aspects of "World Coherence" and "Symbolic Function." (Thesis 90)*

*The seven Aspects of 'faith,' in FOWLER's heptagonal model, can also be differentiated according to the con-texts they refer to: without the possibility to establish definite one-to-one correlations, but with the reminder that the Aspects may speak to all three dimensions, it can be said that some Aspects refer pre-eminently to one dimension, e.g. to the Other, or to the symbolic world. In this way, again, the Aspects reveal their affinity to content, display certain contents and contexts of faith. (Thesis 91)*

*The most advanced consideration of the multi-dimensionality of faith, in FOWLER's work, is presented in his "Model of the Dynamics of Adult Faith" of 1982. The other models of multi-dimensionality can be integrated into that model. (Thesis 92)*

## Chapter 9

### TOWARD A CON-TEXT-UALIST MODEL OF FAITH DEVELOPMENT

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What accounts for a person's development in faith? To ask this question in the words of NIPKOW: "Who is the Author of My Biography?" (NIPKOW 1986b). There are a variety of possible factors which could be seen as having an influence on--or "writing"--a person's biography:

- From a sociological perspective, the institutions and circumstances appear to set the determinants and conditions;
- A hermeneutical perspective, as we have seen, emphasizes the interactive activity of 'reading,' 'understanding,' and 'responding' to the 'texts' which surround us;
- From a strong perspective of action theory, the subject appears as producer of transformation or development;
- From a psychoanalytic perspective, the subject as agent is called into question, since the unconscious appears to be the most influential factor;
- A structural-developmental perspective, in a similar way, refers to the genetic development of largely pre-conscious operational structures.

I do not claim that this list is comprehensive, but it may serve to bring the variety of factors into view. It would be mistaken to view these factors one-dimensionally as mutually exclusive alternatives, but rather they are parts of a force-field of factors which, in an interplay, constitute the changes or the developmental transitions in a person's life.

A sketch of the interplay of a variety of factors is also presented in FOWLER's 1982 model, "Toward a Model of the Dynamics of Adult Faith" (FOWLER 1982d:200;1987b: 15). This model, as already presented (in Chapter 1.3.4.), integrates six components into a comprehensive figure:

- Biological and cultural time, scheduled and unscheduled marker events (A);

- The operational structures of knowing and valuing in 'faith' (B);
- The 'structuring power of the contents of faith' (C);
- The life structure (D);
- The dynamic unconscious (E);
- The force-field of our lives, the economic, political, ideological, environmental, and relational influences, and explicitly the influence of religious communities and their symbolic representation (F).

All of them are integrated into the figure as factors of the dynamics which account for an adult person's faith development.

Through such a force-field model which integrates the various dimensions into an interplay, however, the multitude of questions does not arrive at a solution, but, in face of the variety of factors, the problem becomes more complex. The problem is that of weighing the factors, and of defining the relation between them. Finally, the problem of inventing an appropriately designed research instrument becomes a complex question in respect to this multi-dimensionality.

### 9.1. Development as Multi-Dimensional Interplay of Contexts: A Hermeneutical Perspective

In the perspective of FREEMAN and ROBINSON, the multi-dimensionality, or to put it more precisely, the perspective of development as the outcome of an interplay of multiple factors and contexts, is presented as a comprehensive model for development.

ROBINSON, in his article, "Project and Prejudice: Past, Present, and Future in Adult Development" (ROBINSON 1988), presents his account of development as a processual interplay of four "vectors:"

"There are at least four major 'vectors' by and along which the development of any ability is constituted. Two of these refer specifically to the area in which the individual is engaged in productive activity, and as such are sociocultural in origin and primarily experienced as such. These are the *domain*, or the symbolic order of knowledge and processes of a particular arena of activity, and the *field*, or the social organization of the domain. Two additional vectors, while at least partially open to cultural shaping and definition, are more usually experienced as individual: cognitive development and life-span transition." (ROBINSON 1988:159)

And he goes on to explain his conviction that all of these vectors have an impact on development and that the influence of each vector cannot easily be quantified:

"Each of the four 'vectors' we described can be shown to have its own distinctive impact on development, some directly affecting the individual, some delimiting the possibilities for action. Each can be seen as an influence on development of the ability to successfully engage in productive activity. An individual must successfully negotiate the challenges presented by each of the four vectors, separately and as an ensemble, in order to continue to develop." (ROBINSON 1988:160)

Thus a *con-text-ualist* perspective comes into view which understands development as an interaction process. Not only negotiation between the 'vectors,' but a process of 'appropriation' and 'writing,' comes into view which ROBINSON suggests calling internalization:

"As individuals progress through and interact with the vectors of development, they appropriate and make personal certain aspects of them - different aspects for different vectors and different individuals. This process of internalization eventuates in an array of skills, theories, approaches, and attitudes towards the objects (tangible or intangible) with which they interact." (ROBINSON 1988:163)

The con-text-ualist perspective qualifies as a *hermeneutical* perspective. Although the dimension of competences or "skills" also has its place, what interests ROBINSON most is the interplay of those 'vectors' which he sees resulting in a certain personal "*prejudice*" - a term borrowed from GADAMER. The "prejudices" are assumed to be integrated by means of a personal "*project*" - a term taken from SARTRE - into a "*framework*" as some kind of "matrix of prejudices." What is of interest for my discussion here is the hermeneutical perspective that is expressed in the referential nature of prejudice, project, and framework. They owe their existence to the ongoing attempt to interpret one's 'world' and to 'write one's own text.'

Though his proposal emphasizes the hermeneutical and multi-perspective aspect to such an extent that it risks to lose sight of the structural dimension,<sup>105</sup> ROBINSON's hermeneutical perspective is valuable in two respects: such a 'gen-

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105. FOWLER, as in a personal comment, would view ROBINSON's perspective as "a retreat from a solid interactionism--a *dialectic* between a construing subject and the constructive contributions of 'texts'--in the direction of a psychoanalytic bias toward a more one-sided and passive process of socialization," and thus judge ROBINSON's notion of "internalization" a mystifying understanding. In response to FOWLER, I would call attention to ROBINSON's concepts of "appropriation" and "interaction" with which he wants to incorporate and reflect the *hermeneutical* tradition e.g. of GADAMER. But I admit that ROBINSON's general and multi-dimensional perspective does not present a detailed depiction of the *dialectic* involved in the *hermeneutical* interplay. Moreover, ROBINSON does not explicitly address the relation (or correlation) between the vectors--the relation between the vector 'cognitive development' and the other vectors would be of special interest for our theme--; thus I take ROBINSON's view rather as a reminder of the multi-dimensionality and the necessity of a hermeneutical perspective for an adequate understanding of a person's development.



eral view' may be regarded as an important reminder for more focussed and detailed research projects, as we find them in structural-developmental theories and their research, not to lose sight of the *con-text of an interpreted world*; this is what ROBINSON's terms of prejudice, project, and framework attempt to capture. And, in the second respect, it attempts to paint a picture which is most comprehensive in regard to a person's development and reminds us not to lose sight of the *multiple variables* which would also have to be considered; ROBINSON presents a "general view:"

"In this conception, it is the interaction and integration of all the elements that is the key to understanding development throughout the life span. Domain and field, prejudice, framework, or project cannot individually illuminate this complex process as a whole. Development is, in the last analysis, an individual process, and this conception seeks to provide a general way of understanding how an individual has arrived at a particular point in his or her own development and what development from that point on might be." (ROBINSON 1988:169)

However comprehensive and adequate such a 'general view' may be, it has not yet been developed into a more detailed research design. This is its major deficit.

FREEMAN, in his articles, "History, Narrative, and Life-Span Developmental Knowledge" (FREEMAN 1984) and "Paul Ricoeur on Interpretation. The Model of the Text and the Idea of Development" (FREEMAN 1985), suggests a more focussed, somewhat more precise idea of personal development, when he relates his ideas of development to *RICOEUR's hermeneutics*. But FREEMAN also suggests viewing a very comprehensive field:

"Perhaps most consistent with the contextualist world view, the dialectical orientation, with its emphasis on reciprocal interaction leading to the emergence and continuous change of inner and outer structures, is an apt reminder of the multiplicity of variables needed for anything approaching a thorough explication of human change." (FREEMAN 1984:11)

Thus, to put it more precisely, FREEMAN's proposal of a contextualist view points to the contexts with which we are carrying on dialogue; as mentioned already, he especially points to *three* contexts and suggests including

"not just the ongoing dialogue with ourselves ... but in addition the dialogue we have with others and with the various cultural symbols and works" (FREEMAN 1985:310).

But the focus of FREEMAN's perspective, as these articles show, is on the *self-self dialogue* as the basis of personal development. Thereby, *RICOEUR's* hermeneutical view of the interplay of text and reader is taken as a model for understanding individual development:

"we continually present ourselves to ourselves," (FREEMAN 1985:309)–

a discovery of the past which, in the process of productive imagination, allows for creation, for being not only 'readers,' but for becoming the 'authors' of our life narrative anew (comp.FREEMAN 1985: 310).

ROBINSON's and, more explicitly, FREEMAN's perspectives present a *hermeneutical perspective of human development* which is not different from the one I have presented as the summary of RICOEUR's perspective in Theses 40 and 41: The development of self-understanding is the fruit of our ongoing interpretation of the cultural environment, to interpret the 'text' of our culture, to be in interaction with the symbols and narratives which have been handed down to us. In this hermeneutical interplay, we ourselves are interpreted by the texts, by the symbols and narratives of our tradition, we as persons, including the development of our self-understanding, appear as a 'text' which is open for modification and change through interpretation. RICOEUR's explicit reference to the developmental significance of the self-self dialogue, is displayed in his application of concept of 'narrative identity' to life history. Hence, the "refiguration" of one's life story through the stories told of one's own life is RICOEUR's explicit perspective in which then the life history appears as "cloth woven of stories told" (RICOEUR 1985 1988:246).

This comprehensive view and this deep understanding of a person's development in a con-text-ualist, hermeneutical perspective is very significant for a developmental theory in general and for faith development theory in particular, since it may remind theory and research in the divisions and subdivisions of developmental theory of the larger frame of reference and may deter them from taking the part for the whole. On the other hand, such comprehensive, hermeneutical understanding encounters difficulties which need to be mentioned if we want to successfully correlate the structural-developmental perspective on faith development with the hermeneutical perspective:

How can a hermeneutical interplay like the 'refiguration' or 'receiving a self' by 'reading' the con-text, especially the stories told of one's own life, become an object of a theory which is related to empirical research?

How can this comprehensive, multi-dimensional perspective, as it is presented by RICOEUR, ROBINSON, FREEMAN, - and in FOWLER's 1982 model -, be theoretically correlated; how can it be operationalized for validation in research?

## 9.2. The Structural-Developmental Paradigm: Valuable, but Insufficient

As noted earlier, the structural-developmental paradigm suggests that cognitive, moral, and religious developments relate to each other in a hierarchy of 'necessary,' but 'not sufficient' conditions: Cognitive development, it is assumed, is the 'necessary condition' for moral development, as moral development is the 'necessary condition' for religious development. KOHLBERG suggests a hierarchical relation between the different domains (the different aspects, in terms of FOWLER's model). His theses on the relation between moral and religious development can be found in his article written with POWER, "Moral Development, Religious Thinking, and the Question of a Seventh Stage," (KOHLBERG&POWER 1981). They can be summarized in the following way: Though moral and religious thinking are two parallel domains of development (KOHLBERG&POWER 1981:336), religious thinking is *not necessary* for moral thinking, since morality is an autonomous domain (KOHLBERG&POWER 1981:344) with its own "normative rational structure" (KOHLBERG&POWER 1981:338); religious thinking, therefore, does not serve "to supply moral prescriptions" (KOHLBERG&POWER 1981:336). Religious reasoning, however, presupposes moral reasoning (KOHLBERG&POWER 1981; comp. POWER&KOHLBERG 1980:344): moral development is "necessary for" religious development (KOHLBERG&POWER 1981:336), although it is "not sufficient," since only religious reasoning with its metaphysical and speculative assumptions can resolve the "metaethical questions" (e.g. "Why be moral?") (KOHLBERG&POWER 1981:350) and thus is able "to support moral judgment and action" (KOHLBERG&POWER 1981:343).

Thus KOHLBERG proposes to construct a series of hierarchies and, all the way through, he suggests that we can and must base our analysis on the rules of structural-developmental theory as developed for the domain of *logical operations*. KOHLBERG assumes not only a 'necessary condition,' but also a temporal '*prior*' of cognitive for moral, and of moral for religious development.

If we were to adopt KOHLBERG's perspective for faith development theory or for a theory of religious development,<sup>106</sup> this would imply disregarding the con-

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106. What OSER opts for does not become precisely clear in his book, *Der Mensch. Stufen seiner religiösen Entwicklung* (OSER&GMÜNDER 1984), nor in his recent book, *Wieviel Religion braucht der Mensch?* (OSER 1988a): In the 1984 book, he seems to opt for a distinct domain for religious development with a certain autonomy which, however, can be seen as a facet of a holistic deve-

tents of faith, by and large, and not ascribing to it significance or "structuring power." For, in structural-developmental theory, the contents are seen to be insignificant for development. Hence, for faith development theory, the content would be encountered only on a secondary level, if faith development were confined to being viewed as the behind-the-time derivative of cognitive and moral development. To summarize my interpretation:

*KOHLBERG's definition of the domain of faith and its development, by means of the assumption of hierarchical relations between the developments of cognition, morality, and faith, not only sacrifices the multi-dimensionality of faith, but leads to subsume faith development under the one-dimensional structural-developmental paradigm which has been designed for cognitive development. (Thesis 93)*

Recently, POWER, in his article "Hard versus Soft Stages of Faith and Religious Reasoning" (POWER 1987), has investigated, in more detail, FOWLER's (and OSER's) research from the background of "hard"-stage structural-developmental theory. From the account of POWER's perspective, which I presented in more detail in Chapter 3, it is important here to recall that POWER concluded that faith development theory is a soft stage theory, because it accounts for

"meta-ethical reasoning and heightened self-consciousness, competencies which may presuppose but go beyond logical operations on external objects and their relations." (POWER 1987:8)

and because faith is assessed in the undifferentiated comprehensiveness of the seven Aspects of faith each of which, in truth, "has its own organizing principle" (POWER 1987:14). POWER suggests studying

"the consciously *religious* dimension of human meaning-making" (POWER 1987:24).

I agree with POWER's conclusion that

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developmental structure (OSER&GMÜNDER 1984:224ff). There, he wants to carefully depart from the hierarchical model of a series of "necessary, but not sufficient conditions" between the different domains of development (OSER&GMÜNDER 1984:225; OSER 1988a:84). Despite this option, he claims that there must not be a contradiction between the two proposals - he admits that he cannot answer this question definitely - and that there still could be a temporal or causal priority of moral development in regard to religious development. Results of a survey of 15-year-old students in a public school, presented in the 1988 book, suggest that a higher IQ results in a more rapid stage transition (OSER 1988a:84). In my perspective, KOHLBERG's hierarchical model is more operative in OSER's theory than he admits, since he designed his theory in close affinity to KOHLBERG's theory and the principles of KOHLBERG'S perspective of moral development, especially increasing reflexivity and autonomy are adopted by OSER; the subtitle to the 1988 book reads: "Erziehung und Entwicklung zur religiösen Autonomie." (OSER 1988a). A reconfirmation of this can be seen in his (thoughtless?) remark about the interchangeability of the *contents*: "Inhalte sind nicht nur austauschbar, sie werden zweitrangig im Sinne des Lernens..." (OSER 1988a:9).

"the study of faith must be done through a soft stage analysis" (POWER 1987:24)

POWER's conclusion is surprising insofar as he as one who previously advanced, together with KOHLBERG, the proposal of the "hard"-stage proposal, suggests here that faith development need to remain a "soft"-stage theory, because of its domain-specific *religious*, "meta-ethical" character. In agreement with POWER--which, to be sure, I make on grounds different from those of POWER: I would emphasize the significance of *contents* and *con-texts*--this can be summarized in the following thesis:

*Any theory of faith development will appear as a 'soft stage' theory, from the perspective of KOHLBERGian theory, (and should be proud<sup>107</sup> of it!), unless the conceptualization of faith development has fallen prey to a reduction to either cognitive or moral development. (Thesis 94)*

POWER's perspective, however, can also be read as a confession, from the part of structural-developmental theory, of the insufficiency of the structural-developmental paradigm, because the structural-developmental model, as "hard"-stage model presented by moral development theory, appears not to be applicable to adequately and fully account for the domain of faith.

DÖBERT's perspective is more radical, because he would regard not only the domain of *faith*, but even the domain of *morality*, as transcending the domain of structural operations proper. DÖBERT's view was already mentioned, in Chapter 8, because his bold analysis of the content-loadenness of the moral domain affects both moral and faith development theory's claim of faithfulness to the structural-developmental paradigm. DÖBERT not only holds that the claim of HABERMAS and of KOHLBERG to focus exclusively on structures, while neglecting the contents, is self-deceptive; he sees a systematic mis-perception and false judgment of the significance of the contents operating in structural-developmental theory and research. However, this judgment of DÖBERT does not surprise when we read that

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107. Compare SCHLEIERMACHER's great announcement in favor of the domain of religion, in demarcation from *Wissen and Tun*, from metaphysics and morality - "Metaphysik und Moral (ist) in Menge in die Religion eingedrungen, und manches, was der Religion angehört, hat sich unter einer ungeschicklichen Form in die Metaphysik oder die Moral versteckt (SCHLEIERMACHER 1799 1969:29) - which have come to dominate religion: "Sie (die Religion) entsagt hiermit, um den Besitz ihres Eigentums anzutreten, allen Ansprüchen auf irgendetwas, was jenen angehört, und gibt alles zurück, was man ihr aufgedrungen hat." (SCHLEIERMACHER 1799 1969:35). Compare also SCHLEIERMACHER's definition of 'Frömmigkeit' in Paragraph 3 of the *Glaubenslehre*: "Die Frömmigkeit, welche die Basis aller kirchlichen Gemeinschaften ausmacht, ist rein für sich betrachtet, weder ein Wissen, noch ein Tun, sondern eine Bestimmtheit des Gefühls oder des unmittelbaren Selbstbewußtseins." (SCHLEIERMACHER 1830 1960:14)

he does not believe in the existence of domain specific operations: "*Spezifisch moralische Operationen gibt es nicht!*"

In his article however, DÖBERT also deals with the content-structure relation in *development*: In respect to a conceptualization of developmental theory, DÖBERT (1986:88ff) presents the three possible definitions of the structure-content relation:

"A. *Es entwickeln sich nur die Inhalte, und die Entwicklung wäre demnach zu fassen als ein sukzessives Durchwandern eines Erfahrungsraumes oder als schrittweise Bearbeitung eines (in sozialen Rollen institutionalisierten) Bündels von Handlungsproblemen oder 'Funktionen.'*" (DÖBERT 1986:88)

Such is the perspective e.g. of FREUD or ERIKSON on ontogenetic development.

"B. *Es entwickeln sich nur die Strukturen oder Systeme von Operationen; die Inhalte, also die Wahrnehmungen und Erfahrungen, bleiben als bloß 'Gegebenes' weitgehend konstant.* Dies ist die Position der strukturalistischen Entwicklungspsychologie in der Piaget-Tradition." (DÖBERT 1986:88)

The third possibility of relating structure and content in conceptualizing a developmental theory, and the one preferred by DÖBERT, is the assumption of a development of both structures and contents at the same time:

"C. *Schließlich besteht die Möglichkeit, daß sich im Verlauf eines Entwicklungsprozesses sowohl Strukturen als auch Inhalte verändern.* Beim gegenwärtigen Stand der Forschung über die Entwicklung des moralischen Bewußtseins scheint mir dies die plausibelste Annahme zur Interpretation der vorliegenden empirischen Befunde und zur Integration der vorhandenen theoretischen Modelle zur Moralentwicklung zu sein." (DÖBERT 1986:91)

As the main reason for this thesis, DÖBERT maintains that

"*die Stadien der Entwicklung des moralischen Bewußtseins jeweils neue Elemente neuen Funktionen und neuen Koordinationsformen (Strukturen) unterwerfen.*" (DÖBERT 1986:91)

A tentative sketch of what an account of development could look like is presented by DÖBERT in the following summary statement:

"*Zusammenfassend und etwas vereinfachend könnte man nun sagen, daß Strukturen und Inhalte in der Moralentwicklung wie folgt zusammenspielen: Ich-Entwicklung erzeugt Motive und Befürfnisse, die durch Rollenübernahme erfaßt werden (Wahrnehmung der Inhalte). Wenn interpersonales Engagement hinzukommt (Motivation), werden die gegebenen Inhalte durch die Strukturen der allgemeinen operativen Intelligenz so bearbeitet, daß moralisch gehandelt wird und die Funktionen von Moral erfüllt werden.*" (DÖBERT 1986:93f)

DÖBERT's doubt in regard to the existence of domain-specific operations should at least be considered as a *possibility* that we cannot define such domain-

specific operations for the domain of faith: his thesis calls at least for *methodological doubt* in regard to such operations. Thus, informed by DÖBERT's perspective, I conclude for faith development theory: *The tension between structure and content cannot be overcome or abolished by an easy integration, since structure and content appear together, in an interrelation, and possibly develop in correlation or parallel. (As long as we cannot evidence the complementarity of both the development of structure and the development of content, we could at least assume a correlation between the two.)* (Thesis 95)

Thus the insufficiency of the structural-developmental paradigm in its consideration of the content of faith and its significance for development (its possible "structuring power") becomes obvious, but a possible solution is also indicated in regard to a more appropriate understanding of the developmental process: structures and contents develop in correlation.

### **9.3. Between Structural-Developmental Paradigm and Structuring Power of the Contents: Faith Development Theory Reconsidered**

While, on the one hand, faith development theory, viewed against the background of the "hard"-stage structural-developmental paradigm--which, in turn, has to be called into question, as we have seen, because of its insufficiency to account for the contents--, appears and must appear as a "soft"-stage theory, on the other hand, against the other background, the comprehensive depiction and the deep understanding of a person's development in a contextualist, hermeneutical perspective, faith development theory, especially in research, appears to have its focus on one dimension: the development of structures; and only in a second level, a broader, more circumspect discussion includes the interplay of these structures with the contents of faith. However, as already stated in regard to a conceptualization of faith in Chapter Eight, the implications of a more decisive move in the interpretive turn entails engaging in a discussion about the advantages and limits of the structural-developmental paradigm. When we reckon with the possibility that development in faith is also due to the interaction of 'reading' and 'responding' to the contents and contexts of faith, - the symbols, metaphors, and narratives; the context of others; and the context of one's own life narrative -, then not only the strength, but also the limitation and the insufficiency of the structural-developmental paradigm have to be taken into account. Especially in regard to the

paradigm which presents itself as the "hard"-stage model, any adherence to it without reservation has to be called into question.

Here, FOWLER's theory displays of its relative independence: The hierarchical model of relations between cognition, morality and faith, claimed in KOHLBERG's theory, is not FOWLER's model. On the contrary, the very definition of the concept of 'logic of conviction' which "transcends while including the 'logic of rational certainty'" indicates that FOWLER does not want to subsume the domain of faith under the domains of logic and morality for which the construct of structural operation has been defined and may be valid, but wants to develop a "larger frame," i.e.

"the larger frames of meaning and value we call faith." (FOWLER 1980b:156)

FOWLER's article of 1980, "Moral Stages and the Development of Faith" (FOWLER 1980b), indicates the perspective of faith development theory: With reference to the research of MISCHAY (1976), FOWLER states that

"forms of moral judgment at each stage are anchored in and supported by the larger frames of meaning and value we call faith" (FOWLER 1980b:156).

FOWLER transcends structural-developmental theory, as already stated, in that he understands 'faith' as the deepest and most comprehensive domain of human action. This finds its concretization in the assumed holistically coherent unity of all of the seven 'aspects' of 'faith' which cover a spectrum from logic through perspective-taking and morality to world coherence and symbolic function. FOWLER assumes equal significance for all of the aspects for our assessment of faith. Consistently, the coding procedure weightens all of the seven Aspects equally by taking a simple average: FOWLER and his colleagues, despite some objections, claim that

"there is no theoretical reason to assume that the aspects of faith structuring should be weighted unevenly" MOSELEY et.al. 1986:9).

This holistic notion of faith may be the expression of the claim that faith penetrates and affects all aspects of life. This also reflects FOWLER's deep concern that we could, in our concept of faith, eliminate the variety of depth structures of faith: that faith is relational; that it consists of our commitments to centers of supraordinate value and power; that images, symbols and stories play a significant role; in short: *it reflects the concern that we disregard the contents of faith.* It can be stated that with this notion of holistic multi-dimensionality and with the importance given to



the contents, which are also expressed in the concept of the "logic of conviction," faith development theory incurred the charge of being a "soft"-stage theory.

This approach to a definition of 'faith' and 'faith development' stands in implicit and explicit contrast to the structural-developmental paradigm; it defines the domain of 'faith' as a broad and comprehensive, but unique and independent domain. However, if held against the background of the multi-dimensional picture which I presented at the beginning of this chapter, and if held against FOWLER's own model of the "dynamics of adult faith" of 1982, the prime focus of faith development theory and research appears to be directed predominantly at one dimension: the development of operational structures; and only the broader, more circumspect discussion centers around the relation of these structures with the "structuring power" of the contents of faith. Thus there are good reasons for FOWLER's discussion of the "tension" between developing operational structures of faith which account for stage change, on the one hand, and "the structuring power of the contents," on the other. For this second dimension of structuring, the structuring power of contents, FOWLER also uses the term '*conversion*.' Since FOWLER defines 'conversion' as

"those sudden or gradual processes that lead to significant changes in the *contents* of faith" (FOWLER 1981a:285),

the relation between faith stage change and conversional change reflect

"the interplay of 'contents' in faith with the formally describable operations of knowing and valuing that constitute the 'structures' of faith" (FOWLER 1981a:286).

In other words: in FOWLER's writings, the theme of faith stage change and conversion is *the pre-eminent issue* in regard to which the relation of 'structure' and 'contents' in faith development theory stands to discussion.

However, the common understanding of the term 'conversion' brings with it the risk of a too narrow focus on (1) a *sudden*, (2) *once-and-for-all*, and (3) *radical* replacement of belief (content) - and, hence, the risk of an apparent contradiction to and interruption of faith stage development. Therefore, the term 'conversion' needs clarification: FOWLER (1984a:140) emphasizes that 'conversion' is an "ongoing" and "gradual" process.

A closer investigation of FOWLER's perspective on conversion, I hold, displays the interrelatedness of the structural change and content change in conversion. FOWLER (1981a:285f) suggests six theoretically possible modes of relation between conversion and stage change:

- two modes of relation which are rather a *non-relation* ("Stage change without conversional change" and "Conversional change without faith stage change");
- three modes of relation which describe a kind of *causal relation* ("Conversional change that precipitates a faith stage change," "Faith stage change that precipitates conversional change," and "Conversional change that blocks or helps one to avoid the pain of faith stage changes");
- finally, a mode of relation which is a *correlation* ("Conversional change that is correlated with, and goes hand in hand with, a structural change").

As I read FOWLER's proposal, I would suggest a different understanding of one mode of relation, "stage change without conversional change." It seems to be correct that stage transition can occur without conversional change only if conversion is understood to involve a thorough change or replacement of contents, a "significant recentering" and "conscious adoption of a new set of master stories" (FOWLER 1981a:281f). Faith stage change, however, does involve change in regard to content: though not a radical replacement, it involves *new* understanding which affects not only *perspective change*, but a *selection* change, within the variety of the specific religious tradition, when the person, in transition from one stage to another, "elaborates and reappropriates his or her patterns of commitment" (FOWLER 1981a:285). Thus I suggest adding that a new faith stage may give rise to an affinity to *different* contents or certain *different views and understandings* of the same content within one and the same religious tradition.

This leads to my conclusion: Despite the second mode of (non-)relation, "Conversional change without faith stage change," a process for which MOSELEY (1978)<sup>108</sup> suggested the terms *lateral conversion* and *intensification experience*, all other other modes of relation maintain a kind of causal or correlative relation between structure and content.

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108. "Lateral conversion is marked by changes in the psychodynamic and psychosocial dimensions of faith development and, as such, does not entail stage transition." (MOSELEY 1978:i) And: "The hypothesis guiding our study is as follows: Conversion is the restructuring of the cognitive and affective-volitional processes underlying the values and attitudes which constitute an individual's faith perspective. This process occurs along two different but interrelated levels of cognition, namely the levels of structure and of content, thereby resulting in structural and lateral types of conversion. ... Lateral conversion does not exhibit the cognitive disequilibrium necessary for stage transition. The ideological content of the religious movement is assimilated on the same genetic level as maintained prior to conversion." (MOSELEY 1978:149f)

As already stated in *Stages of Faith*, of the contents of faith which exert the structuring power on our faith orientations, "three major elements" stand out: the *centers of value*

"Whether our valuing in faith exhibits the *polytheistic, henotheistic, or radical monotheistic* pattern, the actual center or centers of value in our lives that have god value for us exert a powerful structuring on our ways of seeing and being in the world." (FOWLER 1981a:276)

the *images of power*, and the *master stories*

"(O)ur characters and faith orientations are shaped by the *master stories* that we tell ourselves and by which we interpret and respond to the events that impinge upon our lives." (FOWLER 1981a:277)

The strongest argument for my claim that faith stage change involves change of *content* is stated by FOWLER at the end of the chapter on structure and content: his understanding of "*recapitulation of previous stages*," the "reconstitution" of "images" and "stories." This recapitulation process is described by FOWLER in terms that suggest that faith development in general can be understood as *recapitulation*:

"When the recapitulative process has done its work, the person has a new foundation of inner integration from which to move decisively toward the next stage." (FOWLER 1981a:291)

This reconfirms my thesis that faith development proceeds in a correlative relation between structure and content. The claim of a *correlation* between structural development and structuring content (conversion) is probably the most we can say at present about the relation between the two; at least at present, the claim of complementarity would go too far, since it would require that we are able to describe development and transformation from *both* sides successfully.<sup>109</sup> The claim of

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109. SCHWEITZER, in his article, "Bekehrung und religiöse Entwicklung. Religionspsychologische Lebenslaufforschung zwischen autobiographischer und sozialwissenschaftlicher Konstruktion" (SCHWEITZER 1989), writes: "Kann man das von Fowler beschriebene Verhältnis von Bekehrung und Glaubensentwicklung als komplementär bezeichnen? Ein Stück weit ist dies sicher zu bejahen. Die Glaubensentwicklung wird aus der Betrachtung von Strukturen, Bekehrung auf der Ebene von Inhalten erschlossen und bestimmt. Religiöse Veränderungen im Lebenslauf werden also in sich ergänzender Weise inhaltlich und strukturell erfaßt. Aber letztlich scheint es sich für Fowler doch nicht um eine Komplementarität zu handeln, jedenfalls nicht im strengen Sinne. Fowler geht, wie die genannten sechs Beziehungsmöglichkeiten zwischen Glaubensentwicklung und Bekehrung deutlich machen, eher von einem korrelativen Zusammenhang zwischen religiöser Entwicklung und Bekehrung aus. Bekehrung und Glaubensentwicklung werden gleichsam als voneinander unabhängige Variablen ins Spiel gebracht. Eine solche Sicht setzt voraus, daß strukturelle und inhaltliche Entwicklung als voneinander getrennte Phänomene miteinander interagieren, also nicht bloß in der Betrachtung analytisch zu trennende Aspekte desselben Phänomens darstellen, die als komplementär im strengen Sinne zu bezeichnen wären. Für eine komplementäre Betrachtung müßten Veränderungen im Lebenslauf stets sowohl als Entwicklung wie als Bekehrung beschrieben und erklärt werden können. Beide Beschreibungs- und Erklärungsperspektiven müßten sich, jedenfalls prinzipiell, auf alle Veränderungen im Lebenslauf beziehen lassen." (SCHWEITZER 1989:7)

correlation, however, to which SCHWEITZER (1989:7) rightly calls attention, has the advantage that it allows a multi-dimensionality and multi-perspectivity of a person's faith transformation. This multi-dimensionality may also include additional dimensions, such as the subject as agent or the psychoanalytic perspective.

The correlation between the developing operational structures and the structuring power of the contents, however, has developed into a rather strong notion of an interrelation of both dimensions. If we take FOWLER's more recent writings into account, development and conversion are seen to have the same goal, to tend in the same direction: to align the life of the person with the Christian Story,<sup>110</sup> to bring our life in congruence with our vocation as humans:

"The Christian approach to the transformation from self-groundedness to vocational existence involves, then, the affirmation of *both* development and conversion." (FOWLER 1984a:141)

This is expressed even more decisively, when FOWLER views development as a "byproduct of faithfulness in vocation," in a section entitled "Co-Presence and Ongoing Conversion in the Congregation" in *Faith Development and Pastoral Care* (FOWLER 1987a:95).

FOWLER's proposal of a correlation of the faith stages with different root metaphors, in his article, "Pluralism, Particularity, and Paideia" (FOWLER 1985c), indicates furthermore a tendency to account for the significance of contents in regard to development in faith. For root metaphors represent a person's world view, his or her referred-to-world as it is determined or influenced by a certain generalizable 'view' which is expressed in form of a metaphorical image.

It is interesting that FOWLER's correlation of faith stages and root metaphors leads up to Stage Four and then seems to open up into a spectrum of different root metaphors: Stage One, Intuitive-Projective Faith, is correlated with the root metaphor of *power*; Stage Two, Mythic-Literal Faith, with *mechanism*; Stage Three, Synthetic-Conventional Faith, with *relationship* (FOWLER 1985c:302); on Stage Four, Individual-Reflective Faith, the root metaphor of *system* comes into view (FOWLER 1985c:303). The root metaphor of *system*, however, FOWLER explains, "is really itself an abstraction" of three other root metaphors: *organism*,

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110. The view of an interplay, or interpenetration of our story with the Christian Story (FOWLER 1984a) presents an answer to IVY's critique of FOWLER's separation of person and story (IVY 1985:67). As I understand IVY, his concern is to bring story and the person's faith closer together which, in faith development theory are seen to be separated in two domains: the person, on the one hand, and the external symbolic world, on the other.

*contract*, and *covenant*. Thus, it appears that development beyond Stage Four, development into Stage Five and Six, involves *conversion from the root metaphors of contract to that of covenant*.

The 'development' of this root metaphor can be sketched, following FOWLER, in this way: 'Covenant' has "its roots in the earliest strata of faith," *Primal Faith*, (FOWLER 1985c:304), but can--and hopefully does--"go all the way" (FOWLER 1985c:305). It is important to nurture this kind of 'world view' as much as possible. The prevalence of other root metaphors as e.g. 'mechanism' and 'system' in the course of a person's development imply that the transformation to the root metaphor of 'covenant' is the '*return*' to this faithful relation to the world and to the Creator. And this (returning) transformation involves a fundamental change of *contents*: the contents of the symbolic world, a change of narratives, a change of metaphors; this transformation thus involves, in short, *conversion*. To appropriate the metaphor of covenant--or e.g. the metaphor of the Kingdom on Stage Six, (FOWLER 1981a:204ff)--implies not only 'knowing about' but also *appropriating* this symbolic content.

The importance of content is emphasized again, to add another argument, when we speak of faith communities as *nurture* for faith. FOWLER has given the idea of *nurture* --which leads up to and prepares this ultimate transition to covenant and the Kingdom of God--increasing attention: In *Stage of Faith*, the notion of the "Faith Sponsorship" of religious communities has been developed (FOWLER 1981a:294); the article, "Pluralism, Particularity, and Paideia," calls attention to the necessity of "nurturing basic trust" in family and education (FOWLER 1985c:305ff); *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*, emphasizes the "awakening," "forming," and "sustaining" significance of communities for our "vocational existence" (FOWLER 1984a:114ff); *Faith Development and Pastoral Care*, very strongly, presents the vision that congregations are "ecologies" leading persons "in ongoing growth of faithful responsiveness to the call of God to partnership" (FOWLER 1987a:98). This idea of nurture displays the significance of content: of the stories, and of symbolic representations for the transformation in faith.

#### 9.4. Faith Development - A Con-text-ualist Model

##### 9.4.1. Faith Development and the Structuring Power of the Con-texts

My understanding of faith development which I view as an advancement of FOWLER's theory, is informed by the hermeneutical perspective which I presented in the first section of this chapter. The idea of development illuminated by RICOEUR's hermeneutic proposes a dialogical or con-text-ualist perspective which takes the model of the *text* as paradigm. The dialogue with the *text*, however, has the productive feature of being a *creative* dialogue. Here, the idea of development comes into view. Development consists in a series of creative re-constructions. The dialogical perspective of development implies the idea that these creative re-constructions are due to the kind of objectifications which like a text puts the self in the position of a reader who, in dialogue with the text, creates new meaning, encounters new possibilities of existence. Reading or listening, as we learn from RICOEUR, are therefore the attitudes most appropriate for this perspective of development.

In reading or listening, the creative function of the 'text' has an impact which elicits or lures us out of our individual 'castle.' *Decentration*,<sup>111</sup> the decentering impact of the 'texts,' comes into play. And this decentration must have a developmental significance, something must have happened "along the way" of development, if, finally (and hopefully), we may arrive at the state of affairs where

"the self is no longer the prime reference point from which the knowing and valuing of faith are carried out." (FOWLER 1987a:75)

Here I will present, what I understand as the con-text-ualist concept of faith development. In slight difference to the models of multi-dimensionality of factors and 'vectors' presented, my definition is focused more on the duality of structure and content; the content, however, unfolds in three dimensions. This definition, it seems to me, is more convenient in regard to a correlative discussion with faith development theory. In the condensed form of a thesis, I present a definition:

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111. This notion of decentration, as we have seen, is in sharp contrast to HABERMAS' notion of decentration from the life-world. It indicates the opposite direction, in FOWLER's words, "figure and ground are reversed" (FOWLER 1987a:75). Comp. also FOWLER 1981a:185; 1984a:68-71; 1980a:31.

*Faith development is the sequence of a person's reconstructive transformations in faith*

*Due to developing operational competences (structures) and*

*Due to the decentering interaction with the contents and con-texts of faith:*

*the con-text of symbols, metaphors, and narratives;*

*the con-text of others;*

*the con-text of one's own life narrative. (Thesis 96)*

This con-text-ualist model of faith development, designed in light of RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective, presents and emphasizes one possible answer to the question, "Who is the author of my biography?" The individual person her- or himself, in his or her interaction with the con-texts of her or his life and inspired by this interaction of 'reading' and 'responding,' appears as author of his or her life narrative. Thus, the question, "Who is the author?" elicits a *double* answer: it is the 'text' and it is the 'individual person.' RICOEUR's terms of 'reader' and 'author' or 'writer,' besides putting strong emphasis on the 'text' and the con-text, also bring the significant role of the subject into play.

In explication of this definition of con-text-ualist faith, I want to refer to the three dimensions, or three 'texts' we are in 'decentering' interaction:

The *interaction with others*, to begin with, is the dimension which is the most fully developed in faith development theory. The majority of the Aspects refer to the other: they account for an individual's responsiveness to the perspective of the other; for the right of the other; for the (expanding) circle of those who count; for the possible authority of the other. The definition of faith as relational (FOWLER 1981a: 16ff) takes account of the impact of the other person--especially those who primarily take care of one--for the developing faith. Increasing significance of the other person explicitly (re-)emerges at the higher stages as openness for and appreciation of the perspective of the stranger, the other who is not of one's own faith (FOWLER 1981a:185;198; 1987a:73). This notion of the other as a kind of 'text' which or whom, by reading or listening, we engage in dialogue with needs, I think, to be given special attention if we want to move toward an understanding of development as informed by the responsiveness to the other.

In regard to the *interaction with the cultural works*, RICOEUR's notion that a person's self-understanding is constituted by means of interaction with the 'text' of the world out there, especially the cultural symbols is significant. The con-text-ualist model of faith thus takes RICOEUR's conviction of the referential dimension, the "reference-to-a-world" into account and attempts to pay attention to his notion of the "long detour of the signs of humanity deposited in cultural works" (RICOEUR

1975f:143). The con-text-ualist model incorporates RICOEUR's emphasis on the "recollection of the original meaning" and the 'gift' of the symbol in 'second naïveté' and his consistent definition of assimilation as "assimilation to" the symbol. Most importantly, the definition of faith as responsiveness in the con-text-ualist model rests on RICOEUR's conviction that "listening" is the ground of faith.

The *interaction with ourselves*, the structuring power of the self-self context, is such an important notion that I will deal with it in a separate section:

#### 9.4.2. *Faith Development and the Structuring Power of the Self-Self Con-text*

Narrative has a special relation for faith development in that it has a kind of double significance: faith is constituted by narrative; and faith in itself is a narrative, it has an "intratextual consistency" (RICOEUR 1977:272). In an autobiographical perspective, both narratives are interrelated. Development could possibly be the outcome of the dialogue with our own narrative, if it is true that 'creation' means that "we continually represent ourselves to ourselves." (FREEMAN 1985:309). And RICOEUR's theory of metaphor implies that this creativity is comparable to the impact of understanding a metaphor which involves "discovery of what was only implicit in the past" and "creation," "the synthetic activity of bringing together the old and the new in a work of productive imagining" (FREEMAN 1985:310). The dialogue with our own life history, theretofore, has impact on development which displays a narrative structure, an 'intratextual and intertextual consistency'<sup>112</sup>

SCHWEITZER, in his book, *Lebensgeschichte und Religion*, suggests defining religious development as "lebensgeschichtliche Veränderung" (change or transformation in life history) which we derive, in the first place, from autobiographical material (SCHWEITZER 1987:32;173). Such preference for a - in comparison to the structural-developmental or psychoanalytical definitions - less precise ("unschärfere") definition, as he confirms, is due to the concern that we should not risk precluding essential aspects of religious development. Respectively, NIPKOW's approach to faith development theory suggests integrating the faith development perspective into the comprehensive framework of "Lebenslauf," "Lebensge-

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112. RICOEUR claims that an appropriate psychoanalytical explanation must be consistent with the criteria of "intratextual consistency" and "intertextual consistency" (RICOEUR 1977:272)



schichte" (NIPKOW 1982:47ff; 1986b; 1987a; 1987b), but in an even more comprehensive 'framework' when he also includes the question: "Who is the Author of My Biography?" (NIPKOW 1986b).

In such a perspective on development in terms of autobiography, life-cycle, or life history, change appears as interplay of multiple vectors. Thus, in respect to the faith development perspective, it is brought to our attention once more that the two aspects: 'change of structure' and 'change of content, conversion,' are intertwined processes. The inclusion of *conversion*, of the contents and their structuring power, however, also leads to a new understanding and a new weighing of the role of the *subject* in faith development: agency and initiative of the *subject* are emphasized more strongly, when we speak of "recapitulation," "elaboration and reappropriation," "conscious adoption" etc.. In the terms suggested in RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective, we could speak of a stronger emphasis not only on 'reading' of the previous stages' contents, but also on 'writing,' on writing a new chapter of one's own life. In the perspective of faith development which is illuminated by the term *conversion* the authorship of the person him- or herself comes into focus.

In his already mentioned article, "Bekehrung und religiöse Entwicklung" (SCHWEITZER 1989), SCHWEITZER suggests both an extension of theory and research on autobiography to include a developmental perspective and an extension of developmental theory and research to include the perspective of autobiographical construction.<sup>113</sup> Thereby, he wants to propose to re-integrate the "lost dimension," the agency of the person as *author* of his or her life history, into the psychological perspective on human development (SCHWEITZER 1989:10).

The scientific perspective on autobiography needs to include a developmental perspective: In reference to the aspect "Form of World Coherence" in faith development research, SCHWEITZER suggests that, corresponding to the competence to integrate the parts and episodes of the 'world,' the ability to perceive a kind of coherence in one's life history is also stage-specific. On the other hand, the developmental theories need to include a perspective of the individual as *author* of her or his life history. Otherwise, the account of human development loses an important dimension and life history appears to be 'written' by the 'author' of the

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113. "Anders gesagt, geht es mir um eine entwicklungspsychologische Erweiterung der Autobiographieforschung. Umgekehrt gibt die Frage nach Bekehrung und religiöser Entwicklung aber auch Anlaß, die religionspsychologische Diskussion um den Aspekt der autobiographischen Konstruktion zu erweitern." (SCHWEITZER 1989:3)

hidden and unconscious depth structures which are the focus of structural-developmental theories (or of psychoanalysis):

"Die religionspsychologische Lebenslaufforschung hat die Frage der Konstruktion von Autobiographie noch kaum beachtet. Als Autor von Lebensgeschichten fungiert gleichsam die Religionspsychologie selbst, nicht aber der einzelne Mensch, dessen Lebenslauf sie untersucht und beschreibt. Strukturalismus und Psychoanalyse kommen dabei zu einer parallelen Konzentration auf die gleichsam hinter dem bewußten Subjekt liegenden Tiefenstrukturen und die dem Bewußtsein entzogenen Prozesse im Unbewußten." (SCHWEITZER 1989:13)

For an adequate account of religious development and of conversion, SCHWEITZER claims, structural-developmental theory (and the psychology of religion in general) needs to adopt and integrate the perspective of *the individual as author of life history*.

A hermeneutical perspective, as suggested in RICOEUR's thought, strongly supports such an understanding: life history is perceived, as we have seen, as the "refiguration" of the story of one's life by "the truthful and fictive stories a subject tells about himself or herself" (RICOEUR 1985 1988:246). The subject thus is seen as "a reader and the writer of its own life" (RICOEUR 1985 1988:246).

The perspective on faith development which focuses on the biographical, the life-cycle, or life history dimension, and hence brings the role of the subject as agent or producer of her or his faith development in the foreground can be summarized as in the following thesis: *Faith development is the sequence of a person's reconstructive transformations in faith which is due not only to developing operational structures, and not only to the development of contents, but also to the encounter with, and reflection on, the 'text' of one's life history.* (Thesis 97).

#### **9.4.3. Contours and Dimensions of Further Developments**

The reconsideration of faith development theory, in the light of a hermeneutical perspective as in the previous section, also has implications in regard to further advancements of the conceptualization of faith development. To investigate them, further research is needed. However, there are certain suggestions which result from the perspective I have developed so far.

(a) *The Concept of Domain-Specific Operations*

Further research in faith development theory is needed to revise the concept of 'operation' as it regards the conceptualization of development. The concept of domain-specific 'faith operations' needs to be clarified in regard to the relation of the development of the (content-irrelevant) 'logic of rational certainty' and the development of the (content-based) activities of the 'logic of conviction:' valuing, committing, meaning-making. In a thesis: *The concept of domain-specific 'faith operations' needs to be clarified in order to define more precisely the consistency with, and necessary difference to, the concept of 'cognitive operation.'* (Thesis 98)

Thereby, the following question needs to be addressed: Can we speak of a development "beyond formal operations" at all<sup>114</sup>? Is development beyond Stage Four more influenced by change in content? MOSELEY's suggestion that development to stages five and six is rather a conversion<sup>115</sup> has to be discussed in light of the work that has been done on dialectical reasoning.<sup>116</sup>

(b) *The Significance of the Symbolic Content of Faith*

The reformulation of the Aspects in the terms of responsiveness, as suggested in the previous chapter, also has implications for a conceptualization of development in faith, as we have seen in this chapter. The developmental significance of the contents, of symbols, metaphors, and narratives, which is captured by FOWLER's notion of the "powerful transforming potential" of the 'logic of conviction,' therefore, should be integrated into the conceptual framework of faith development theory. Probably we do not need an increase in the number of Aspects, or another set of aspects, to take these contents into account, but rather the reformulation in terms of responsiveness already brings the referentiality of faith into view. This is how I understand FOWLER's remark about Aspect G:

"Much work remains to be done with Aspect G, 'Symbolic Functioning.' ... In this aspect, particularly, the dynamics of a logic of conviction must be seen as operative with powerful transforming

114. Comp. KRAMER 1983; COMMONS&RICHARDS&ARMON 1984; NIPKOW 1988:96!

115. "I suggest that conversion is necessary to move to stages five and six. Moreover, it seems to me that the function of 'dialectical thinking'--structural advancement beyond formal operational thinking--could be explained in terms of the sublation of intellectual, moral, and religious conversions within a single consciousness. The tensional and paradoxical character of stage five may very well be indicative of the sublation of rational, moral and religious conversions; hence the open-endedness of meaning-making and the dialogical character of stage five. Stage five sublates the intellectual biases of stage four and affirms a pluralistic view of truth. Stage five sublates the moralism of stage four and affirms a multi-perspectival pursuit of all values." (MOSELEY 1984:156)

116. E.g. BASSECHES 1984a;1984b; BUSS 1979; COMMON&RICHARDS&ARMON 1984; KRAMER 1983; REESE 1982; RIEGEL 1975a;1956b;1979; SARDELLO 1976b; TOLMAN 1983;

potential for the orientation and functioning of the total psyche. The theoretical and empirical engagement with this aspect at present constitutes one of the most vital yet difficult growing edges of this project." (FOWLER 1980a:37)

A possible first step in investigating and illuminating the significance of the contents could be the conceptualization and pilot testing of sets of stage-specific contents or issues. This could lead one to viewing the developmental journey "from the other side," from the side of the contents. This proposal, finally, would test the following hypothesis: *Since, in faith development, structures and contents change, in correlative parallel, it would be equally appropriate to sketch the sequence of development not only as an outcome of the development of operations, but also as due to the "structuring power of the contents of faith."* (Thesis 99)

### (c) *Faith Development and Life Narrative*

Two modes of relation between faith development and life narrative call for further research, in order to move toward a developmental theory of faith that takes the narrative identity, the intratextual consistency of a person's development into account: (1) the perspective on life history as it is affected and influenced by the faith stage;<sup>117</sup> (2) the biography and life review, the significance of one's own life narrative, as it affects development.

The following hypotheses could be tested: *The reconstruction of a person's life history depends on his or her developmental stage of faith, it is stage specific.* (Thesis 100) *The life history, especially crises and peak experiences effect faith transformation in a special way, and lead to a refiguration of the life narrative.* (Thesis 101)

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117. SCHWEITZER's proposal of stage specific reconstruction of the life narrative could be a guide: "Betrachten wir diese Entwicklungsstufen der 'Form des Weltzusammenhangs' nun unter dem Aspekt der Konstruktion von Lebensgeschichte, so ist anzunehmen, daß die jeweilige Form dieser Konstruktion tatsächlich entwicklungsbedingten Voraussetzungen unterliegt. Über das episodische oder dramatische Erzählen einzelner Geschichten hinaus wird eine Lebensgeschichte als systematische Perspektive wohl erst mit dem Erreichen der synthetisch-konventionellen Stufe möglich. In einem individuell-persönlichen Sinne dürfte sie vor der individuierend-reflektierenden Stufe nicht anzutreffen sein." (SCHWEITZER 1989:12)

## Chapter 10

### TOWARD A CON-TEXT-UALIST MODEL OF FAITH DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

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In this last chapter, I will take up the questions which proposed themselves in our reflections on faith development *theory* and ask these questions in regard to faith development *research*: How can faith development research account for the "structuring power of the contents of faith"? How can faith development research account for the narrative structure of a person's faith history? Implications from RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective may again help us to formulate an answer. The concern to carry the implications of the hermeneutical turn for faith development theory further has taken on concrete form in the proposal for a con-text-ualist model of faith and faith development. Now, finally, we will investigate the domain of research in faith development, since from a con-text-ualist model of faith development research we may expect a better means for consideration of both *symbolic-narrative contents and con-texts* of faith and *life history*.

As we have seen in our analysis of faith development research, life history is not evaluated for the purpose of obtaining direct information in the evaluating procedure, but is merely kept in mind so that it can be used on an optional basis to enrich the coding. This appears the more understandable, as we have reason to assume that research would need to depart from the procedure of structural-developmental analysis, if a consideration of the life history were to become a major object of research.

The obstacles for faith development research in regard to a thorough consideration of life history are due to the principles of structural-development research, which is designed to investigate the present competence of a person in performing a structural operation, e.g. of logical or moral reasoning - or of the 'logic of conviction.' The analytical instruments which aim at the reconstruction of

operations are not meant to account for the significance of the contents or contexts - to account for their decentering impact, to use RICOEUR's terms; they are not designed to illuminate the diachronic character, the time structure which NIPKOW (1986b:31) is concerned with, as we will see. The diachronic structure which is provided by the theory and which the researcher has in mind only comes into play in a second reflection. In this structural-developmental paradigm, then, the construction of what appears of the life history of the respondent, is a reconstruction, more precisely: an *extrinsic* reconstruction.

When we look at faith development research from the angle of a contextualist model, from a definition of faith as responsiveness which suggests illuminating, in faith and faith development, the "structuring power of the contents" and contexts and, as well, the transformations in light of the 'text' of life history, then the need for a refinement of faith development research becomes obvious. How can research in faith development be designed to illuminate not only operations, but to illuminate *contents*, *con-texts*, and *responsiveness* as well?

The relation between explanation and understanding can serve to illuminate the two sides in faith development theory and in faith development research. Here, RICOEUR's proposal for social scientific methodology which I already presented in Chapter Seven may indicate a way: RICOEUR's proposal which introduces a hermeneutical perspective and takes the 'text' as its basic model presents a better solution, a "fresh approach," to the dilemma of explanation and understanding. Therefore, I propose: *For the reflection on faith development research, it is adequate to adopt RICOEUR's perspective of the hermeneutical circle as dialectical relation between explanation and understanding.* (Thesis 102)

The relation between explanation and understanding, in RICOEUR's perspective, is a *dialectical* relation. Both sides must not be played off against each other. They belong together, distinguishable but dialectically interrelated. Their dialectical relation, according to RICOEUR, constitutes a hermeneutical circle in which two methods of reading play an equally important role: the first method of reading starts with understanding and seeks explanation; the second method of reading starts with explanation and seeks to arrive at understanding.

What does the dialectic of explanation and understanding mean for the interpretation of faith development theory? The relation between explanation and understanding can serve to illuminate the two sides in faith development theory and in faith development research, structural-developmental *explanation* of faith development and *understanding* the con-text-uality and responsiveness of faith and faith development.

In my analysis of faith development theory and research, however, it became clear that presently the two sides are weighted unevenly. In respect to the research procedure, this imbalance appears as follows:

*Faith development research proceeds, in part, in accordance with RICOEUR's first method of reading, from understanding to explanation; however, this method of reading is only of marginal importance, since coding immediately and predominantly engages in the reconstruction "in terms of structural-developmental theory," hence in explanation. RICOEUR's second method of reading, from explanation to understanding, is more important to faith development research. (Thesis 103)*

On the other hand, the faith development interview, as especially the inclusion of the 'Life Tapestry Exercise' shows, provides a most appropriate instrument of an interpretive approach which starts with understanding. This fact leads me to propose that:

*The "contextual richness," the variety and depth of contents which the research instrument elicits need to be taken into account also in the evaluation procedure, in order to arrive at an adequate understanding of the interplay of structures and contents, to allow for an understanding of the developing structures as well as of the "structuring power of the contents." (Thesis 104)*

When I emphasize the aspect of a hermeneutical perspective, in order to bring both dimensions into balance, when I suggest giving more weight to understanding, which I think is necessary, it does not at all mean that I propose disregarding the importance of the other aspect, the aspect of explanation. This would be inconsistent with RICOEUR's proposal.<sup>118</sup> It does not mean dispensing with the explanatory power of structural-developmental theory and research, if the hermeneutical perspective is given more weight. There is a necessity for and legitimacy of explanation in faith development research. Therefore, I will start with RICOEUR's second method of reading and ask about its implication for faith development research.

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118. We encounter RICOEUR's strong emphasis on the importance of explanation, in his inquiry into psychoanalysis, in which he explicitly justified the work of explanation as our attempt to come to terms with the unconscious and uncontrollable.

### 10.1. From Explanation to Understanding: Faith Development Research in the Interpretive Turn

Research in faith development would lose an important means of access to a person's developmental trajectory, if it were to abandon *explanation*. It is important to recall that, in RICOEUR's proposal of social scientific understanding, the point of departure for the second method of reading, *explanation*, has its own justification and legitimacy as well. In faith development research as it is presented in the *Manual for Faith Developmental Research*, this explanatory method is the primary approach to a person's development in faith. It consists in the "reconstruction of the responses in terms of structural-developmental theory." The focal methodological step, in faith development research, toward explanation consists in the extrinsic reconstruction of the transcribed interview responses.

With its explanatory method, faith development research stands in the methodological tradition of structural-developmental theories, especially that of moral development research. And it can be argued that we also find, in faith development theory, a similar incorporation of the interpretive turn, as it is adopted by KOHLBERGian research methodology. However, we can discern some important advantages and improvements in faith development research which mark a difference to moral development research.

First, however, we should note the continuity and agreement: Faith development theory shares a certain kind of an interpretive approach with KOHLBERG's version of structural-developmental research. Thus *explanation*, does not mean here the kind of objectivistic explanation which is the expectation of positivistic methodology: verifiable knowledge e.g. by quantitative proof.

KOHLBERG claims, as stated in chapter 3, that moral development research lies in the interpretive vein, in that it

"... rests on the communicative stance of an interpreter, not on the stance of someone trying to classify and predict behavior as distinct from meaning." (KOHLBERG&KAUFFMAN 1987:40)

This can be stated for both faith development research and moral development research in regard to their earlier and more parallel research procedures: structural-developmental explanation proceeds in a rather *intuitive* approach to the interview text and a rather intuitive scoring method: It depends very much on the intuition of the coder to arrive at an adequate understanding and justifiable reconstruction of the responses. Thus the method of observation, in KOHLBERG's words, "rests on the communicative stance of an interpreter."



If nevertheless the goal is the acquisition of verifiable knowledge, research has to "employ an objective and reliable method of observation." But all that the coding procedure of the earlier moral development research and faith development research offer up to the present is a sample of responses which, during the development of the research method, has been revealed to correspond most exactly with the theoretical description of that stage. The coder's task is to find a justifiable *match*. Reliability of such reconstructive observation and explanation requires not only some acquaintance with theory and research procedure, but in addition the coding procedure must be repeated by a second person, in order to allow a test of the interrater reliability. To speak of *objectivity*, however, would be an overestimation of this intuitive and interpretive reconstruction.

Thus the other point of agreement between faith development research and moral development research comes into play: the structural-developmental reconstruction which is precisely described in the *Manual* as "reconstruction in terms of structural-developmental theory." Here, as I stated above, research in both moral development research and faith development research proceed from the interpretive approach to a method of reading in which an extrinsic theoretical framework of explanation is applied. Therefore I conclude:

*Faith development research, especially the coding procedure, follows RICOEUR's second method of reading, from explanation to understanding: its primary focus is on structure and its evaluation method is structural-developmental reconstruction which, by instruction, has to disregard content. (Thesis 105)*

Second, the difference should be pointed out: faith development research has pursued a remarkably different course in the further development of research procedure and the research instrument.

The advancement of the moral development research instrument consists in the development of a standard scoring technique; it involves a progressive separation of structure from content (KOHLBERG&KAUFFMAN 1987:37) and thus, as KOHLBERG states, it "reflects a change from a view of interpretation as an art to a view of interpretation as a science" (KOHLBERG&KAUFFMAN 1987:40).

The progress from an intuitive scoring method to a standard scoring technique of moral development research, KOHLBERG claims, has not affected the interpretive character of the research method, it does not mean relinquishment of the interpretive approach. However, I hold, it appears as progress in the attempt to gain verifiable knowledge; the search for objectivity in structural-developmental explanation appears to be the motivating interest.

Thus moral development research seems to have developed in the opposite direction as that in which we see faith development research method moving: faith development research has consistently maintained the open-ended interview; it remained consistent in the consideration of the multi-dimensionality of the Aspects; and the now published *Manual for Faith Development Research* appears as a rather small sample of stage descriptions, if compared with the two-volume *The Measurement of Moral Judgment*. Especially the recent inclusion of the 'Life Tapestry Exercise' indicates a difference: the life narrative of the interviewee seems to be of special importance for faith development research, even if it has not become part of the evaluation procedure proper, since it is not coded. However, this may be indicative of faith development theory's progress in the direction in which the interpretive turn is tending.

Thus faith development theory and research appears to imply a concept of faith and faith development which is deeper and includes more dimensions and features than the structural-developmental approach of explanatory reconstruction is able to capture. Consistently neither the open interview format, nor the more intuitive interpretive approach in the evaluation procedure, could be modelled into a more standardized research technique. When I suggest adjusting faith development research more to an interpretive approach, I not only suggest that we realize the implications of the redefinition of faith in terms of responsiveness - as I will argue below - but it also seems feasible within the framework of present faith development theory, to establish a research procedure which is consistent with the broad and multi-dimensional concept of faith and faith development.

If the notion of a "structuring power" inherent in the contents of faith is to become more than a theoretical affirmation, I think, it would be appropriate to adopt more of a hermeneutical approach in faith development research. This may become clear when we take the implications of RICOEUR's proposal for methodology into account. But also when we turn our attention to RABINOW and SULLIVAN, the authors who coined the term "interpretive turn" and whose understanding, I argue, suggests an interpretive refinement of methodology.

RABINOW and SULLIVAN give a definition of the interpretive turn:

"The interpretive turn refocuses attention on the concrete varieties of cultural meaning, in their particularity and complex texture, but without falling into the traps of historicism or cultural relativism in their classical forms. For the human sciences both the object of investigation - the web of language, symbol, and institutions that constitutes signification - and the tools by which investigation is carried out share inescapably the same pervasive context that is the human world." (RABINOW&SULLIVAN 1979:4).

Social scientific method, to reiterate what RABINOW and SULLIVAN have said, needs to focus on "the concrete varieties of cultural meaning," on "particularity," and on the "complex texture" of reality. This is what the interpretive turn wants to illuminate. This reflects the theme of the multi-dimensionality, the contextual richness, and the plurivocity of meanings. And these are the features of our 'world' which leads RICOEUR to favor the hermeneutical approach of *Auslegung*, of attempting to understand.

Further, as the second sentence of this quote indicates, the interpretive turn implies not only a different view of the object of research, but also of the research tool: The research tool cannot be regarded and must not be designed as an objectifying explanatory device as in the natural sciences, but rather it is embedded in "the same pervasive context that is the human world."

RABINOW and SULLIVAN's proposal suggests recalling and emphasizing HABERMAS's acceptance of the interpretive turn, when he parallels social scientific interpretation to text interpretation. HABERMAS' notion of the *communicative* character of the interpretive approach and the *multi-* (i.e. *three-*) *dimensionality* of interpretive questions may serve as an important point of departure for any social scientific methodology which adopts a hermeneutical perspective. Thus HABERMAS' perspective leads us well into the interpretive approach - despite the subsequent limitation of the interpretive approach to his proposal of rational reconstruction.

In his article, "Interpretive Social Science vs. Hermeneuticism," which has been influential for KOHLBERG's theory, HABERMAS explains the higher sensitivity which is inherent in the hermeneutical attitude by alluding to the proceedings of text interpretation, as the passage which I already quoted in Chapter Three<sup>119</sup> indicates. In order to arrive at an adequate understanding of an utterance, we need to ask more questions. This, I think, implies for the research procedure the suggestion to enlarge the number of variables, to take into account the three dimensions inherent in speech: (a) the expressive dimension; (b) the propositional dimension; and (c) the interpersonal or regulative dimension. This means that the "object" of our inquiry is an author's utterance of *his/ her personal point of view about something* in the world *in communication with* another member of the same speech community.

The hermeneutical turn thus implies, as stated already in Chapter Three, that we leave the standpoint of the objective observer and take on the role of the inter-

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119. See Chapter 3.2.!

preting participant in communication. The question which HABERMAS asks in the context of this proposal of communicative interpretation may be indicative of how far away the interpretive turn is from an objectifying approach: HABERMAS asks whether it is still possible to gain rational, scientific knowledge, after we have given up the objective position of the observer. Hermeneutics, it seems, by suggesting nothing more than to take into account the three dimensions inherent in a speech act, has shaken objective, verifiable knowledge acquisition to such an extent that we have to doubt the possibility of objective knowledge.

In light of this understanding of the interpretive turn, which is based on the analysis of the three dimensions of the speech act, HABERMAS' resort to rational reconstruction appears rather as a short-cut.

If we take each of these dimensions in which an utterance claims validity seriously, we move toward what I understand to be a con-text-ualist idea of understanding: The expressive dimension of the interpretive inquiry may reveal feelings and wants of an individual depth (which e.g. we attempt to deal with in psychoanalysis) and the expressive dimension also may be the point at which life history and its impact may become visible. The propositional dimension is the dimension which RICOEUR also called the 'reference-to-a-world.' This is the dimension in which the content reference, the 'world view,' in propositional or in symbolic-narrative form is expressed. The interpersonal dimension, finally, brings the reference to the other person, and also to the Other as the significant other person, into view. Hence the con-text reference of a text, in our case, of an interview response, is emphasized, when we maintain these three dimensions.

From RICOEUR's proposal for social scientific methodology, we derive the proposal to focus the referentiality of the text especially on the dimension of 'reference-to-a-world.' RICOEUR arrives at the notion of content referentiality in the movement of the hermeneutical circle, when he suggests that we proceed from explanation to understanding. Structural analysis or any other kind of rather clear-cut explanatory procedure needs to follow the hermeneutical circle, which will lead toward *understanding*, toward an increasing commitment to an interpretive approach. In RICOEUR's words, we need to proceed from 'surface semantics' to an approach of 'depth semantics.' Certainly, the structural-developmental reconstruction is more than a structural analysis of 'surface' structures, - it is the analysis of underlying structures of faith; however, the structural-developmental reconstruction attends to the 'how' of a person's faith instead and does not illuminate the 'what,' the reference inherent in the response. There is still the possibility of a 'deeper' understanding.

*Faith development research, in proceeding from explanation toward understanding, would need to engage in 'depth semantics.' In 'depth semantics,' the 'referred-to world' comes into view; the aspect of content in faith is given consideration. (Thesis 106)*

When RICOEUR's proposal reveals itself as being an appropriate proposal for faith development research as well, it would be helpful, if we were to attempt to incorporate what RICOEUR calls 'depth semantics,' into the faith development research instrument. This means, in the first place, consideration of aspects of content:

*Faith development research would need to focus not exclusively on the structures and attempt to reconstruct the responses only "in terms of structural-developmental theory," but to consider the contents, in order to understand the interplay of structure and content. (Thesis 107)*

This proposal to consider the aspects of content in the responses of the faith development interview could also take up the thread of the research procedure in an earlier stage of faith development research. It could be seen as recalling what has receded into the background, but has been debated, in earlier stages of faith development theory. In 1975, FOWLER wrote:

"There ... exists some correlation between structural stages and the possibility of grasping or being grasped by particular beliefs, ritual practices, and socio-ethical imperatives. Certain types of beliefs, symbols, and ritual practices may be fairly stage-specific." (FOWLER 1975b:5)

And structures have the advantage that they display greater *constancy*. This fact has had the consequence for the design of faith development research that it focussed its interest on the *structures* of 'faith:'

"While beliefs and practices may vary greatly, there is evidence that the structural patterns of faith-knowing show constancies which may not be so variable with respect to form or the sequence of development within individuals." (FOWLER 1975b:5)

Thus, in the history of faith development research, we find some support for the assumption that not only the structural dimension of faith, but also the contents may develop and transform in the stage sequence; that, therefore, certain contents may also be indicative of a faith stage. From this notion of the stage-specificity of certain contents, it appears as no large step to imagine that these contents may also have an impact on the transformation of faith, may be significant and account for development of faith itself.

## 10.2. A Further Step Toward Understanding: Accounting for Contextual Richness, and Responsiveness

A con-text-ualist model of faith and faith development implies an interpretive approach. When it makes any sense to define faith in terms of *responsiveness* - being in responsive interaction with the symbols, metaphors, and narratives of our religious tradition, which play a constitutive role for faith -, then the design of faith development research should allow for an illumination of a person's faith responsiveness; faith development research would need to engage in the attempt to interpret the interviewee's responses, how they reflect the person's responsiveness to the con-texts and contents of her or his faith.

Responsiveness, however, is a rather complex object of research. This can be illuminated by pointing to the contrast to the constructs of logical operation, 'moral operation,' and 'faith operation:'

Responsiveness as an object of research is remarkably different from an 'operation' in the PIAGETian sense, which can be tested by asking an easy question e.g. about a logical relation, or about a physical experiment. The response can be a clear 'Yes' or a 'No.'

But responsiveness is also more complex than what KOHLBERGian theory and research defines as 'moral operation;,' a 'moral operation,' it is assumed, can be assessed by a research design which uses a dilemma question; the dilemma resolution in the response can be checked against a sample of exemplary responses. (But the testing of 'moral operations' could also be as simple as testing a person's application of a moral rule.<sup>120</sup>).

Finally, responsiveness exceeds the construct of a 'faith operation' as it is assumed and used in faith development research. However, the broad definition of 'faith' and the complex procedure of assessing 'faith' by an interplay or coherence of seven Aspects and the - finally explicit - indebtedness to the Judeo-Christian tradition explain the inappropriateness of a simple research instrument such as a simple question, a dilemma test or the like. Faith development research will remain an "exercise in hermeneutics," and, in KOHLBERG's words, "hermeneutics as an art" will remain the most adequate procedure.

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120. Thus, the results may not be very different from the present moral development research results. But some comparative studies about the temporal priority of logical to moral development may yield different results, if we were to reverse the level of complexity and ask an almost unresolvable question of physics for testing cognitive development and an easy application problem of a moral rule for testing moral development, as DÖBERT (1986:93) sharp-wittedly states.

Due to its very nature, responsiveness is something different from operations. It resists the kind of refinement of the research procedure which consists in a progressive separation of an assumed structural operation from content. But it points and refers back to the art of interpretation. Since responsiveness is responsiveness for the con-text of faith, the con-text-ual richness, the complex texture, and the particularity of the contents and con-texts cannot be eliminated. Therefore, the interpretive approach suggests itself as the most appropriate procedure.

The essential referential relatedness of responsiveness can be illuminated further, if we take into account the fact that the contents and con-texts of faith have a time dimension, have a historical trait:

Con-text-uality has to do with the relation of the individual not only to the con-texts of self, other and symbolic world as *present* con-texts. But con-text-uality also has to do with history. Con-text-uality is a *historical* category to the extent that these con-texts have a history and hence display a historical horizon. This is particularly important for the symbolic world, since religious symbols, metaphors, and narratives are rooted in a historical tradition. This is also significant for the relation to oneself in autobiographical reflection; the con-text of *self* is, in the first place, a historical con-text. This will become the focus of the last section of this chapter.

The historical trait of con-text-uality would imply, for faith development research, being able to take account of the individual's relation to history. Does the present research instrument suffice in consideration for the relatedness to history? Do we need more aspects in faith development research?

This is the point where NIPKOW's proposal to extend the number of aspects is important. NIPKOW's concern regards exactly the issue of the time-structure of human experience and the historical character of self-understanding, when he asks:

"How could this type of theory (faith development theory, H.S.) be refined so that it might be able to take account of narratives as indicators of the time-structure (Zeitstruktur) of our experience? I doubt whether in Fowler's theory the adequate place could be the operationalization of what is meant with "symbols" as one of the seven "structural aspects" of stage description. The time-structure concerns for example the way we relate our private biography to the historical fate of our own nation. It is a historical category. ... The issue we are raising deserves to be regarded as a separate "structural aspect;" it has clear developmental implications of its own which concern not just functions of symbols (images) as such, but images in the context of the more or less developed historical (self-) understanding." (NIPKOW 1986b:31f)

From my perspective of faith as responsiveness to the con-texts and contents, I agree with NIPKOW. His decisive reference to *time* and *history* illuminates an

important trait of faith as responsiveness. We have to find a way which allows that "narratives as indicators of the time-structure" be accounted for in faith development research. We have to account for the fact that "the way we relate our private biography to the historical fate of our own nation" "is a historical category." If we attempt to account for the "clear developmental implications" of the relation to history and, hence, want to understand the symbolic representations "in the context of the more or less developed historical (self-) understanding," it requires more than a structural-developmental reconstruction. This calls, in the first place, for a more interpretive approach. In my point of view, NIPKOW's concern - which is also mine - points toward a refinement of the entire research procedure which should be modelled more into an instrument of *understanding* i.e. also of interpreting the *time structure* of the con-texts; only in a second stage, would it require incorporating additional aspects into the faith development research instrument.

However, NIPKOW definitely proposes to add an eighth aspect which accounts for the development of the 'God-person relation:'

"So it might seem apt to introduce the explicit category of "God-person-relationship" as an additional eighth structural factor into Fowler's faith development theory and to operationalize it in the Manual by corresponding aspect descriptions and code criteria. The results of an interview depend on what one is looking and asking for." (NIPKOW 1986b:48)

This aspect would greatly differ from the other seven because of its primary focus on symbolic content, since here we encounter the tension between the generic universality of faith and the formalism it implies, on the one hand, and the content-specificity of the 'God' aspect, on the other. But, I think, such a proposal could appear to be unjustified only, if faith development research were to exclude all that appears as a heavy content-loaden issue. To include the 'God-person relation' could be part of the attempt to refocus attention to the con-texts of faith, to engage in an interpretive approach to *responsiveness*, to the innermost responsiveness of faith.<sup>121</sup>

There is a beginning in FOWLER's work: In the Life Tapestry Exercise, an extra column is reserved for the 'Images of God.' In *Faith Development and Pastoral Care* (FOWLER 1987a), FOWLER already engaged in a reflection on the God-person relation, there especially in relation to the central theme of 'vocation.'

Therefore, it seems one should accept NIPKOW's proposal and test its applicability in faith development research. It could be concluded that NIPKOW's

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121. Also OSER's (e.g. OSER&GMÜNDER 1984) work includes a comprehensive account of the relation of the individual to the Transcendent. His work, therefore, would need to be taken into account as a contribution to the discussion of the God-person relation.



proposal, as one example of possible extensions of the spectrum of the aspects, with the intention of including aspects of content in 'faith,' only proposes making explicit and operationalizing what is already present in the interview: *con-text-ual richness*.

My proposal to interpret faith as responsiveness would imply, as already presented in Chapter 8, Figure 3, interpreting the seven Aspects in terms of responsiveness. As indicated in Thesis 90, the Aspects then may display a spectrum and may be differentiated according to the content they refer to and, how they require 'reading' and 'responding.' In this respect, the seven Aspects may display a spectrum which begins, on the one end, with logical operations and includes, at the other end, the most content-loaden aspects of "World Coherence" and "Symbolic Function."

HUNT's (1985:140;165) observation that the aspects display a spectrum from attention to logic, on the one hand, to the attention to 'logic of conviction' measured by Aspects D to G, on the other, might well be right, but can be defined more precisely, if we illuminate the responsiveness of faith.

In logic, the *structure* is the issue, not the referred-to content. The other Aspects also embrace aspects of content or, with RICOEUR, the feature of "reference to".

To start at the one end, with the aspect of logic, as already stated, we encounter problems in identifying a con-text, a certain responsiveness. This is not surprising, if we consider the interchangeability of contents in logic. For logical reasoning, it is impossible to assign to it a certain dimension of content reference.

In respect to the theme of the hermeneutics of symbol, metaphor and narrative, and as has also become clear in NIPKOW's quote about the time structure of faith cited above, it is especially Aspect G, 'Symbolic Function,' which is the center of interest. But the aspect of 'World Coherence' also has a strong con-text reference. If we interpret both aspects as 'responsiveness to symbols' and as 'responsiveness to, or concern about, the coherence of the world,' we get an grasp of the contours of faith as responsiveness which reflects RICOEUR's notion of faith 'listening' or 'hearkening.'

To account for such responsiveness, faith development research would need to be an instrument of *understanding*, also including the time structure of these symbolic con-texts. Faith development research would need to be an instrument which assesses the more or less developed responsiveness, including the "more or less developed historical (self-) understanding."

The faith development interview would need to provide an appropriate set of questions which elicit symbolic, metaphoric, and narrative content, and hence the person's responsiveness for them; likewise, the responsiveness and concern for the coherence or in-coherence of the 'world' would need to be elicited to a sufficient degree by the interview questions.

The questions of the present faith development research interview provide a good starting point. They concern *religious practice* ("Do you consider yourself a religious person? What does this mean to you?" and "Do you pray, meditate, or perform any other spiritual discipline?"); *death* ("What does death mean to you? What happens to us when we die?"); *sin* and *evil* ("Do you think that there is such a thing as sin or evil?"); and *ideas, symbols, and rituals* in general ("Are there any religious ideas, symbols, or rituals that are important to you, or have been important to you? If so, what are these, and why are they important?").

However, they could be improved, in light of the definition of faith as responsiveness, becoming more open and more specific at the same time. Going beyond NELSON and ALESHIRE's judgment, who also notes that the terms may be some-what too uncertain and abstract (NELSON&ALESHIRE 1986:193), I would suggest not only abandoning the distancing attitude ("Do you think that there is such a thing ..." or "Are there any ..."), but asking more specific questions like "What is the most important symbol of faith? How does it concern your life?" and a similar question in respect to faith stories; but, most important, following NIPKOW's suggestion I would suggest including, not only in the life tapestry, but in the interview questions, such a simple, however very open question like "Who is God?"

The stage descriptions and coding criteria in the *Manual* could also be a good starting point. It could be improved, however, in light of the concepts of contextualist faith, of responsiveness, and of the development of historical self-understanding. While I will have to delegate a thorough consideration of suggestions to a revision of the *Manual* which would attempt to incorporate these issues in further research, I want to indicate briefly what I mean:

To focus on the aspect of Symbolic Function, I find the descriptions of Stage Five (MOSELEY et.al.:174ff) and Six (MOSELEY et.al.: 196f), the ones which most of all meet with the criterion of focusing on, and being attentive to, a person's responsiveness for the symbolic context: a person's responsiveness for the symbolic context can be examined using the criteria that "a new openness to the power of the symbol to evoke, generate and sustain meaning" is specific of Stage Five; and that "the sense that the symbol or the reality toward which it points may be actualized" and symbols are taken as "the doorways into a transcendent realm"

are indicative of Stage Six. Descriptions and criteria for previous stages also display some interest in and concern about the responsiveness toward the symbolic con-text: the "numinous quality" of the symbol in Stage One; the "little notion of the power of the symbol to evoke feeling" in Stage Two<sup>122</sup>; the orientation "toward the power of symbols to evoke feeling and emotion" in Stage Three; the "reduction" of the symbol in Stage Four. These descriptions are a point of departure, but I do not regard them as sufficient for an assessment of responsiveness for the symbolic con-text of faith.<sup>123</sup>

Thus, all of these aspect descriptions and coding criteria could, I think, be developed into more comprehensive and more specific sets of criteria. But more: there may be stage-specific symbols, metaphors and narratives, or a certain, stage-specific understanding of them, which would lend themselves to being incorporated into these catalogues as well. If e.g. the symbol of the Kingdom--or a certain understanding of the Kingdom--is held to be essential<sup>124</sup> for Stage Six, why not include it in the coding criteria for that Stage?

However, in light of such a concept of faith as responsiveness, another question appears to be of at least the same importance as the question of whether the aspect descriptions and coding criteria seem to be appropriate: the question as to whether the interpretation procedure which, in the process of coding ultimately

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122. The aspect description given in the *Manual* (MOSELEY et.al.:100) is questionable, since it is assumed that: "When the symbol represents an idea or concept, it must be specific and well defined. There is little notion of the power of the symbol to evoke feeling that appears quite strongly at Stage 3." or when we read that Stage Two faith makes a distinction "between the symbol and the thing symbolized" and that symbols, on that stage, "are not invested with evocative power." Such an attitude of a demythologizing understanding and a disregard of the disclosing power of the symbol can become questionable, if we assume, on the other hand, that Stage Two faith "tends to be embedded in its stories and myths," and thus displays a strong responsiveness for narratives. The *Manual* needs to be supplemented and note the fact that symbols may affect Stage Two persons far more deeply than they can articulate.

123. This is particularly true for the description of Stage Four, which presents us with a very complex set of problems: On the one hand, Stage Four is held to be demythologizing and reductionistic. Thus it can be seen as the Enlightenment move in individual development (comp. "The Enlightenment and Faith Development Theory," FOWLER 1988a!). All inherited traditions are "subjected to the scrutiny and evaluation of critical reasoning" (FOWLER 1987a:70). In disagreement with FOWLER's claim that this Enlightenment move brings gains: clarity, explicitness, precision, defeasible-ness, I would speak of idolatrous misuse and demonic distortion, as TILLICH does in "The Meaning and Justification of Religious Symbols" (TILLICH 1961) and in "Existential Analysis and Religious Symbols" (TILLICH 1956). Thus Stage Four reductionism would translate: there is no responsiveness for the symbolic con-texts at all; the symbols are dead. On the other hand, there is the ideological character of Stage Four faith which would call our attention to the power, or rather: to the (repressive and dominating) force of certain symbolic representations.

124. "I take those descriptions (of Stage 6, H.S.) to be formal and generalized expressions of that radical monotheistic faith with which Jews and Christians respond, in trust and loyalty, to the present and coming reign of a God of sovereign universality." (FOWLER 1981a:209)

leads to a stage assignment, still seems to be an adequate way of arriving at understanding a person's development in faith, or whether other research procedures, or a modified procedure of interpretation, would follow from the focus on responsiveness and the con-texts. It could well be the case that the more we engage in an interpretive approach, the more we see the necessity to engage in a discussion process - or a "conflict of interpretations" - with other interpreters; and thus an easy (computerized) stage assignment appears to not be possible anymore. A more interpretive approach is, very likely, not content with just a number, but might possibly require more description (of contents and con-texts), more text, it possibly also requires more argumentative text. But this is not the place to design a research procedure for faith development research, but only to hint at the implications of an interpretive approach.

### 10.3. From Understanding to Explanation: Communicative Reconstruction and Life Narrative

The theme of this final section indicates a change of perspectives: We will now change sides and illuminate RICOEUR's first method of reading, from *understanding* to *explanation* - a method of reading which, to be sure, shares with the second method of reading one and the same hermeneutical circle. Thus the theme of this section can take up the thread of the previous section, but opens up a new perspective. The necessity of an increasing and more extensive engagement in an interpretive discourse - which may require more time, more text, more paper - promises increased consistency with the more sensitive interpretive approach. Moving further in this direction, a proposal for social scientific method comes into view: *communicative validation*. Thus, from RICOEUR's first method of reading, we can derive the proposal of communicative validation. For the perspective on a person's developmental journey, communicative validation can be specified as *communicative reconstruction of life history*.

From this proposal of social scientific interpretation, we then will approach our theme of the *life narrative* and take up not only the thread of the inquiry into FOWLER's faith development theory in Part One and the idea of development in RICOEUR's thought, but will also include what I concluded about life narrative in Chapter 9 and, finally, what has been said in the previous section with reference to

NIPKOW about the time structure and the historical character of con-text-uality and responsiveness.

### 10.3.1. *Communicative Reconstruction*

In RICOEUR's first method of reading, which starts with *understanding* and attempts to move toward *explanation*, indications for a communicative approach emerge: being faithful to a model of *Auslegung*, as RICOEUR wants to be, this method of reading starts with a guess. The discursive correlation of the different understandings - whose differences can be ascribed to the differences in the point of view in kinesthetic perception - indicates a way toward validation and explanation.

The rich material of biographical representations, e.g. in the life tapestry exercise and in the responses to the questions about the crises and peak experiences suggest such an approach of *understanding*, if we do not want to risk losing much of the richness and coherence of the life narrative. The idea of development derived from RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective--we objectify our past experiences like a text which we interpret, we become *readers*; we encounter and invent new meaning, we become *authors*--suggests that we listen to, and try to make sense out of, a person's own re-constructions in his or her life history.

A more sensitive approach of understanding is needed to illuminate the con-text-uality and responsiveness of the self-self interaction. Thus research should primarily consist in listening to the 'story,' reading the 'text,' understanding a person's own telling of his or her story. Research should try to evaluate the respondent's *intrinsic* reconstruction of his or her own life story, his or her imaginative work in reporting some kind of coherence in his or her life.

While RICOEUR's proposal strongly suggests, as our starting point, looking and listening, guessing, and then attempting to understand, it is not his proposal to validate the guess and the first understanding in communication with the author. Such a proposal for communicative validation, however, does not contradict RICOEUR's method, but we have to refer to other resources for a better account of this procedure. In biographical research, the proposal for communicative validation has been suggested.

New developments in the German discussion on social scientific methodology may contribute to our theme here. FUCHS, in his *Biographische Forschung*, shares common ground with RICOEUR's first method of reading, when

he suggests pursuing research in life history, especially in regard to interpretive evaluation, as a series of decisions ("Abfolge von Entscheidungen," FUCHS 1984:191), rather than as a program of a definite line or sequence of methodological prescriptions which would be nothing more than the technical realization of a pre-planned strategy (FUCHS 1984:192). The communicative character of the entire research procedure comes into view, when FUCHS notes that social scientific research rather resembles the process of discussion at a conference:

"Eher ähnelt Sozialforschung der Leistung eines Gesprächsleiters in einer Arbeitsbesprechung, der nach vielen Informationen der Beteiligten, nach manchen Kontroversen und Unklarheiten, nach ausführlicher Aussprache über Sachverhalte und Bedingungen ein Resümee formuliert und darin ein Ergebnis formuliert, das der Gruppe vorher nicht bekannt war." (FUCHS 1984:192)

Thus, 'communicative validation' is the proposal for social scientific research to validate the interpretation of the interview *in communication with the interviewee*.

Does this mean that the interviewed person should have the last word, the chance for final correction? This could be justified with respect to the fact that the interviewee is the expert in regard to his or her life history and thus can judge the interpretation better than any researcher or group of researchers.

Objections to and reservations against the proposal of communicative validation, however, need to be given some attention: If we do not want to risk to be misled by the possibility that the interviewee may be consciously or unconsciously extenuate his or her life history, communicative validation should not proceed in symmetry between interviewee and interpreter. The interviewee may be under pressure to justify the facts and their interpretation; or may even be subject to self-deception (Cf. HEINZE et.al. 1981:35). Therefore, research, granted the advantages of listening to the judgment of the interviewee and taking them into consideration, should not be designed as a procedure of *unrestrictedly symmetrical* communicative validation.

The methodological proposal of OEVERMANN, a student of HABERMAS, which he called "*objektive Hermeneutik*", (OEVERMANN et.al. 1979) may indicate a better solution which, however, brings an account of *explanation* into play. OEVERMANN distinguishes between latent structures of meaning which are seen as independent from the subjectivity of interviewee or interviewer, on the one hand, and subjective intentional meanings, on the other hand (OEVERMANN et.al. 1979:367). The utterances in the interview also display deeper structures of meaning of which the interviewee is not conscious or not yet fully conscious. The task of 'objective hermeneutics' then is to decipher the internal grammatics of the (text of the) interview.

OEVERMANN's proposal may be important in that it calls attention to the meaning in the interview which is not to be equated with the conscious and subjective meaning the interviewee has in mind, thus enables the display and interpretation of not fully conscious structures, such as repressed meanings or self-deception.

Faith development research, by application of structural-developmental reconstruction, brings a similar kind of depth structure into play. This analysis of depth structures is a method which points toward and is part of explanation.

Such application of a more explanatory method, however, need not contradict the communicative procedure; it need not interrupt or end communication. On the contrary, I think this explanatory perspective can be brought into the correlative discussion as a contribution worthy of consideration. The only limit, I hold, regards the situation, in which the conflicting interpretations cannot be correlated in communication; here I think the researcher should have the last word.

Thus, I conclude for faith development research as well: Reconstruction in faith development research adequately proceeds, as far as possible, as *communicative reconstruction*.

And faith development research has indeed developed some steps which are starting points for communicative reconstruction of a person's development in faith: the inclusion of the life tapestry exercise into the research instrument provides good preconditions: the interviewee's own reconstruction of her or his life history has been put into writing and is shared with the interviewer at the beginning of the interview.

To indicate a way in which RICOEUR's proposal to proceed from understanding through validation to explanation could be strengthened in faith development research, I believe that

*The communicative approach (which proceeds in dialogue with the expert!) could be strengthened in faith development research; this could be an appropriate way of validating the first guesses about the structural transformations and about the structuring power of contents or contexts as well: symbols, metaphors, stories, concepts; the other persons; and - last, but not least: the interviewee's own remembrance of her or his life history. (Thesis 107)*

### 10.3.2. *Reconstruction of Life Narrative*

Con-text-uality, as we have seen, is a historical category to the extent that the con-texts have a history and hence display a historical horizon. This is not only important for the symbolic world, since religious symbols, metaphors, and narratives are rooted in a historical tradition, but also for the relation to oneself in autobiographical reflection. The con-text of *self* is primarily a *historical* con-text.

In this perspective, the double significance of narrative - that faith is constituted by narrative *and* that faith in itself *is* a narrative - appears in an interrelation within one and the same biography. In an autobiographical perspective, both narratives are interrelated. Development could be viewed as the outcome of the dialog with our own narrative, if it is true that 'creation' means that "we continually represent ourselves to ourselves."

This can be reconfirmed by recalling RICOEUR's perspective: the creativity of transforming our life narratives is comparable to the impact of understanding a metaphor which involves "discovery" and "creation;" we are both "reader and the writer" of our own life (RICOEUR 1985 1988:246); thus life history appears as "cloth woven of stories told;" there is a double 'metamorphosis' in the 'play:' while 'reality' is presented in a playful metamorphosis, the reader is also 'metamorphosed' (RICOEUR 1981b:187).

In an earlier thesis, therefore, I concluded that faith development is the sequence of a person's reconstructive transformations in faith which is due to the encounter with, and reflection on, the 'text' of her or his own life history.

Such strong emphasis on both the subject's authorship and the constitutive significance of the 'text' of life narrative, however, should not foreclose or eliminate another feature of faith: the fact that there are depth structures which structural-developmental analysis attempts to capture. To stress the one aspect, does (and must) not mean disregarding the other. Thus the picture becomes more complex and includes two aspects of faith which would need to be correlated. This is consistent with the interpretive approach which starts with understanding: we need to take, from the start, as many perspectives as possible into account.

Thus the correlation of the two perspectives or two dimensions of faith, though they are interrelated, can be viewed from either angle. Then, two different ways in which they influence each other come into view. Two modes of relation of faith development and life narrative can be stated, which, for faith development research, would imply two different research procedures:



(1) The responsiveness for one's own life narrative, can be viewed as affecting faith development; hence, research would attempt to understand *the transforming, developmental significance of biographical narration*.

(2) The perspective on life history can be seen as affected and influenced by the faith stage; hence, research attempts to *illuminate the individual's development of biographical reconstruction*.

Consistent with the tendency of the reading method which starts with understanding, I will begin with the first mode of relation and the pertinent research procedure.

(ad 1) Faith development research could focus on the biographical retrospective and life review, the significance of one's own life narrative as it affects development and develop research instruments for understanding the coherence of the respondent's life story. This could be viewed as a consistent consequence of RICOEUR's first method of reading for faith development research.

In regard to present faith development research, I contend: Reconstruction in terms of structural-developmental theory is one of the appropriate ways of getting access to a person's life history in faith, as became clear in the first section of this chapter in which we followed the movement from explanation to understanding. While this is the approach of an extrinsic reconstruction, other more interpretive approaches can be imagined. A more psychoanalytically colored reconstruction which we find e.g. in FOWLER's interpretation of Mary's faith development may point toward an interpretive approach, even if there may be difficulties in regard to consistency with the rest of faith development research.

Moving on in the interpretive direction, another way to gain access to life history emerges which is more close to the person and therefore a more consistent point of departure for an interpretive approach. This interpretation is not primarily the work of the researcher, but is the work of the person him or herself. It is the reconstruction which we usually call "autobiography."

Faith development research appears to move in this direction. In the *Manual*, the autobiographical dimension is given more weight by the incorporation of the "Unfolding Tapestry of My Life" as an autobiographical study. The problem is that so far no research procedure has been developed which is equally elaborate and of similar reliability as the coding procedure of the interview questions.

The assumption stated in Thesis 102 is the basis of such a perspective: The life history, especially crises and peak experiences affect faith transformation in a special way, and lead to a refiguration of the life narrative.

If faith development research were to take this approach, this would have far-reaching implications: It would imply a research design which is entirely different from present faith development research. If research primarily would consist in attentiveness to a person's own reconstructions of the transformations in life history, then the researcher, at the start, would need to forget any theory of faith development, and to engage in understanding *the person's own theory* displayed e.g. in the life tapestry sheet. The life tapestry exercise can be seen as revealing such individual theory of faith development. Also the questions in the *Manual* about crises and peak experiences elicit such a personal theory of faith development:

"Have you ever had moments of intense joy or breakthrough experiences that have affirmed or changed your sense of life's meaning?" "Have you experienced times of crisis or suffering in your life, or times when you felt profound disillusionment, or that life had no meaning? What happened to you at these times? How have these experiences affected you?" "Do you feel that currently you are growing or changing in any areas of your life? If so, where do you feel most in need or most open to change? What is your 'growing edge' at this point?" (MOSELEY et.al. 1986:41)

Such personal theory of faith development, however, does not need to remain and "get lost" in the particularity of an individual's stories. There are other theories which make sense out of this person's life narrative and the transformations involved in it. Last, but not least, the researcher brings with him or her a well defined theory which can be brought into play. Such research procedure then would call for engagement in a communicative procedure of a "conflict of interpretations."

This second kind of research procedure very precisely aims toward the proposal of communicative validation, though an explanatory trait has entered the scene: the explanatory approach which the researcher brings with him or her into the communicative process of interpretation. This explanatory procedure is already part of the other perspective on the relation between faith development and biographical transformation.

(ad 2) The perspective on life history can be seen as affected and influenced by the faith stage. The assumption is as follows: The reconstruction of a person's life history depends on his or her developmental stage of faith, it is stage-specific. Here, SCHWEITZER's proposal of stage-specific reconstruction of the life narrative could be a guide:<sup>125</sup> Based on the Aspect "Form of World Coherence," he presents a sketch of a development of autobiographical reconstruction.

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125. Comp. the quote of SCHWEITZER (1989:12) at the end of Chapter 9!

Thus, according to the proposal for faith development research which would follow RICOEUR's first method of reading, the investigation which begins with understanding, is also open for the possibility and the necessity of engaging in and moving toward *explanation*, of engaging in a more explanatory reading which still can and needs to be brought into the correlative discourse of a communicative interpretation. This research procedure, even though it involves paperwork of documentation and later test of justifiability, is modelled rather according to a interpretive discourse. Not only the interview, but also the procedure following the interview is open and open-ended: a series of decisions. The final result, the summary and concluding statement is formulated by the researcher.

In concluding this chapter, what has been stated in the introductory remark needs to be recalled: RICOEUR's proposal for social scientific methodology which he derived from the hermeneutics of the text show themselves as yielding illuminating implications for faith development research in both of the methods of reading: the method that starts with explanation - more developed at present - and the one which starts with understanding - a method which is emerging.

## CONCLUSION

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With the inquiry into faith development theory in light of the hermeneutics of symbol, metaphor, and narrative, this investigation has engaged in a correlative discussion between FOWLER's and RICOEUR's perspectives: it has attempted to illuminate the correlation between both contributions to understanding a person's faith and faith transformations: that of the philosopher and that of the developmental psychologist and theologian.

RICOEUR's work has made a rich contribution to the attempt to formulate the hermeneutical perspective, - the thesis about the insufficiency of the subject, the impossibility of any immediate self-understanding; the emphasis on the decentering or assimilating impact of the symbol; the creative power of the metaphor to constitute the person; the power of the narrative to remake reality, to transfigure the world; and finally, the most explicit statement that faith derives from 'listening' or 'hearkening' - in all of such details, RICOEUR's perspective yields a deep understanding of the hermeneutical approach and suggests a further step in the 'interpretive turn.'

Thus the key problem to which this work, especially in Part Three, aspires to be a contribution, is the conceptualization of faith development theory in light of the hermeneutical perspective, as we find it in RICOEUR's work. This key problem unfolded in three respects: the concept of faith, the idea of development, and the methodology of faith development research.

In the third part, therefore, the attempt to carry the implications of the 'hermeneutical turn' for faith development theory and research further has been concretized in the proposal for a con-text-ualist model of faith, faith development, and faith development research:

The con-text-ualist model suggested defining faith as *responsiveness*. In this definition, there is the announcement to pay special attention to the decentering interaction of the subject within the con-texts of all three dimensions: the con-text

of the *other*; the *symbolic-narrative contents and con-texts* of faith; and the con-text of the *self*, of one's own *life history*. Besides to the constructive activity of the person, we need to pay due attention to the impact of symbolic and narrative manifestations - the contents of faith - and to the person's receptivity, for listening as the origin of faith. In this respect, the reformulation of the Seven Aspects of faith in terms of responsiveness call for further reflection. Thus the concept of con-text-ualist faith, thus, calls for a qualification of the structural-developmental paradigm: the presupposition of the construing activity of the subject, the concept of 'operation,' and, therefore, the faith belief distinction, need to be qualified by, and correlated with, the notion of the subject as being dependent on the encounter with the 'text.' Further research is needed to reflect the concept of domain-specific 'faith operations.'

The idea of faith development, respectively, is reformulated in terms of the con-text-ualist model: faith development, then, can be defined as the sequence of a person's reconstructive transformations which are due not only to the development of operational structures, but to the person's decentering interaction with the con-texts and the creativity or metamorphosis which results from such interaction. Consistent with the hermeneutical feature of this con-text-ualist model, the individual comes into play in the role of 'reader' and of 'author' of her or his life narrative. The developmental transformation then appear as 'writing' and 're-writing' one's own life narrative. This leads us to focus our attention on the person's interaction with (the 'reading' of) his or her life narrative, on autobiographical reflection.

This suggests that, in further research, we pay attention to the stage-specific contents, to the stage specific interaction with certain con-texts, and, especially, to the stage-specific interaction with one's own life story.

From a con-text-ualist perspective, certain implications follow for faith development research: the consideration of the con-text-uality of faith suggests adopting RICOEUR's dialectics of understanding and explanation. In considering RICOEUR's proposal for methodology, the 'interpretive turn' is reconfirmed and strengthened in that *understanding* finds its proper place in the hermeneutical field. This would suggest an advancement of the present method of structural-developmental reconstruction and engaging in an approach of 'depth semantics:' to design instruments which consider the content and con-text referentiality, the time dimension, and the God-person relation (NIPKOW). The most divergent proposal for a research method would be the proposal of communicative validation which can be seen as consistent with RICOEUR's first method of reading, from understanding to explanation: the person's own biographical reconstruction, e.g. in

the Life Tapestry Exercise, would be constructed and validated in communication with the person himself or herself.

To summarize: the implications of the con-text-ualist model which I take as implications from RICOEUR's hermeneutical perspective suggest understanding the development of faith and selfhood not only as a sequence of reconstructions and transitions in regard to the competence to perform structural operations, but also as sequence of transformations of the ability to listen and to be responsive to the contents and con-texts of faith which are of symbolic, metaphoric, and narrative nature. Thus the con-text-ualist model of faith development suggests that we refocus our attention on the hermeneutics of symbols, metaphors, and narratives in faith development theory.

In concluding our journey of reflection about faith development theory and the proposal of a con-text-ualist model, I want to return to one of FOWLER's summary definitions of faith - hoping that it now appears in a new perspective and that a fresh 'reading' suggests itself, after all that has been said here:

"Faith is: People's evolved and evolving ways of experiencing self, other and world ... as related to and affected by the ultimate conditions of existence ... and of shaping their lives' purposes and meanings, trusts and loyalties, in the light of the character of being, value and power determining the ultimate conditions of existence ... . (FOWLER 1981a:92f).

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This book is a theoretical inquiry into the hermeneutics of James Fowler's theory of faith development; therefore, it starts with an investigation of Fowler's theory. For an account of the hermeneutics of metaphor, symbol, and narrative, it investigates the work of Paul Ricoeur. Thus it engages in a correlative discussion; it attempts to strengthen, within a theory of the structural-developmental family, the *hermeneutical* perspective and presents the proposal of a *contextualist* model for faith development theory. In investigating Fowler's theory, and in proposing the *contextualist* model, the reflection focuses on: the conceptualization of *faith*; the model of *development* in faith; and the *research method* in faith development.

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