Religious Development.
The Current Formulation of a Structural-Developmental Perspective

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Religious Development. The Current Formulation of a Structural-Developmental Perspective

1. The Question

Examples

Person A passionately claims the exclusive validity of their religion and the authoritativeness of their religious prescriptions also for anyone else.

Person B shows intellectual humility and is open for encountering the unknown and supports inter-religious dialog.

Person C, based on their own autonomous reflection, attempts to promote rationality, and suggests fair coexistence and tolerance.

Person D is deeply embedded in their religious community and wants to preserve harmony and avoid any conflict.

2. Proposals for Structural Differences

2.1 Allport's Proposal for Structural Differences

Allport's (1950, 1966; Allport & Ross, 1967) distinction between two types of religion, intrinsic and extrinsic:

- "the extrinsic religious orientation is … the context of prejudice,"

- "the intrinsic orientation is the matrix of tolerance" (Allport, 1966, p. 455)

Important is the contrast between a version of religion that supports prejudice and a version of religion that promotes tolerance—which, as Allport (1954, p. 456) has also put it, is the contrast between

- the religion "of an ethnocentric order" and

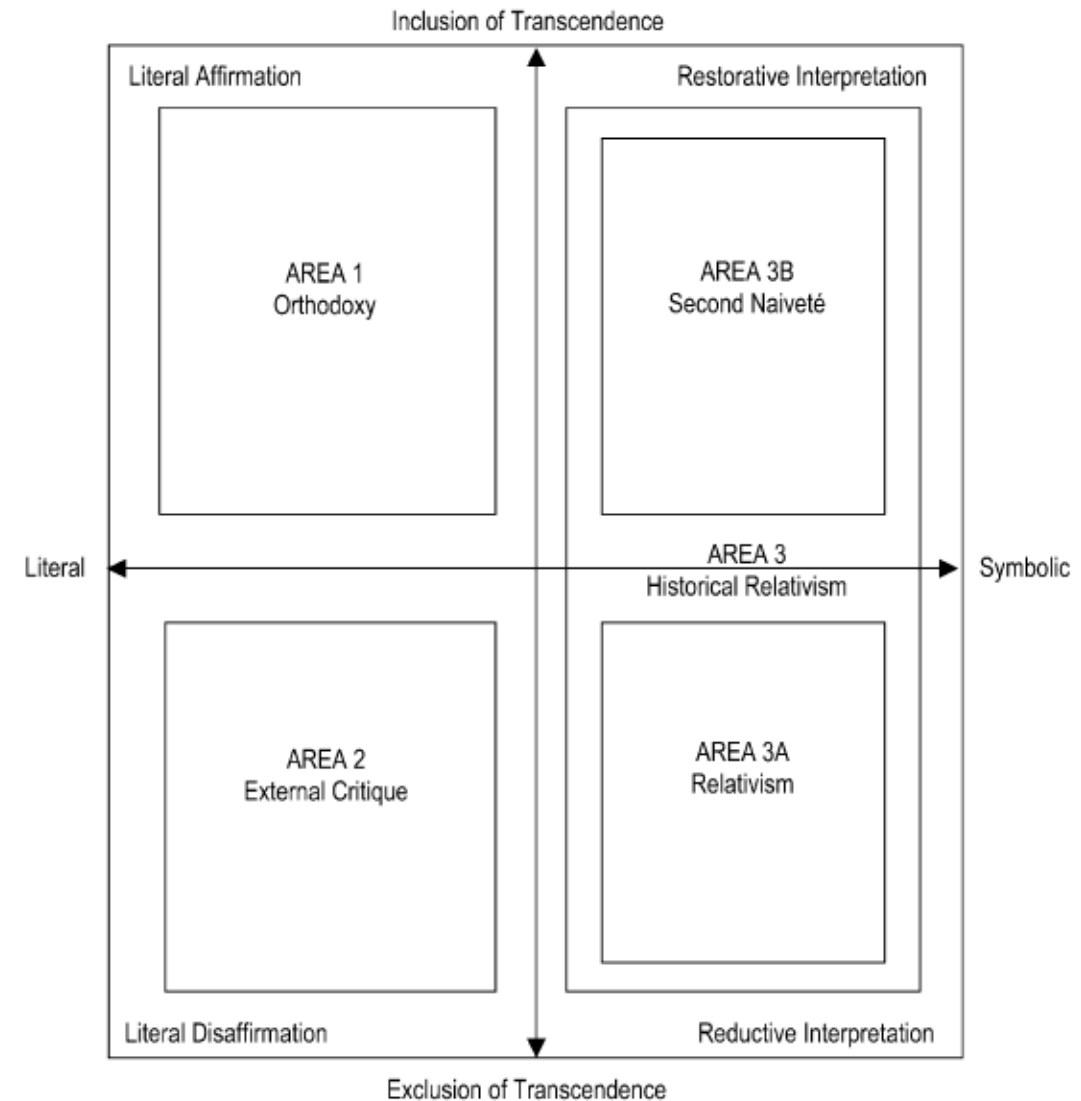- the religion "of a universalistic order."

2.2 The Post-critical Belief Model

The Post-critical belief model and the Post-critical Belief Scale attend to differences between four types:

1. orthodoxy
2. external critique
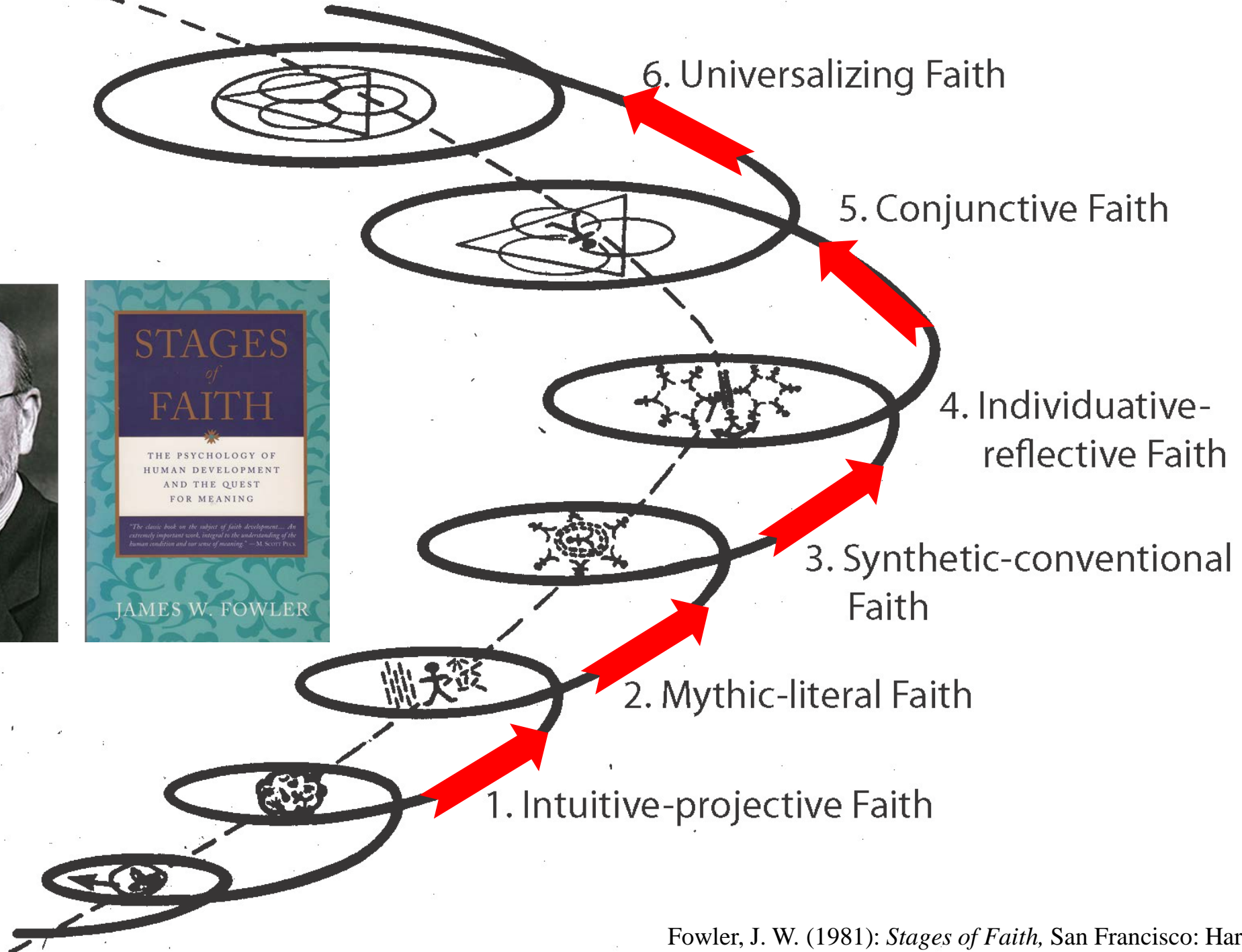3. relativism, and
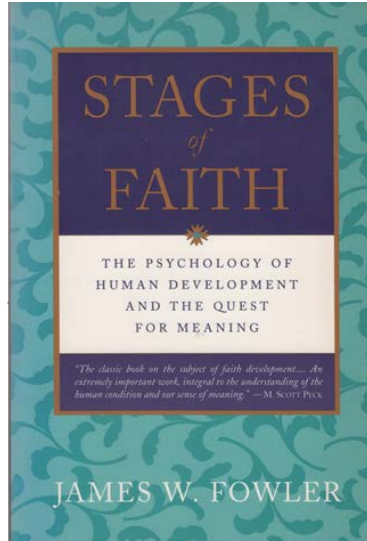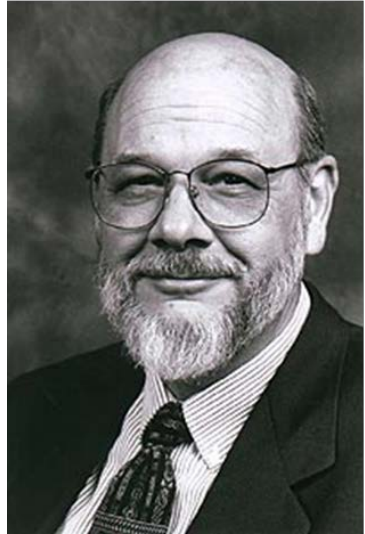4. second naïveté.

Developmental order? (Hutsebaut, 2000)

(PCBS; Duriez, Soenens, & Hutsebaut, 2005; Hutsebaut, 1996; Hutsebaut, 2000)

For the figure, see Fontaine, J. R. J., Duriez, B., Luyten, P., & Hutsebaut, D. (2003). The internal structure of the Post-Critical Belief Scale. *Personality & Individual Differences, 35*, 501-518.

2.3 Fowler's Proposal for Structural Differences

6. Universalizing Faith

5. Conjunctive Faith

4. Individuative-reflective Faith

3. Synthetic-conventional Faith

2. Mythic-literal Faith

1. Intuitive-projective Faith

STAGES
of
FAITH

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
AND THE QUEST
FOR MEANING

"The classic book on the subject of faith development.... An
extremely important work, integral to the understanding of the
human condition and our sense of meaning." — M. SCOTT PECK

JAMES W. FOWLER

Fowler, J. W. (1981): *Stages of Faith,* San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Fowler's Definition of ‚faith' 1981

"In the most formal and comprehensive terms I can state it, *faith* is:

People's evolved and evolving ways
of experiencing self, others and world
(as they construct them)

as related to and affected by the
ultimate conditions of existence
(as they construct them)

and 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 (as grasped in their
operative images - conscious and
unconscious - of them)."

Fowler, J. W. (1981): *Stages of Faith*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, p. 92-93.

What is a stage? What is development of faith?

In his characterzation of faith stage development, Fower generally followed Kohlberg's criteria for („hard") cognitive-structural stages:

- Structural Difference

- Structural Wholeness

- Invariant Sequence & Irreversibility

- Hierarchical Integration

- Universality

Kohlberg, L., Levine, C. & Hewer, A.. (1983). "The Current Formulation of the Theory", in: L.Kohlberg: *Essays on Moral Development, Vol.II. The Psychology of Moral Development*, (pp. 212-319) San Francisco: Harper & Row 1984; quote: p. 238.

Necessary Revisions of Faith Development Theory…

… regarding the 'logic' of stage development:

- *Structural Difference*

Yes, we agree!

- **Structural whole**
- **Abandoment of previous styles**
- **Irreversibility**

… are not empirically supported: need to be rejected

- **Invariance**
- **Sequentiality**
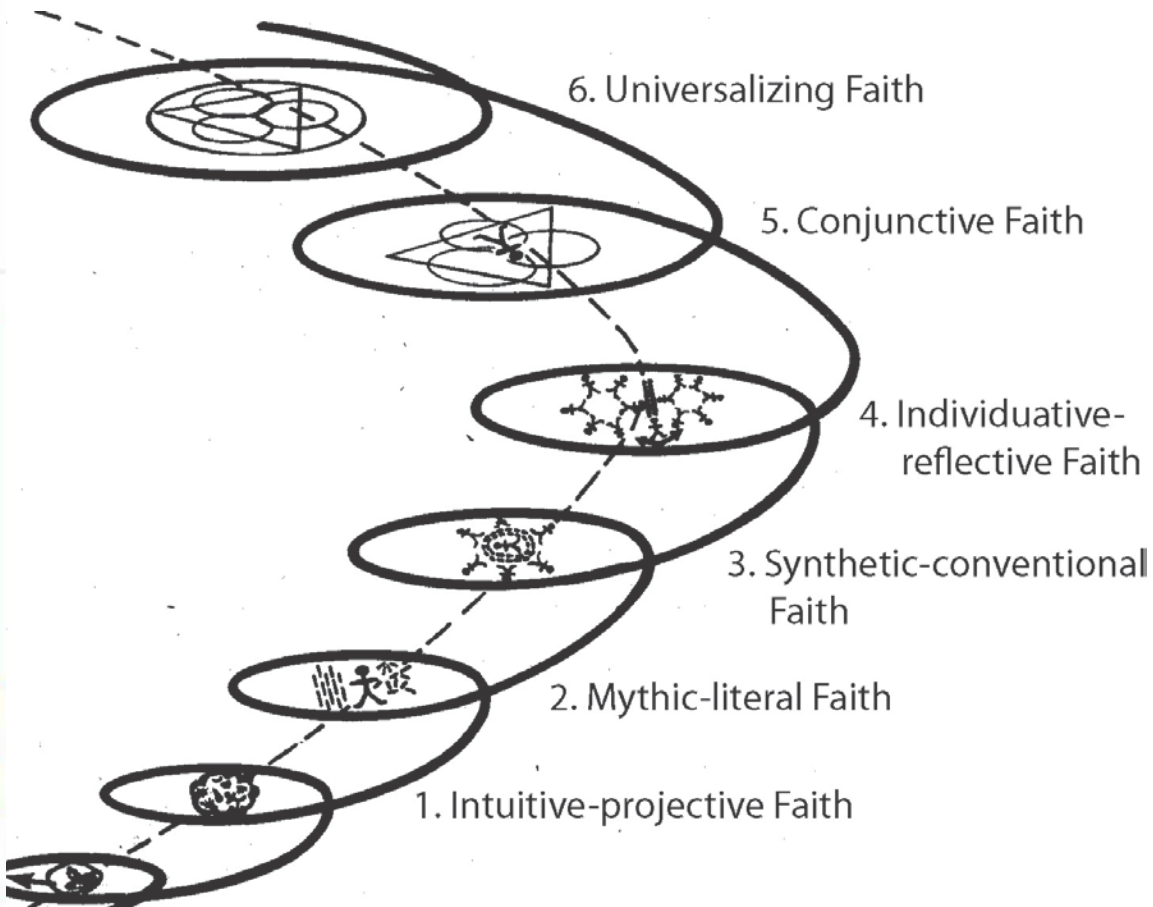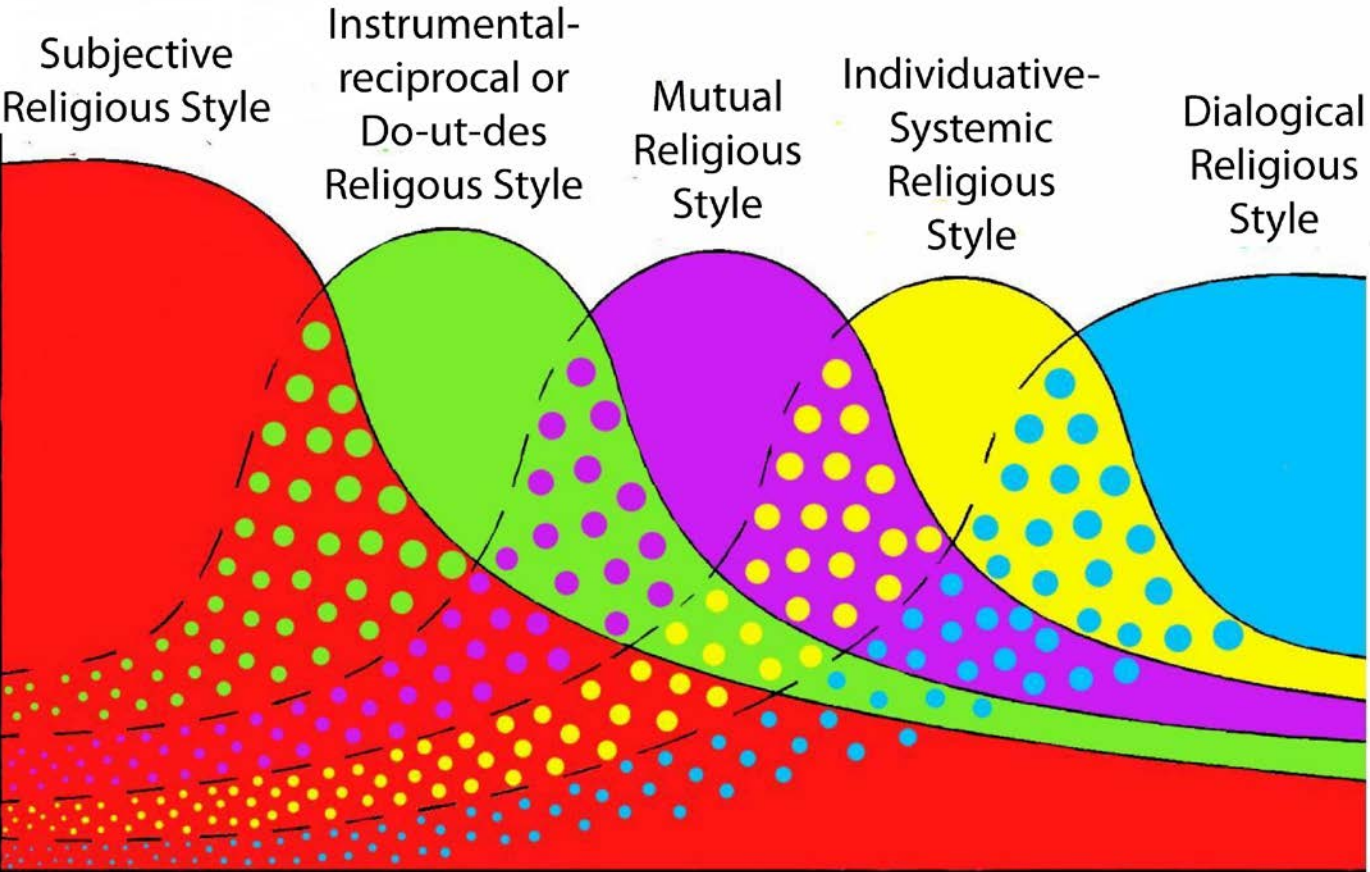- **Universality**

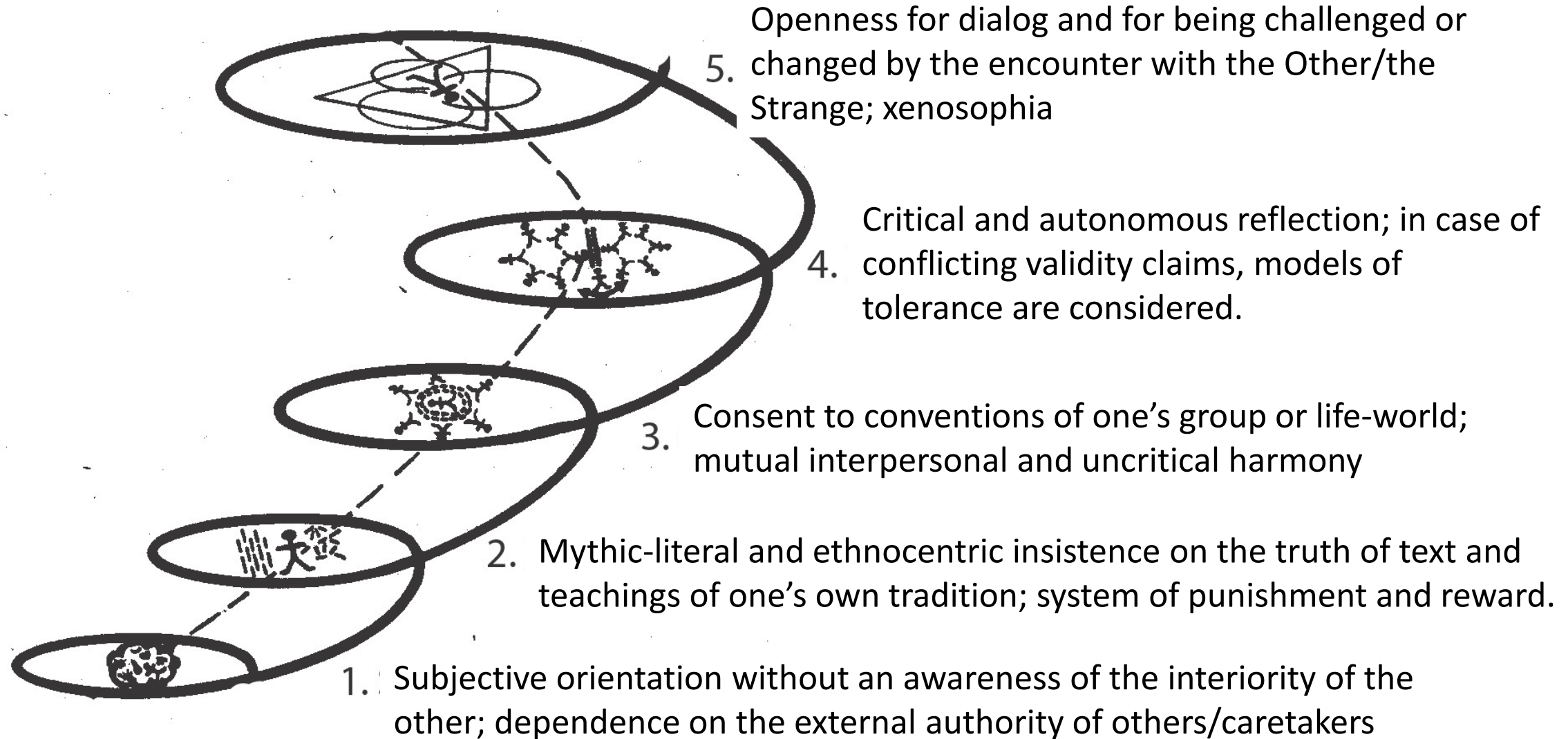**?** **}** *…depend on empirical evidence*

- **Hierarchy**

…derives strong support from philosophy, rather than from psychology alone

3. The Religious Styles Model –
   Our Proposal for Structural Differences

Conceptual and Methodological Decisions …

Subjective Religious Style

Instrumental-reciprocal or Do-ut-des Religous Style

Mutual Religious Style

Individuative-Systemic Religious Style

Dialogical Religious Style

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Five Religious Styles – Recent Characterizations

5. Openness for dialog and for being challenged or changed by the encounter with the Other/the Strange; xenosophia

4. Critical and autonomous reflection; in case of conflicting validity claims, models of tolerance are considered.

3. Consent to conventions of one's group or life-world; mutual interpersonal and uncritical harmony

2. Mythic-literal and ethnocentric insistence on the truth of text and teachings of one's own tradition; system of punishment and reward.

1. Subjective orientation without an awareness of the interiority of the other; dependence on the external authority of others/caretakers

4. Conlcusion

How we take Fowler's legacy further…

1. **Differential conceptualization of religion**:
   a) Variety of structurally different religious styles
   b) Change and development over time

2. **Using the Faith Development Interview (FDI)**
   a) Triangulation with questionnaire data
   b) Combination of ideographic and nomothetic perspectives.

3. **Potentials for longitudinal research on religious change and development:**
   a) Re-Interviewing with the FDI after some years
   b) Construction of religious types
   c) Longitudinal modeling of styles, types, and scales—still combining ideographic and nomothetic perspectives.
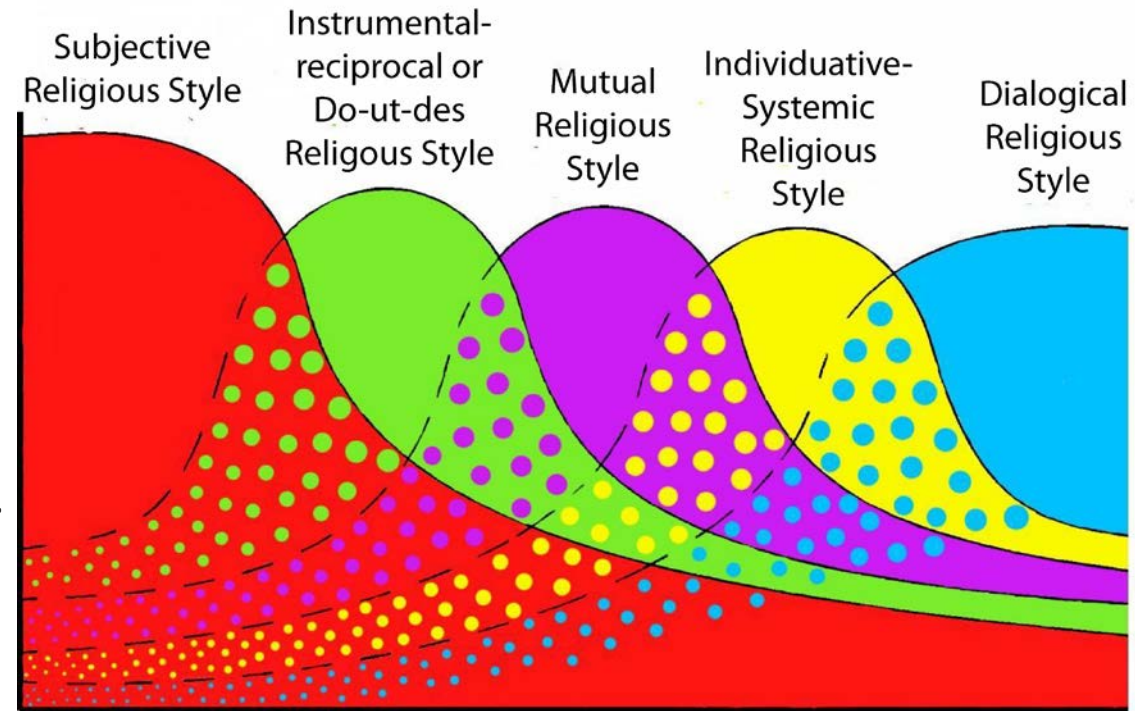
What is religious development? A Structural Definition

Religious development consists in changes in an individual's lifetime. These changes are characterized by intra-individual differences between structurally distinct ways of understanding, appropriating and re-constructing the propositional, narrative, symbolic and ritual manifestations that religious cultures offer, and individuals use, for making meaning of their everyday and extraordinary experiences.

When such structurally distinct ways of meaning-making that change in an individual's lifetime are regarded to present a hierarchical order, we speak of religious development.

Structural models require an open conceptualization of ('religion' as) 'meaning-making'.