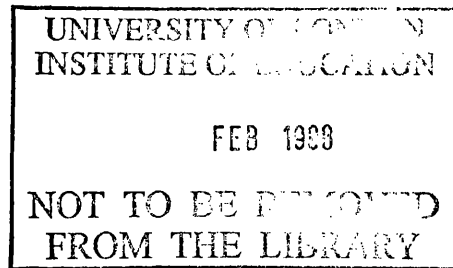


DOES FAITH DEVELOP UNIVERSALLY THROUGH
STABLE AND HIERARCHICAL STAGES ?

by

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degree of Master of Philosophy of the University of London



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ABSTRACT

Faith Development Theories are concerned with the way faith, as a way of knowing, develops universally through stable and hierarchical stages.

This thesis questions the assumptions underlying these theories.

The spiritual tradition of Western Christianity is examined for evidence of stable stages.

Piaget's stage theory is reviewed critically.

This is followed by a critical look at language development studies.

The assumption of development as a naturally occurring phenomenon is questioned.

Some thoughts are gathered about self and mind.

Finally, these chapters are woven together to propose that faith may indeed change but that these changes are not universal, stable and hierarchical. A theory to explain faith change is developed throughout the thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

The Context of this Study

"Our account is of the Way of Faith. It is about what constitutes faith, and how that faith develops. It is about the ways in which we make sense of and relate to 'life, the universe and everything' - and especially God - in our particular journeying as children and young people and through our adult years. It is the story of human development and growth in the way of faith"
(Astley 1991 pX)

These words come from the book 'How Faith Grows' which was written as a result of a working party of the Church of England General Synod Board of Education 1990. The sub-title of this book is 'Faith Development and Christian Education'.

Many educators and many Christian educators have become convinced by the arguments of faith development theories. These theories claim that as we grow older our minds/brains change, thereby changing the way we perceive reality. James Fowler is one of the foremost proponents of faith development theories.

As an education adviser in the Church of England I had taught Sunday School teachers and leaders of young people about human development. As a priest in the Church of England I had used the tradition of spiritual growth as a way of helping people understand their situation. As a teacher in state primary schools I had used the works of Piaget as a basis for devising programmes of work for the children in my care.

It was while I was an education adviser that, in common with many educationalists within the Church, I came across the work of James Fowler. Fowler is an American who has produced a theory of Faith

Development. He has used the ideas of Piaget, Kohlberg and Erikson to elaborate the idea that humans, who are 'endowed at birth with nascent capacities for faith', develop through stages of faith throughout their lives (Fowler 1981 p xiii).

Since the early 1970s Fowler and his colleagues at Harvard University and latterly at Emory University have produced a theory of faith development that has proved to be influential in North America and Britain (eg 1980, 1981). His work is now translated into many European languages and others including Korean and Indonesian.

Fowler's influential theory postulates six universal, stable and hierarchical stages of faith.

Universal means that progress through the stages is part of each human being's experience. No matter which historical time we explore, no matter what culture or educational or life experience we examine the theory will lead us to expect to find the same pattern of stages of faith. Faith is defined by Fowler as a verb that includes meanings such as 'a way of knowing' and as 'that knowing or construing by which persons or communities recognise themselves as related to the ultimate conditions of their existence'. (Astley & Francis 1992 p4)

The claim of universalism of faith development theory is one area that I will be examining in this thesis. I will ask the question 'Can it be shown that it is feasible that each person holds a similar way of construing their relatedness to the ultimate conditions of their existence ?'

Faith development theories also postulate the idea of stable and hierarchical stages of development. This means that not only are we led to expect that each person in the world in our time and throughout history will develop through the same stages we are led to expect to find that the ways of construing are invariably sequential, and that in the most extreme version of the theory having reached a particular stage we do not use previous stages of faith and cannot use subsequent stages until we reach them.

I came to challenge these claims for faith development theories because they did not accord with my experience. As a teacher I was becoming increasingly aware of the discrepancies between expected performance of particular pupils in relation to Piaget's scheme. I was also aware of the growing amount of literature critical of Piaget's studies. As a priest in the Church of England I found myself asking why so many of the people I talked to failed to find a place in Fowler's scheme without having to look for reasons that explained why progress was either hindered or aided through the stages. I was also aware that if there were indeed stages then people seemed free to use previous and later ways without reference to the sequence or hierarchy of Fowler's stages. In other words my experience began to make me question the received wisdom concerning universal, stable and hierarchical stages of faith.

As I have said Fowler is highly influenced by the work of Jean Piaget, the Swiss psychologist.

Piaget (1953) claims that the way of knowing develops as the brain matures. Piaget as a biologist and psychologist claims to have

observed that children think differently from adults. His studies claim to show that children develop ways of thinking in stages that have a genetic basis. Piaget claimed to have observed the invariable structures underlying thought. He was not intending to describe the content of thought which is of course a cultural variable.

As the brain/mind ages, so Piaget claims, the structures that constitute the way humans think will develop through universal and stable stages. We cannot skip a stage and all people who are Homo Sapiens develop in the same way.

Piaget's theories have been very influential in education circles, at least in the West. However, in the last two decades there has been a growing body of evidence that is critical of Piaget's methods and the interpretations of his findings. I will review this literature in chapter 2.

Fowler was also very influenced by Kohlberg, an American who has devised a stage theory for moral development. For his PhD Dissertation at the University of Chicago (1958) Kohlberg studied 75 boys of ages from early childhood to adolescence. From this study he hypothesised that moral reasoning developed through six stage-like positions. In many subsequent studies he has refined his theories. (1981, 1984) This work has its own body of supporting and critical literature. This thesis will draw lightly on this literature as I wish to follow new paths in an attempt to understand the human condition.

Erikson (1950) is the third influence upon Fowler's scheme. Erikson

outlines Eight Stages of Man. The stages are Infancy, Early Childhood, Play age, School age, Adolescence, Young Adulthood, Adulthood, Old Age. At each stage the person undergoes a crisis. The successful outcome of each crisis is described in bipolar qualities. For example in the Oral-sensory age, the earliest, the qualities are described as 'Basic trust' and 'Mistrust'. Each subsequent stage is dependent upon the resolution of the previous stage. The scheme is described in terms of stable, hierarchical and universal stages. Erikson's work is also not without criticism.

This is the context of this study. I was working in the field of Christian education. Educators in this country were being influenced by the work of Fowler who was advocating universal stage theory as a way of devising educational and pastoral programmes. My own experience did not accord with stage theory. I was curious. Why were so many educationalists turning to Faith Development theories for a way of describing reality? Why were these theories so attractive? For many the theories and findings appear to fit reality.

Of course people develop. Of course adults think differently from children.

The concepts fitted the Christian idea of pilgrimage.

The Christian Way was accepted as being a process of development and progress.

The theories fitted Scripture. 'When I was a child I thought as a

child. When I became an adult I put away childish thoughts'. (1 Cor 13:11)

The theories also appeared to fit the need for empirical evidence.

Being based upon the theories of Piaget, the theories also fitted the then received wisdom of educators.

Faith development theories were therefore based on many assumptions and the received wisdom was not unchallenged (Dykstra & Parks 1986). This thesis is part of the continuing challenge to the received wisdom.

I will ask critical questions about the possibility of universal stages. Is it possible that each Homo Sapiens changes the way of construing meaning in an invariable pattern? If this pattern is true for all human beings at all historical times, are the stages stable?

In order to question the received wisdom and to put forward an alternative model this thesis will follow the following scheme. I will outline Fowler's theory of faith development in greater detail.

Secondly I intend to look at the claims of Piaget. Piaget is crucial to Fowler's scheme. I will enquire whether there is sufficient evidence to support the claims of universal stable stages of development.

Thirdly I will examine the spiritual tradition of Western Christianity. Do the writings of people who were interested in

spiritual change support the claims of faith development theories ?

I choose people who have tried to generalise about the human development.

In the chapters on Piaget and the Western spiritual tradition I will argue that the claims of faith development theories are not based on secure foundations. I will give evidence that is highly critical of the claims for stage theory, especially universal and stable stages.

And yet people do appear to change their faith and their way of construing meaning.

In order to build up a picture of what is happening when people change their ideas and constructions of reality I turn to some understandings of language. Faith development theories draw on cognitive psychology. People appear to change over time. My enquiry will use some of the concepts of cognitive language research as a framework on which to hang my questions about faith development.

Having deconstructed the claims of faith development theories and then begun the process of constructing a theory to explain changes of faith I turn to the question of progress. I question the received wisdom of our day that time plus change equals progress. I will attempt to describe how this understanding came about. I will also use the concept of eschatology, an important Christian metaphor to propose a possible reason why our faith changes. If 'time plus change does not equal progress' how does time relate to our faith changes ? I will examine some of the ideas that faith development theories bring to the fore. Stage theory presupposes the inevitability of direction in any change. Is this direction

teleological, normative or utopian or, indeed, eschatological ? Are the stages defined by genes or by culture ?

Another series of assumptions that form the basis of faith development theories revolves around two connected debates. What is it that changes ? This is the question concerning the sense of self. This exploration will take us into the mind/brain debate.

The connected idea concerns free-will. Are we bound to develop through the stages described by Fowler and others ? Or is there the possibility of freedom, freedom to consciously or unconsciously choose another path rather than merely to deny progress along the set path ?

While it is not self evident that faith develops through stable hierarchical stages it would appear that faith does change with time. I have sought evidence from different paradigms to suggest why this is so.

My thesis is eclectic. It will be obvious that I have greater experience in some areas than others. I do not provide empirical evidence from my own research though I am confident that I have provided evidence from researchers in a wide variety of fields of study in a way that brings new interesting and useful thinking to bear on the question of the nature of Faith Development.

Chapter 1
AN INTRODUCTION TO FAITH DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

This chapter provides an outline of Fowler's Faith Development theories and places the theory in the historical context of associated studies.

I indicate that Fowler's proposals are criticised from many perspectives.

I describe Oser's theory of faith development (in Fowler Nipkow Schweitzer 1992) in order to compare this structuralist theory with Fowler's.

Fowler's Theory of Faith Development

In his Stages of Faith (1981) James Fowler invites us to join him "in the serious play of looking at the human life of faith, its movements and transformations, its breaking downs and coming together, its unique features and its predictable stages".

Fowler has produced a theory of faith development which is proving influential in the educational circles of the Christian church in the USA and UK. Even though the dust cover calls the book, Stages of Faith, "a trail-blazer" the work is part of a system with a long heritage. Fowler claims to use empirical studies based on the work of Piaget, Erikson and Kohlberg as a basis for describing stages of human development. In doing so, he joins a long list of "trail blazers" who throughout the centuries have attempted to systematise and describe spiritual or faith development. Yet as I will show in

chapter 3 there is little evidence to support the proposition of universal, hierarchical and sequential stages in the writings of Western Christian tradition.

Spiritual directors of many faiths have recourse to information to help them guide the pilgrim. The twentieth century has seen an intensification of focus on child development. In 1903 Haslett produced his recapitulation theory in which he describes the way children develop through animistic (0-3 years), mythopean (3-7 years) ethical (7-11 years) and spiritual conception (11-18 years) stages, in line with the way he perceived the religious ideas of mankind to have developed.

In 1929, in the Child's Conception of the World, Piaget outlined his theory of religious development. This work was based on his system of stages of intellectual development.

Harms (1944) published his theory of the Development of Religious Experience in Children in 1944. He asked 3-18 year olds to draw their picture of God. He then put the results into three bands related to age: Fairytale (3-6 years), Realistic (6 - 11 years), Individualistic (11-18 years).

Age-related stages (modified by intelligence) formed the basis of Goldman's work of the nineteen sixties and seventies (eg Readiness for Religion 1965).

Peatling also claims to have found age-related stages in the nineteen eighties (eg Cognitive Development: Religious thinking in Children,

There can be seen in Peatling's 1977 title an interest in adult cognitive development. Westerhoff describes faith developing through the affiliative phase of early childhood, to a searching phase of adolescence and early adulthood to a mature phase that begins in middle adulthood and develops until death (Bringing up Children in the Christian Faith 1980)

Fowler is also interested in adult human development in part of his scheme is from cradle to grave. We can see that scheme developing in his writing.

In 1974 James Fowler gave one of the Thirkield-Jones Lectures at Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta. In the journal of that seminary Fowler published an essay entitled 'Faith, liberation and human development' in which he outlines his theory of faith development from a structuralist viewpoint.

The structuralists claim that it is possible to focus on the underlying structures or operations of human thinking. Fowler claims to have discovered patterns of faith that are independent of religions.

In the following years Fowler published many articles linking faith to developmental concepts which culminated in 1981 in the publication of 'Stages of Faith'.

'Stages of Faith' 1981 outlines a way of understanding how humans develop in terms of faith. However, because the questions and criticisms that this work has and continues to produce have caused Fowler to refine his definition of each stage, I will use the definitions of the stages that Fowler produced for a book published in 1992 (Fowler Nipkow and Schweitzer 1992).

Fowler's Stages of Faith: A brief summary:

'Primal Faith (Infancy): A prelanguage disposition of trust forms in the mutuality of one's relationships with parents and others to offset the anxiety that results from separations which occur during infant development.

Intuitive-Projective faith (Early Childhood): Imagination, stimulated by stories, gestures and symbols, and not yet controlled by logical thinking, combines with the perception and feelings to create long-lasting images that represent both the protective and threatening powers surrounding one's life.

Mythic-Literal Faith (Childhood and beyond): The developing ability to think logically helps one order the world with categories of causality, space and time; to enter into the perspectives of others; and to capture life meaning in stories.

Synthetic-Conventional Faith (Adolescence and beyond): New cognitive abilities make mutual perspective taking possible and require one to integrate diverse self images into a coherent identity. A personal and largely unreflective synthesis of beliefs and values evolves to support identity and to unite one in emotional solidarity with others.

Individuative-Reflective Faith (Young Adulthood and beyond): Critical reflection upon one's beliefs and values, utilising third person perspective taking; understanding of the self and others as part of a social system; the internalisation of authority and the assumption of responsibility for making explicit choices of ideology and lifestyle; all open the way for critically self-aware commitments in relationships and vocation.

Conjunctive Faith (Mid-life and beyond): The embrace of polarities in one's life, an alertness to paradox, and the need for multiple interpretations of reality mark this stage. Symbol and story, metaphor and myth (from one's own tradition and others') are newly appreciated

(second, or willed naivete) as vehicles for expressing truth.

Universalising Faith (Mid-life and beyond): Beyond paradox and polarities, persons in this stage are grounded in a oneness with the power of being. Their visions and commitments free them for a passionate yet detached spending of the self in love, devoted to overcoming division, oppression and violence, and in effective anticipatory response to an inbreaking commonwealth of love and justice'.

(Fowler 1992 in Fowler Nipkow and Schweitzer 1992 pp 24 & 25.

Let us remember that Fowler is talking about universal stable stages.

When asked by William Avery what were the benefits of his developmental theory Fowler gave six responses (Astley and Francis 1992 pp 131ff):

1. The theory puts into words what is intuitively felt.
2. The theory is a tool to interpret religious behaviour.
3. Some changes are stage changes. The theory provides a diagnostic tool to assist educators and counsellors.
4. The theory makes an important contribution to understanding such concepts as justification.
5. The theory makes links between theology and the social sciences.
6. Finally, Fowler claims that society is evolving from the Individuative-Reflective stage to the Conjunctive stage. His theory will be helpful in aiding the process of this change.

The theory outlined in Stages of Faith was formulated as a result of 359 interviews conducted over a period of nine years. These interviews were expected to take between 2 - 2½ hours and consisted of answering questions in four sections.

Part one is called Life Review. Questions include date of birth, occupation, ethnic origins and religious identifications. It also includes making a 'life map', putting a life into chapters and answering questions such as 'what gives your life meaning ?'

Part two is called Life-shaping Experiences and Relationships (Fowler 1981 p310ff). Questions in this section include these:

'At present, what relationships seem most important for your life ? (eg intimate, familial or work relationships)

You did/did not mention your father in your significant relationships.

When you think of your father as he was during the time you were a child what stands out ?'

The third section is entitled Present Values and Commitments.

Questions in this section include:

'Can you describe the beliefs and values or attitudes that are most important in guiding your own life.

Is there a 'plan' for human lives ?'

The fourth part of the interview is called Religion. Questions include:

'Do you have or have you had important religious experiences ?
What is your image (or idea) of mature faith ?'

The interviews were transcribed from audio tape and analysis made on the basis of the transcription.

Fowler describes part of his analysis:

'The 51-60 age group includes persons who range across Stages 2-5. These distributions confirm that faith stages are not perfectly correlated with chronological age and that adult persons of normal intelligence and emotional stability can and do reach long-lasting equilibrium of faith at any of the stages from 2 on. In the 51-60 age group a plurality of persons best described by Stage 3 are found (35.3%). A slightly reduced percentage (29.4%) are Stage 4, while Stage 5 persons constitute 23.5%. (Notice however, that the 51-60 age group constitute the smallest number of any age segment

in the sample (17 in all).'

(Fowler 1981 p319)

There is a growing body of literature that is critical of Fowler's work (for example Parks 1992 in Fowler Nipkow and Schweitzer 1992). Some of this criticism focuses on the methodology (Nelson 1982); small samples, (Webster 1984 in Astley and Francis 1992); lack of cross cultural studies (Furishima 1985 in Astley and Francis 1992); the difficulty of finding agreement about which stage to assign a particular transcript (Gorman 1982); the impossibility of evaluating what a person may mean on the evidence of 2½ hours' interview. Other criticisms focus on the definition of faith and the inexact wording of the stages (Moran 1983).

Sharon Parkes 1992 (in Fowler Nipkow and Schweitzer 1992) presents a review of the main criticisms that North American's produced in the years between 1981 and 1987:

'A review of the critical literature reveals clearly five primary foci of resistance and concern. They are: (1) the definition of faith; (2) the description of stage 6 - Fowler's vision of 'mature faith'; (3) the adequacy of the theory in relation to particular religious beliefs; (4) the adequacy of the account of affect, process-motion, the unconscious, and the imagination; (5) the adequacy of the theory vis-a-vis a critical socio-political analysis, especially a gender analysis. It is the first two of these that have dominated the discussion to date'. (p105)

Oser's Theory of Faith Development

In order to better understand faith develop theories I will outline another scheme.

Oser of Fribourg University, Switzerland, has also used Piaget's structuralism to produce a faith development scheme.

'Stage 1. There is an ultimate Being who protects you or sends you something hurtful, dispenses health or illness, joy or despair. The Ultimate Being influences you (and all other beings) directly. The Ultimate Being's will must always be fulfilled. Otherwise the relationship is broken.

'Stage 2. The Ultimate Being can be influenced by prayers, offerings, the following of religious rules, etc. If one cares about the Ultimate Being and passes the tests He sends, He will act like a trusting and loving father, and you will be happy, healthy, successful, etc. An individual can influence the Ultimate Being, or he or she can fail to do so, depending on his or her needs and free will.

'Stage 3. The individual assumes responsibility for his or her own life, and for matters of the world. Freedom, meaning and hope are linked to one's own decisions. The Ultimate Being is apart. He has His own field of action; we have ours. The Ultimate Being's wholeness encompasses a freedom, hope and meaning that are different from the human ones. Transcendence is outside the individual but represents a basic order of world life.

'Stage 4. Now an indirect, mediated relationship with Ultimate Being has come into existence. The individual continues to assume responsibility, but he or she wonders about the conditions for the mere possibility to carry responsibility. He or she sees his or her commitment as a way to overcome lack of meaning and hope, as well as absurdity. The transcendence is now partly inside (immanence): the Ultimate Being becomes the condition for the possibility of human freedom, independence etc. via the divine plan.

'Stage 5. The Ultimate Being (God) appears in every human commitment, yet transcends it at the same time. The Ultimate Being becomes apparent in history and in revelation ... Transcendence and immanence interact completely. This total integration renders possibly universal solidarity with all human beings. The 'realm of God' becomes a cipher for a peaceful and fully committed human potential, which creates meaning not in options detached from the world but rather in a truly social perspective'.

(pp39ff Oser in Fowler Nipkow and Schweitzer 1992)

Both Oser and Fowler use the concept of stage development to describe changes in faith. It will be noticed that there are points of congruence and differences when comparing Oser's and Fowler's schemes. Both theories rely heavily on the work of Piaget. Because

the main theories are Piagetian based it is prudent to look at this body of work with the purpose of critically demonstrating that the structuralist approach formulated by Piaget is a poor foundation on which to base faith development theories.

Chapter 2 IS THE STAGE SET ?

Some of the problems associated with using Piaget's theories and development as a foundation for exploring faith development.

This chapter will discuss some of the problems of using Piaget's work as a basis for exploring faith development. As will be shown Fowler (1981), Oser (1992) and others have been highly influenced by Piaget and therefore a critical look at the work of this Genetic Epistemologist seems a valid way of discussing stage development in relation to faith development theories. We find that cross cultural studies cast doubt on one of the chief features of faith development theories, the universality of stage structures. It becomes clear that Piaget's structuralism can be regarded as a poor foundation for faith development theories.

Fowler's debt to Piaget

Religious Education (1974 Vol LXIX No 2) carried a report by Fowler of his work up to that point. He writes:

"We are looking at faith as a way of knowing and construing, rather than as that which is known and construed. We are looking at knowing and valuing as patterned processes rather than as knowledge and values. This focus on the structural character of faith knowing has its parallels in theories of cognitive and moral development. Piaget's research has concerned itself, not primarily with the child's knowledge of maths, physics and logic, but rather with the patterns of thinking and reasoning which the child has developed to organise its experience of the world and which therefore underlie its knowledge of the physical environment". (Fowler, 1974)

Fowler's use of Piaget's structuralism

Piaget calls his work "genetic epistemology". His concerns are how knowledge originates and develops. His theories are structural.

There are changes in patterns of thinking. These stages are sequential and hierarchical. Piaget claims that children develop through these stages by a process of adaption to reach equilibrium.

Infancy	0-1.5	Sensorimotor
Early Childhood	2-6	Preoperational or Intuitive
Childhood	7-12	Concrete Operational
Adolescence	13-....	Formal Operations

Fowler adopts this system for his system of faith development:

Stage 0	Infancy and undifferentiated faith
Stage 1	Early childhood - Intuitive - Projective faith
Stage 2	Childhood - Mythic-literal faith
Stage 3	Adolescence - Synthetic Conventional faith

Piaget's scheme stops at Fowler's stage 3. The partial equilibriums of previous stages now culminate in an equilibrium taken on into adulthood.

Fowler has difficulty in basing his theories on Piaget's work at this point for his faith development theory attempts to describe adult stages. Disequilibrium is part of the process of moving into subsequent stages.

Stage 4	Young Adulthood - Individual Reflective Faith
Stage 5	Adulthood - Conjunctive Faith

Fowler describes a sixth stage called 'Universalising Faith'. Only a few people reach this poetic stage - he lists Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King as examples.

Some problems associated with the concepts of Equilibrium & Adaption
There must be questions asked about extending a scheme into adulthood which uses the mechanism of equilibrium. Piaget is very abstract in

his descriptions of the equilibrium process. The goal of the development process is adaption. Adaption is the equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation - between the restructuring of information and restructuring the internal cognitions to enable both to be logically and affectively compatible. Piaget saw as an end product the understanding of identity in objects, situations and principles. The period of Formal Operations is the end of the process. Therefore Disequilibrium would be seen as regression in Piagetian terms.

As G Moran (1983) points out: "The concept of equilibrium is designed to deal with the sticky issues of final causes".

Final causes are the claim that someone knows the end of the process of human development. As Piaget claims that later development is seen in earlier stages then the "final plan" is seen at the beginning. Piaget's final plan or description of maturity as equilibrium, peaking at the formal operations stage, is questionable. Two examples of developmental ideas which are highly critical of Piaget's theory of equilibrium are given.

Gisella Labouvie-Vief sees things very differently from Piaget: "Contradiction must be accepted as part of adult life which accepts, even thrives, on imperfection, compromise and the necessity to fumble". (Labouvie-Vief 1980 p13)

Schaie (1977) sees complexity and contradiction as positive (as opposed to regressive). Schaie sees adult development occurring in response to changing experience. Life changes can be seen as

functions of changing experience not necessarily as inevitable and hierarchical psychological stages (K Schaie 1977).

The Labouvie-Vief (1980) and Schaie (1977) studies are examples of adult development studies which highlight problems with Piaget's scheme. These studies cast doubt on the equilibrium mechanism peaking at the Formal Operations Stage. More importantly they cast doubt on structural stage theory in general. Several areas of study will further illustrate these doubts.

Cultural studies do not validate Piaget's findings

The first area concerns cross-cultural studies. Do people of different cultures develop the same process at the same time? Work with children seems to indicate that Piaget's findings are culturally bound. In The Coming of age in Samoa (1943), Mead tells of the use of conservation of weight at an age that calls into question Piaget's findings using Swiss children (Mead 1955). RM Beard 1969 discovered that English children diverged from Piaget's scheme especially in the areas of physical causality and spatial conceptions. Martorano (1977), using Piaget's material tested 80 children aged 11-15. 33% of subjects varied by two substages and 61% of subjects varied by three substages. Her conclusions were that a formal operational level of performance on one task does not imply an equivalent level of performance on all tasks.

In these and many other examples of research the variation between cultures and between members of a stage are found to be so great that doubt must be cast on the validity of stage theory in general and Piaget's theory in particular. The usefulness of Piaget's work as a

basis for forming a heuristic device to study faith development is severely questioned by these findings.

Young children can use deductive logic

Piaget hypothesises that young children cannot make inferences or use deductive logic. This claim has been tested in many ways.

For example, Piaget claims that children of four, five or six respond randomly to the question which is the longer of two rods when the rods have only been compared with a third rod. And yet Bryant and Trabasso (1971) and Harris (as quoted by M Donaldson 1978) produce results that mean that children are not nearly as limited in their ability to reason deductively as Piaget claimed. Quite young children can use logic in an "if so then . . ." procedure in such a way that calls into question this stage being limiting, sequential and hierarchical.

Young children can make inferences

Other studies have found that very young children can fill in the missing gaps of a story or extrapolate an ending, thereby making inferences, see for example Hewson (in Donaldson 1978). This criticism is striking at the heart of any faith development theory which uses stages as a foundation, for it calls into question the differences that are thought to be found between adults and children.

The difference between adults and children are not as great as Piaget would claim

In one of Harris' experiments (in Donaldson 1978) he asked four-year olds which strips of paper were longer and found that most four-year

olds could use logic to produce the correct results if the questions and the steps were given with care.

On the other hand, experiments such as those of Wason and Johnson-Laird (1972) and Johnson-Laird Legrenzi and Legrenzi (1972) show that many adults (even university students) find "if so then" reasoning difficult if the questions make little sense to real life experience.

Wason and Johnson-Laird (1972) asked university students to prove a rule. There were four cards. Two of them had a letter, two a number.

<u>E</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>
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The students were told that each card had a letter on one side and a number on the other. Their task was to name those cards (and only those cards) that needed to be turned over to prove the rule. "If a card carries a vowel its reverse side will be an even number". This task proved difficult. Then Johnson-Laird, Legrenzi and Legrenzi (1972) produced another version of the task. This was the rule. "If a letter is sealed it carries a 5p stamp". Which envelopes (and only those envelopes) must be turned over to prove the rule? Only two out of twenty-four subjects produced the correct answer in the first test. Twenty-one out of twenty-four subjects could do the second test correctly.

It appears that adults and four-year olds are closer in ability to use logic than Piaget believes. This is not to say they think in the same way but we are encouraged to look further than stage theory to describe cognitive and therefore faith development.

Another question is raised by these studies. The ability to use logic in one area of life or domain is not necessarily carried over to other domains. A scientist may use logic in his work but quite happily fit contradictory statements into a faith system and not call it a paradox. A child may be able to infer the ending of a story but miss the point of a question concerning conservation because his language system is embedded in a reality different from his questioner.

The question of decentering

Another major criticism of Piaget's work concerns the ability to decentre. The ability to decentre is also an important aspect of Fowler's theories. Fowler sees the maturing process moving through stages from ego-centricity to the time when self is relinquished as a centring reference point.

'Intuitive-projective children exhibit the cognitive ego centrism we spoke of in part II. Being as yet unable to co-ordinate and compare two different perspectives in the same object they simply assume without question that the experiences and perception they have of a phenomenon represent the only available perspective'.

'The movement towards Universalizing faith [the final stage] is marked by the radical completion of two tendencies we have seen developing in the course of earlier stages. The first involves decentering from self'. (Fowler 1981 p123)

Piaget's experiments with the mountain and the photographs showing different perspectives of the mountain seems to show that children up to the age of eight or nine cannot choose the correct photograph showing the perspective from a place other than theirs.

And yet the studies by Hughes (in Donaldson 1978) seem to show that very young children can put themselves "in other's shoes".

Hughes made two walls intersect like a cross. A policeman doll was put in position. The task was to place a boy doll in a position so that it would be hidden from the policeman. Thirty children between the ages of 3.5 years and 5.5 years gave 90% correct answers. The reason given for these results, which are irreconcilable with Piaget's claims, is that the purpose made sense. The children in Hughes' experiment understood the intention of the boy who wanted to hide.

Experiments such as these do not show that children are not ego-centric. Nor could it be claimed that adults do not show signs of ego-centricity. The ability to decentre does not appear to develop smoothly over time as can be seen when tribalism, racism, agism or any other criterion used to exclude becomes a basis for making judgements. What is in question is the extent of the differences between children and adults. The significance of the differences in the ability to decentre appears to be far less than either Piaget or Fowler would claim.

In the Journal of Psychology and Christianity Ford-Grabowsky (1986) asks "What developmental phenonemon is Fowler studying?" She argues that Fowler has confused two tracks of human development that cannot logically be combined:- namely ego development and spiritual growth. Even though the concept of 'ego' plays an important part in Piaget's work and Fowler's work, both use the word loosely. Mary Ford-Grabowsky invites us to think more carefully about self and ego using Jungian definitions. The ego as defined by Jung refers to the centre of consciousness; the self is the totality of conscious and

unconscious elements. This criticism of Piaget's and Fowler's work illustrates how terminology is used loosely by both Piaget and Fowler and indicates how lack of rigour in using terminology can lead to distortion of meaning.

It could be said that many of the studies critical of Piaget's work accuse Piaget himself of finding it difficult to decentre. He is perceived as making claims from his point of view with little regard to what is happening to the children. His critics accuse him of taking the children's response as fact with little attempt to discover if the experiment introduces its own error. It can be seen that some experiments are not clear to children and a change of an adjective makes it clear what is meant by the experimenter's question. McGarrigle (quoted in Donaldson 1978) has tried a number of experiments to try to understand what is happening in Piagetian tests.

Clearer questions bring different results

In McGarrigle's experiment where white dots lead to a chair then a sequence of red dots lead on to a table, the children were asked two questions:

- a) Are there more red steps to go to the chair or more steps to go to the table?
- b) Are there more steps to go to the chair or more steps to go to the table?

36% of children answered question a) correctly. 68% of children answered b) correctly.

In other experiments he found that the questions being answered by

the children were not the questions being asked (in Donaldson 1978).

There are many experiments showing the pressure to give explanations, to conform, to make a response, to comply. This pressure is there for children as well as adults. When children do not understand the question they make inferences in order to comply. In doing so, they may include classes of information normally regarded as being outside the boundaries of the experiment. They may do this naturally as did the boy who chose the statement 'Tommy would wish his hair was red' as the conclusion from two premises postulating a connection between red hair and the ability to play football well and gave his reason, "because I would wish my hair was red".

Flavell points out:

"The child may also not entertain the possibility that the adult experimenter could be deceiving him, although that is, of course, exactly what the authority figure is doing You might not entertain it either if the Pope or George Washington were testing you". (Flavell 1963)

Mary Ford-Grabowsky (1987) cites an example of another type of misunderstanding.

"He protested that the interview had not asked him about his faith. He was not the first of our interviewees to make this remark. Apparently, when people agree to talk about their faith, they expect a different set of questions, an opportunity to relate their beliefs about God, for example".

This is an example of using questions from one domain and interpreting them with ideas from another. Although not without merit it may be asked how possible it is to ask a psychological cognitive development question and interpret it by using part of Tillich's theology as Fowler attempts to do.

Some of the criticism of Piaget's methodology is outlined by Brown

and Desforge (1979). They point out that Piaget's records of questions and responses are selective and mix fact and interpretation. Replication, therefore, is difficult. The interpretative nature of the results does not allow opportunity to eliminate alternative accounts for results. There is little attention to language development even though the theories depend heavily on verbal data. There is little attention to the child's ability to comprehend. These are fundamental procedural flaws.

Criticism of Piaget's terminology

As has already been stated it is claimed that Piaget has based his work on loose terminology. Martin (quoted in Brown & Desforages 1979) argues that Piaget uses key mathematical terms in imprecise ways. McNamara (in Donaldson 1982) argues in exactly the same way.

Piaget claims that an understanding of number develops from an understanding of classes. Seriation, he claims, develops as a procedure for distinguishing between class members. McNamara is highly critical of this view. First, he points out, children understand number before they understand the logic of classes. Secondly, operations are not the same as arithmetic operations. Thirdly, classes are groups of objects sharing certain attributes, whereas arithmetic procedures can be applied to sets and to arbitrary collections of objects. Finally, it is only possible to use seriation to distinguish between set members when distinguishable features have already been noted. McNamara claims it is untenable to hold Piaget's view that the growth of arithmetic understanding is a result of the development of logic. If loose terminology and poor use of symbolic logic as a structural account of competence results

in an inversion of a supposed hierarchical relation, doubt is cast on the whole claim to see stages as sequential and hierarchical.

Performance and competence

Chomsky (1965) in his work in linguistics makes a distinction between performance and competence. Piaget appears to be unsure of the difference between performance and competence. Performance refers to observable acts of eg language production. Competence refers to the knowledge of the rules which underlie performance. In the study of linguistics, competence is not a psychological test of performance and does not describe psychological operations. (Greene 1986 p18)

Some would claim (eg Flavell and Wohlwill quoted in Brown & Desforges 1979 p119) that the competence model

'is a formal, logical presentation of the structure of some cognitive domain whilst the performance (or automaton) model represents the psychological processes by which information in competence gets used in real structures'.

Fowler - Loose terminology and the problems of defining stages

According to Greene (1986) an aim of cognitive psychology is to describe 'all the knowledge which is responsible for language behaviour, including processes involved in the production and understanding [of language]' (p19). Clear descriptions of the knowledge and process are necessary, therefore, to describe cognitive development.

Fowler, basing his work on Piaget, uses descriptions of knowledge and processes to define stages.

'The gift or emergent strength of this stage is the birth of imagination, the ability to unify and grasp the

experience-world in powerful images and as presented in stories that register the [person's] intuitive understanding and feeling toward the ultimate conditions of existence'. (Fowler 1981 p134)

This could be a description of William Blake. It, in fact, refers to Fowler's Stage I - the intuitive-projective faith of early childhood. These descriptions of knowledge and process are not formal, logical or clearly defined. The same difficulties arise with Piaget's work where there appears to be a circular argument or relationship between competence and performance and descriptions that are not well defined.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with some of the many problems associated with using Piaget's Theories as a basis for faith development studies.

Piaget has claimed to:

- a) describe and define the properties of each stage
- b) describe the goal of cognitive development, and
- c) describe the process of moving from one stage to another.

Through reference to published work I have tried to show there is doubt about each of these claims. Cross cultural studies and studies within each stage show such variation to bring doubt about Piaget's ability to define each stage and also about the possibility of there being any absolute age-stage boundaries. Piaget fails to describe the goal of cognitive development and the studies of many working in the field of andragogy bring severe questions to bear on Piaget's final stage. Finally, I have tried to show that Piaget's methodology is as suspect as his claims. Thus it is the contention of this

chapter that if Fowler is describing a developmental reality, a foundation firmer than Piaget's work would be a necessary tool. It appears that by using Piaget's work he has continued the process of confusing distinct areas of thought eg cognitive development, ego development, spiritual development and religious development.

In this chapter I posed the question 'Is Piaget's structuralist theory a good basis for faith development theories ?' I believe I have shown that there is evidence of too many flaws in Piaget's work to act as a foundation for a different area of research.

In discussing Piaget's work Moran writes: "In Piaget's scheme the political, economic, religious and institutional are effectively banished in a linguistic universe composed only of the cognitive and affective". (Moran 1983 p56)

In the 'serious play of looking at the human life of faith', Fowler has probably played too much. What is clear is that faith is not only "embedded in a tradition" it is also embedded in language.

It is to the Spiritual writers of the Western Christian tradition I now turn as this is the main tradition used by Fowler in support of his theory of faith development.

Chapter 3 DOES THIS LADDER HAVE RUNGS ?

An examination of Western Christian tradition

This chapter continues the process of laying bare some of the assumptions underlying faith development theories, theories which assume that faith develops naturally sequentially and universally.

Initially, the feasibility of relating concepts from one domain of study to concepts from another is explored. Then taking the position that it is useful to do so, the writings in the spiritual tradition are examined to see if they recognise universality, stability and sequence. I have chosen a cross-section of writers who discussed the question of faith change in such a way that we can examine their works for evidence of stable universal and hierarchical stages despite the differences in terminology.

The witnesses from the Old Testament, the New Testament, Christian theologians and mystics were chosen so that a cross section of ideas could be examined from a line in time. They were also chosen for their endeavours to generalise about the human condition of their time in relation to our quest.

It is not the intention to give an encyclopaedic account of the Spiritual Tradition. The selection of writers proved difficult and it is certain that many important figures have been excluded. What was attempted was a search for evidence of understanding of human development. The witnesses used have proved influential throughout the ages. Either by rejection (eg Wesley's rejection of mysticism)

or inclusion (the allegorical exegesis of Puritanism) the guides from previous ages have proved foundational to the changing ideas of the faith community of later ages. These writers were thinking and reflecting in a Pre-Copernican world. Authority and truth were bound up in the faith community. Many of the 'Saints' (eg Julian of Norwich) struggled to remain within the Truth of Mother Church whilst still exploring at the edges of acceptability. Gallileo, amongst others, challenged the hegemony of truth. As a scientist observation alone could supply the truth, Logical Empiricism, verification by observation became the natural way to examine human behaviour (at least outside the faith community).

Although this chapter will show that the spiritual tradition of Western Christianity recognises changes over time in the way humans approach spirituality and faith it remains unclear whether universal stages are apparent in the tradition. The process of analysis is made difficult because of the way the writers use language and rarely define their lexicon. Analysis is difficult because the writers tend to write from within a faith system and hypotheses are not tested against data or ideas from outside that framework. The rise of modernism has seen a change in emphasis. Some writers of spiritual or faith development now attempt to use evidence from secular systems of thought. The scientific process of explanation is difficult to compare with the faith process of interpretation as we will see. But with the rise of a post modern critique of logical empiricism there is a recognition that truth is susceptible to cultural influence.

In G Moran's analysis of the developmental theories of Piaget and

Erikson he asserts "In freeing themselves from a determinism of beginnings, both Piaget and Erikson have to find a way to avoid a determinism of the end" "Both" he claims, "are concerned with interaction between organism and environment" (Moran 1983 p24).

Dalrymple's words remind us that progression is "embedded" in the tradition.

'The Christian who prays involves himself in a double journey, a journey inwards and a journey outwards. The journey inwards is the journey from the issues of this world towards God. It is a journey towards the mind of Christ, beyond feelings of expediency and fear of what people will say to truth itself. It is followed by the journey outwards, back from the depths where we meet God to the issues facing us in our everyday lives, a journey which we now undertake with a new sensitivity to the will of God.' (Dalrymple 1979 p17)

The Quest and some difficulties of relating one era's religious thought to a different era and one domain of study to concepts from another.

In this chapter the question is asked, 'Can we find evidence, in the spiritual writings, for asserting that faith or spirituality develops naturally, sequentially and universally?' The quote from Dalrymple clearly dispels all illusions that this is an easy task. Is it possible, for example to understand phrases such as 'journey to the Mind of Christ' from a position outside the faith community. If these phrases and ideas are comprehensible to other world views (eg a behavioural science) are they able to be related to phrases from other writers such as 'Union with God' or 'entering the final mansion' ?

Martin Thornton, a contemporary writer, asserts that

'Spiritual progress is embedded in the tradition; the

move to what is technically and somewhat ambiguously called perfection hence the host of classical titles that speak of journey, scales, ladders and ways'. (Thornton 1984 p94)

Dalrymple speaks of stages in the spiritual life:

'The first stage is to stop being possessive of world things'. 'We learn to let go and let God take over'. (Dalrymple 1979 p28)

This quote reminds us of the need for a careful examination of the Tradition. Does Dalrymple use the concept of stage in a similar way to, for example, James Fowler ?

Clearly there are different approaches to religious phenomena.

Lawson and McCauley (1990) are helpful in describing some of the different ways of approaching religious phenomena. Intellectualism, Symbolism, Structuralism and Logical Empiricism, they assert, are searches for explanations.

According to Lawson and McCauley (1990) an intellectualist approach to religious phenomena centres on four claims:

1. Human beings are rational.
2. Their interest in explaining the world reflects this.
3. The idioms of explanation differ across times and cultures and
4. Religion is only one manifestation of explanatory systems.

The intellectualist approach has the difficulty of producing a workable semantic as idioms of explanation differ so widely across history and culture.

Lawson and McCauley describe the symbolist position as the search for the relationship between symbols and society. Two of these underlie

the symbolist approach.

1. Humans use encoding and decoding devices to represent their most cherished understandings.
2. Symbolic systems are not explanations of the world but are representations of the psychological and social systems.

Structuralists describe myths (as narrative) and rituals (as actions) which manifest particular features of human understanding. An analysis of mythic thought would therefore disclose a theory about the mind and not about the way the world is.

The structuralist and symbolic approaches keep us aware that the perceived structures of the human mind or human society change in different times and cultures.

These approaches to religious phenomena are very different from each other and from religious ways of thinking and are therefore helpful in keeping a balanced examination of the tradition of spirituality of western Christianity.

Logical empiricism draws a distinction between theory and observation. But as PM Churchland (1979) points out few if any observations are independent of a theoretical framework. This understanding is important when analysing faith development theories which claim to be based upon empirical evidence.

These approaches to religion and religious activities are different from theology inasmuch as they attempt to explain religious phenomena. Generally, theology has made little attempt to explain

human religious behaviour. Theology interprets behaviour in the light of an organising set of beliefs. The source material to be used in this chapter is almost exclusively interpretive. The material (in the main) will not have been written to explain historical strategies, dialectical strategies, psychological theories or social theories.

An historical strategy will attempt to locate the religious phenomenon in a cultural time.

A dialectical strategy has the goal of explaining why societies have the structure they have.

Psychological theories attempt to explain or represent mental stages.

Social theories attempt to locate religious phenomena in the controlling social structure.

Why use the tradition of Western Christianity ?

When discussing Systematic Theology, Gavin D'Costa writes

'The general direction of this argument so far has been that both mainstream and radical forms of systematic theology are locked in an intellectual tradition of Western Hegemony, supported by the intellectual institutions of learning which have generally marked out reality in a fatally myopic fashion'. (D'Costa Theology Vol XCV 1992)

Published faith development theories are, in the main, also part of this Western hegemonic tradition. Even though the works of the spiritual writers of the past were not organised to speak to historical, dialectic, psychological or sociological theories it can be legitimately asked whether the theories of human behaviour written

in a theological framework support the human behaviour theories of faith development written within a logical empirical framework. If D'Costa is correct, then it is also legitimate to examine some of the influences of Western hegemony to ascertain congruence or disagreement between the tradition and faith development theories. In terms of an education programme the discussion will use the ideas of curriculum, hidden curriculum and null (or absent) curriculum as part of the background. It will not be possible to give more than a glimpse of each "curriculum" to be examined. Much of the hidden curriculum such as social control, gender, or power issues cannot be studied in this chapter, even though these aspects are very important to the dominant ways of viewing the world and human behaviour. Truth it will be shown in a later chapter can be seen to be one of the variables of cultural hegemony. The witnesses will be examined for evidence about their understanding of human development. This evidence may be visible by its absence.

The Old Testament: Group Identity, Ethical Understanding and Individual Development

One major source of influence on Western Christianity has been the collected works of the Old Testament. It can be seen that there are many diverse strands of understanding in these books as the theology comes under different influences over time.

Whereas Christian spirituality (eg St John of the Cross) describes Union with God as a goal, the Old Testament and Jewish spirituality in general strives for a cleaving to God. In the main progressive stages of faith development remain in the background. What is

emphasised is moral development. Lionel Blue (1983) quotes the beginning of Jewish Blessings as a way to describe the Rabbinic path to holiness, 'Blessed are you, Lord God of the Universe, who makes us holy through the performance of His commandments'. (in Wakefield 1983) This illustrates the Old Testament emphasis on maturity measured as performance rather than recognising the developing cognitive stages of current faith development theories.

One of the prophets of the Old Testament asks

'And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8)

These ideas sum up the marks of a mature Jew. Do the marks occur naturally? For the Jew God is graceful and all the people were to:

'Love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart, and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your head, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates'. (Deut 6:9-4)

This teaching was for every person and for all ages. It appears to be aimed at developing group identity and ethical understandings rather than aimed at developing personal maturity or personal holiness. The Exodus motif colours much of the writing of the Old Testament. Redemption is mainly a national concern but occasionally can be seen to be personal. Israel reflected on the time some of the tribes gained freedom from slavery in Egypt and became "servants of Yahweh". This motif became a symbol for other moments of redemption, or setting free. Psalm 130:8 for example reads: "It is he who redeems Israel from all their sins". This metaphysical

redemption is rare in Old Testament writings and by far the most common usage is concerned with the relief of suffering, political persecution and loss of wealth.

There is little emphasis on personal development. The "Story" of the Old Testament is of a Nation - a nation which can do little if anything to redeem itself. In fact part of the Exodus story which weaves its way through the Old Testament is summed up by the words

'And Moses said to the people; "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord which he will work for you today The Lord will fight for you, you only have to be still' (Exodus 13:13)

Maturity (human development) recognised as holiness or wisdom is seen to be given by God, certainly in the early theological stories. Saul, for example, prophesied "when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him" (1 Sam 10:10) But just as quickly "The Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul and an Evil Spirit from the LORD tormented him" (1 Sam 16:14) There is little evidence here of any understanding of stability of a stage position. This brief examination of Old Testament witness would seem to suggest that greater emphasis was placed on the corporate and ethical nature of faith compared with the personal and developmental nature of faith. So far there is a silence about humans developing through stable and universal stages. This silence about human spiritual development is continued by the diverse witnesses of the New Testament.

The New Testament: Group Identity, Ethical Understandings and Individual Development

Mark, the earliest Gospel according to most commentators, summarises the Christian understanding of his day as: "The time is fulfilled,

and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe in the Gospel"
(Mark 1:15) There are no schemes to develop spirituality to
apprehend the Good News.

The letters, some of which predate and others of which were written
well after Mark's Gospel are also vague about the notion of
developing spirituality. Even though there is doubt about author and
recipient, for ease of expression I have kept the scriptural titles.
The Philippian Church were exhorted to work out their salvation in
fear and trembling. (Philippians 2:12)

The Colossian Church read: "Him we proclaim, warning every man, and
teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man
mature in Christ" (Colossians 1:28)

The Ephesian Church was told:

'The body of Christ is to be built up until we all attain
to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of
God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of
Christ so that we may no longer be children tossed to and
fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the
cunning of men ' (Eph 4:13,14)

Wisdom was seen by Paul as a gift of the Spirit (11 or 12) and the
fruit of the Spirit was seen as taking time to ripen and mature. (Gal
5:22)

This would appear to accord with current faith development theories
and is one reason why these theories are taken as descriptions of
truth by Christian educators. But in Christian terms the ripening of
the fruits of the Spirit was to be understood from an eschatological
viewpoint - there was always a 'not yet' of any mature stage. The

fruits of perfection could be expected to ripen only in people of the faith community. Stages were not seen as being universal.

We can see the importance attached to being in community. The community possessed the stories, wisdom and ideas that would bring salvation.

Salvation, perfection, the new man, putting on Christ, are descriptions of maturity. Is this maturity universal? Are there steps along the way to God as the gnostics believed? Does maturity come naturally? One writer at least answers these questions succinctly:

'But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing it is the gift of God' (Eph 2:4-8)

The writer of this passage refutes the gnostic idea of stages to God. Salvation is a gift to be received and therefore is neither universal nor part of a 'natural' process.

Generally the New Testament witnesses remain quiet about human spiritual development. The early writings are steeped in the concept of the Eschaton, the End Time which may account for the null curriculum. Development was not a possibility if the world was about to end. The concept of Eschatology will be explored further in chapter 5.

The Early Philosophers

In this section I examine the work of Plato, Aristotle, Philo, Plotinus and Augustine. In these writings, dating from 5th Century BC to 4th Century AD there can be seen the developing influences on and within Christianity which eventually led to the formulation of stage theory. What I show, though, is that while changes in faith are recognised these changes are not universal stages and there is little congruence between the schemes.

Plato's (c 429-347 BC) influence on Western Christianity and particularly on Christian mysticism cannot be overemphasised. Platonic thought can even be seen in the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament and a comparison between Platonic and Judaic thought will illustrate similarities and differences.

Plato asserted that right action was most important. Right action cannot exist without knowledge. For Judaism knowledge is centred upon the Torah and is found in the faith community. In the Republic, on the other hand, Plato describes the soul as being in a cave, and having to make the upward journey to the sun. The philosopher, in order to live the good life (which is subordinate to the quest for knowledge) must come back to the cave for the benefits of fellow citizens (Rep 520c). The philosopher escapes from the cave and ascends from the shadows to reality. The contemplation of absolute beauty is the most perfect life for man.

We can see that Plato describes stages in the life of a 'Philosopher'. The journey to maturity is the journey from a state of ignorance to the contemplation of reality. Contemplation

supercedes right action. Contemplation leads to the living of a good life.

So Plato's scheme for philosophers is:

1. Ignorance
2. Escape through knowledge
3. Contemplation of absolute beauty
4. Living the good life.

As only philosophers can expect to follow this pattern, the stages are not universal.

Aristotle (d 322) described a two stage distinction between the moral virtues of liberality and temperance and the intellectual virtues of wisdom and intelligence. The moral life was a preparation for and subordinate to the life of contemplation. In fact contemplation, according to Aristotle, makes us like God in his self-contemplation.

Neither Plato nor Aristotle wrote about a natural progression through the stages but both were highly influential in later models of progression through stages of human development.

While stages or changes in faith are recognised by both Plato and Aristotle, the schemes are not congruent and show no expectation of being universal. But both philosophers influenced thinkers of later ages who produced their own pattern of stages of faith change.

For Philo (c25 BC to c40 AD) the fusion of the active, moral and contemplative life led to inner freedom - a freedom from the

domination of the passions. The primary aim of this freedom is the "worship of the self evident, who is better than the God, purer than the One and more Primordial than the monad"

In his numerous works Philo assumes a stage-like progression but he is silent as to whether these stages occur naturally or universally.

Philo's work is thought to be the first writing to interpret the Bible in an allegorical way and his writings also allow us to glimpse some of the influences and differences between Judaic and Platonic systems of thought.

As WP Davies writes:

'Nor is the close relationship of God Himself to the Law to be lightly treated: for Judaism this meant that religion, revealed in the Law, was no secondary afterthought but coeval with God himself'.

Davies continues:

'Again these emphases raise the possibility that within Judaism there may have been conceptions not far removed from the Platonic doctrine of ideas, albeit expressed far more naively than in Plato'. (Davies 1984)

Davies asserts that

'This attempt to equate revelation and nature, philosophy and law led Philo to use the allegorical method'.

Religious texts were interpreted both to gain information of the natural order and also 'for "sobre intoxication"'. For the duration of the time of "Ecstasy" the faculties are replaced by God as they recede before him.

Plotinus (205-270 AD) developed Platonic and allegoric methods and his work shows a five stage ascent. Associated with neo-Platonism

this fivefold path is usually condensed to three stages: purgation, illumination and union. The result of this threefold path is freedom from the material world and union with the One.

Plotinus charts his stages as follows:

- 1) Awareness of the baseness of things and especially the soul
- 2) The process of purification
- 3) The process of introversion
- 4) The contemplation of the Beautiful Mind
- 5) Ecstasy - Direct contact with the One

The final stage is "the flight of the alone to the Alone". It is not clear whether these stages need to be developed or if they occur as a result of natural maturation. Neither is it clear if the stages are expected to be universal.

Augustine, born 354, is one of the most influential Christian thinkers. Of interest to this study is Augustine's understanding of salvation and grace. At first he believed that an unbeliever can make the first move and turn freely to God. In his later theology Augustine saw that faith is a gift from God. Grace is not given to all, but only to God's elect. In his work The City of God Augustine describes two cities. One is predestined to reign eternally with God, the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil. Only grace, according to Augustine, could free nature from sin, and grace is freely given but only to the elect (14:28-15:2).

There is no evidence to suggest that Augustine recognised a universal passage to salvation.

The Early Fathers

The Early Fathers do not give us a clear picture of naturally occurring stages, even though there is discussion in their extant works concerning perfection. For example, Ignatius (d 117) asserted that we become perfect as we accept both the outwardness of Christ's flesh and the inwardness of his being with the Father. Clement (c 95) appears to have taken on the Platonic ideal with Stoic overtones when he asserts that the life of perfection begins with faith and ends with knowledge and also that it is important to master our disorderly feelings.

Ireneus (c 180) clearly sums up the belief that there is movement from one state of being to another when he writes "We are to be made". Making belongs to God. If we think we are already finished, we shall remain stunted. But the writings remain unclear as to the relationship between natural progression, grace and effort.

The Desert Fathers of the Fourth Century

The Desert Fathers are no clearer about the relationship between progress, maturity and effort: "Here we discover the second great contribution of the desert fathers to the history of spirituality: their desire to interrelate as clearly as possible the life of labour and the life of the heart. It was not a simple task. Agathon (4th Century) felt that inner watchfulness mattered more than bodily asceticism: it was the fruit of the spiritual life, while labour was the foliage that offered protective covering and pleasure to the eye (Agathon,8). Another elder put matters almost in reverse, so that teaching and reflection became the foliage, while action was the fruit (Nau,252). Neither text, however, concerns itself with mere

sequence, as if to suggest that one achievement grew from the other: both were grafted upon something deeper, the man himself. Arsenius added another interesting inversion. 'As far as you are able, strive to make your inner life a work in accord with God, and then you will overcome the passions that afflict us from without' (Arsenius,9). Clearly there were few set prejudices as to what constituted the inner and the outer dimensions of a monk's life. Rather, a complex interweaving of attitude and endeavour characterized the asceticism of the desert (John the Dwarf, 34)." (Source unknown)

The position so far

A few things are becoming apparent through this study. The lexicon used at different times is difficult to translate across the times. Secondly, theological words such as perfection or goal of life do not easily translate into words in the cognitive developmental lexicon. Concepts such as grace and God's activity do not help the process of understanding the tradition of spiritual writers from an empirical viewpoint. Thirdly, there seems little evidence to suggest that the four Vias of Eckhart (see below) or the three stages of Neo-Platonism, for example, equate with the stages of faith as outlined by Fowler (1981) or Oser (1991).

What is evident in these writings is that people who are actively involved in the faith community can expect to see changes over time, in the way they pray, apprehend God or the world, and understand their faith.

Our quest continues to try to understand if these changes occur naturally, sequentially, universally and in stages, or whether other

factors influence these changes. It appears unsatisfactory to hold the view that words such as 'God' or 'grace' are sufficient to explain the phenomenon of change. But the witnesses of the spiritual tradition do not appear to support the view that the changes are genetically inevitable.

The Mystical Tradition of Western Christianity

The Ladder of Perfection, to use Hilton's(d 1396) phrase, gathers many of the symbols used to talk about the Spiritual changes that can occur ie moving up, perfection, grace, hard work. Hilton divides the Christian life into two stages, separated by a "dark night". The first stage sees the reformation of faith. The second and higher stage sees the reformation of feeling. In the dark night the soul is detached from earthly things and goes on a Pilgrimage. The soul leaves behind all good and bad things in order to recognise its poverty.

The unknown author of the Cloud of Unknowing(14th century) agrees that the journey, the road, is uphill all the way to the end. The journey of the soul 'to be oned with God' takes effort and grace and although four stages are outlined, the author of the Cloud is clear that this `way' is not for everyone.

"And I beg you for the love of God not to let anyone see this book unless he is in your judgement able to benefit from it in the sense that I described earlier when I said who should set out to be a contemplative and when he should begin". (Wolters (trans) 1961 p149)

So the cloud is for the person specialising in contemplation. There is no evidence that the book describes universal progression even though stages are described. It is difficult to know how faith

development theories deal with the following paragraph unless it is to put the author's views into a 'stage' defined by a modern view of the maturing process.

'If you ask me how you are to begin, I must pray Almighty God, of his grace and courtesy, to tell you himself. Indeed it is good for you to realise that I cannot teach you. It is not to be wondered at. For this is the work of God alone, deliberately wrought in whatever soul he chooses, irrespective of the merits of that particular soul'. (Wolters (trans) 1961 p100)

Four Continental Mystics

Meister Eckhart born 1260 was to develop a fourfold path in place of the Neo Platonic model 1) The Via Positiva 2) Via Negativa 3) Via Creativa 4) Via Transformativa. Eckhart appears to be positive about the natural way the path unfolds through these vias: "All creatures are by nature endeavouring to be like God". But it is not clear if he means the same thing as a current epistemologist or ethologist. Eckhart continues:

'The heavens would not revolve unless they followed on the track of God or of His likeness. If God were not in all things, nature would stop dead, not working not wanting'. (Fleming 1988 p30)

In summarising a section of Eckhart's thinking Ursula Fleming writes about the method of encouraging progress.

'It is a process of letting go', letting go of the soul powers, intellect, memory, will, the senses, to achieve freedom and stillness to 'wait upon God We have to work to prepare ourselves but we do not have to worry'. (Fleming 1988 p38)

Eckhart looks forward to perfection:

'The first article is: The Father begets his son in me and I am the same Son and not another. We are not heirs just because we are sons but because we are the Son we are heirs'. (Blackney 1941 p280)

A longer passage may help us enquire if Eckhart knew about human development:

'The Eternal Birth is constant Revelation. How is God

ever being born in man? Look you, suppose a man hews out and brings to light the divine form which God has wrought into his nature, then God's image in him stands revealed. Birth must be taken in the sense of revelation, the Son being said to be born of the Father, because he reveals the Father as Father. So the more and more clearly God's image shows in man, the more evidently God is born in him. And by God's eternal birth in him we understand that his image stands fully revealed . . . this man is ever being born in God. How can a man ever be born in God? Lo! by revealing this form in a man the man grows like unto God, for the form of man is the same as the image of God which is God in every respect. The more he is like God the more he is one. So man's eternal birth in God we understand to mean ideal man refulgent in God's image.' (Fleming 1988 p43)

Eckhart talks of God's infinite capacity to give and the soul's infinite capacity to receive and although the biblical phrase "We are made in the image of God" is important to his thinking, Eckhart is not explicit whether the processes of `receiving' or `birthing' occur naturally or universally. (Fleming 1988 p124)

Ignatius Loyola

George E Ganss SJ writing about the Spirituality of Ignatius Loyola 1491-1556 asserts:

'In his Spiritual exercises he applied his world view towards helping individual persons to discover God's will for themselves: How can they by wise and prayerful decisions fit themselves more co-operatively into his saving plan, in order to bring him greater glory from themselves and others'. (Ganss in Wakefield (Ed) 1983 p225).

Under Fundamental Principle No 23 of the Spiritual Exercises we find:

'Man has been created to praise, reverence and serve our Lord God, thereby saving his soul. Everything else on earth has been created for man's sake, to help him to achieve the purpose for which he has been created. So it follows that man has to use them as far as they help and abstain from them where they hinder his purpose. Therefore we need to train ourselves to be impartial in our attitude towards all created reality, provided we are at liberty to do so, that is to say it is not forbidden. So that, as far as we are concerned, we do not set our hearts on good health as against bad health, prosperity as against poverty, a good reputation as against a bad

one, a long life as against a short one, and so on.
The one thing we desire, the one thing we choose is what
is more likely to achieve the purpose of our creating'.
(Corbishley (trans) 1963 p20).

Spiritual maturity is seen by Ignatius Loyola as conformity to God's
will and the 'overcoming of self and the regulation of one's life on
the basis of a decision arrived at without any unregulated motive'.
(Corbishley (trans) 1963 p2).

Another two writers who have influenced subsequent Christian ideas
about progressing in faith are St Teresa of Avila (1515-82) and St
John of the Cross (1542-91).

Teresa of Avila wrote, amongst many titles, The Way of Perfection for
her nuns. Her works describe intermediate stages between meditation
and 'spiritual marriage'. St John of the Cross worked with Teresa.
He used the metaphor of the dark nights to describe the purgation of
the soul before its ultimate union with God.

The images of 'The Interior Castle' and the 'Ascent to Mount Carmel'
would appear to indicate that St Teresa of Avila and St John of the
Cross would ascribe to stage theory, at least when it comes to the
prayer life of the religious. On a closer reading their models
appear much less stable and hierarchical than stage theory would
assume. Oser (1992) sums up the stability of stages:

'A comprehensive description of the developmental
hierarchy of the religious judgement stage would require
spelling out each of seven polar dimensions for each of
the five stages separately, demonstrating that they form
a structured pattern - the distinct quality we can call
'stage''. (Fowler, Nipkow and Schweitzer (eds) 1992 p39)

Ruth Burrows writes of St John of the Cross:

"John was trained in Scholasticism and understandably

employs scholastic philosophy with its view of man and the world as his framework. This philosophy with its endless divisions and sub-divisions is alien to our way of thinking. We seek to unify". (Burrows 1987 p10)

Perhaps Ruth Burrows has not come across modern faith development theories.

Writing is sequential. Word follows word. Idea flows from idea. St John expresses the idea of the soul's journey to Union with God. The soul has to pass through the Dark night of the senses and the Dark night of the Spirit. Sequences of words do not necessarily denote sequences of stable stages. For example the concept "faith" is mentioned only in Book II of the Ascent of Mount Carmel, the Dark Night of the Spirit. This was not meant by John that faith does not enter the Dark night of the senses of Book I. Neither are we to understand that the nights are totally sequential and hierarchical.

As W Trueman Dicken (1963) writes:

'The Christian enters these nights as his or her spiritual stamina allows, but they are not strictly successive insofar as they overlap and interlock, and the most rudimentary disciplines can never be neglected even at the highest level of sanctity'. (Dicken p371)

This is not to say that development and progression are not part of John's model. John clearly sees people developing along certain paths. The Nights may be occurring simultaneously in part but his understanding is that in the Night of the Spirit the soul experiences severe discomfort as it approaches Union. St John of the Cross recognises that few people reach the Stage of Union and may shrink back from discomfort.

'But it greatly behoves the soul to have much constancy and patience in these tribulations and trials, whether they come from without or from within, and are spiritual

or corporeal, great or small. It must take them all as from the hand of God for its healing and its good, and not flee from them, since they are health to the soul. This the Wise Man counsels, in these words: If the spirit of him that is powerful descends upon thee, leave not thy place (that is, the place and abode of thy healing, by which is meant that trial); for the healing, he says, will cause great sins to cease. That is, it will cut the thread of thy sins and imperfections, which is evil habit, that they go not farther. And thus interior perils and trials quench and purify the evil and imperfect habits of the soul. Wherefore we must count it a great favour when the Lord sends us interior trials, realizing that there are few who deserve to suffer that they may reach the goal of this lofty state of attainment to perfection through suffering.' (Peers (trans) 1935 p54)

St John's descriptions of the Night's discomfort do not seem congruent with the Piagetian theory of equilibrium/disequilibrium where adaption is seen to be the equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation.

Would a recognition of the differences of semantics and lexicons allow us to perceive greater agreement between St John's findings and the later stages of faith as outlined by Fowler:

"Conjunctive Faith (Mid-life and beyond): The embrace of polarities in one's life, an alertness to paradox, and the need for multiple interpretations of reality mark this stage. Symbol and story, metaphor and myth (from one's own traditions and others') are newly appreciated (second, or willed naivete') as vehicles for expressing truth.

Universalizing Faith (Mid-life and beyond): Beyond paradox and polarities, persons in this stage are grounded in a oneness with the power of being. Their visions and commitments free them for a passionate yet detached spending of the self in love, devoted to overcoming division, oppression, and violence, and in effective anticipatory response to an inbreaking commonwealth of love and justice.' (Fowler 1981 p25)

The trials and tribulations of the soul nearing Union do not sound like an embrace of life's polarities or a groundedness in a oneness with the power of being.

While John and Teresa recognise the 'Normal' pattern of purgative, illuminative and Unitive stages, neither recognise the stability of each stage nor a continuous path through them.

Teresa writes of the Interior Castle:

'Let us now turn to our castle with its many mansions. You must not imagine these mansions as arranged in a row, one behind the other, but fix your attentions on the centre, the room or palace occupied by the King. Think of a palmito (a shrub) which has many outer rinds surrounding the savoury part within all of which must be taken away before the centre can be eaten'. (Teresa of Avila 1974)

Teresa also does not recognise stability in what may be stages of development. She asserts that we can fall back and she is also clear that:

'This path of self knowledge must never be abandoned, nor is there on this journey a soul so much a giant that it has no need to return often to the stage of an infant and a suckling. And this should never be forgotten. Perhaps I shall speak of it more often because it is very important. There is no stage of prayer so sublime that it isn't necessary to return often to the beginning'. (Kavanagh (trans) 1976 p94)

This understanding accords well with the thinking of Carol Gilligan. In response to Kohlberg's theory of moral development Gilligan (1982) describes moral development as a circling back to deepen the human ways of caring for and connecting with others.

Conclusion

On the evidence of the writers used in this chapter we have found the expectation of change but no evidence to suppose that the changes are universal, sequential or hierarchical. This runs counter to the claims of modern faith development theories which cite Piaget's findings as support.

The Christian Western Spiritual Tradition does not recognise universality - not everyone is expected to go through the stages outlined by any particular scheme.

The tradition does not recognise stability.

It is not apparent when comparing more than one scheme that the hierarchies of the schemes are congruent.

There is no evidence for natural progression.

On the contrary, the tradition is clear about the importance of remaining in the faith community. The community carries the language of the tradition.

I therefore now turn to language theories to start the process of trying to build a theory of why people's faith appears to change.

Chapter 4 A WEB IN A TEXT

Some insights for faith development theories from cognitive psychology and in particular theories about language.

In the first three chapters I have attempted to display the Emperor's New Clothes of faith development theories.

Firstly, we have seen that much evidence pointed to the fallibility of the structuralist approach of Piaget and therefore of faith development theories which have clung so closely to them.

Secondly, although at first sight it appears that the Western Christian tradition might be said to be the parent to current structural schemes, closer study shows this connection to be uncertain.

Chapter 4 uses some theories of language as a tool of enquiry to further explore the reality of faith change. If it is indeed unsound to claim that faith develops naturally, sequentially and universally, I nevertheless go on to ask what is the reality of change and development in relation to faith. Language theories have the potential for giving us a framework in which to understand the nature of development. The following aspects of language theories are used to ask questions about faith development: lexicon; syntax; semantics; and social context analysis. These concepts are used to structure the bulk of this chapter's enquiry. I do not intend to stay close to the traditional ways of studying these subjects. In this thesis the four concepts are used as a framework of enquiry.

I then evaluate the use of scripts and default systems in relation to faith development theories.

The biological nature of learning is touched upon.

Finally, the chapter is concluded with some philosophical questions which lead into the following two chapters.

The nature/nurture debate

One of the debates that divides developmental theories can be summed up as the nature/nurture debate. Take for example the discussion concerning the apparent loss of ego-centric speech. Piaget proposes that language develops in stages as part of the maturing process.

Hadfield (1962) quotes McGraw's definition of maturation:

'the unfolding and ripening of the abilities, characteristics, traits and potentialities present at birth, but only later coming to maturity in a developing organism' (p48)

Hadfield continues:

'An excellent definition. Maturation is the development of innate patterns of behaviour in ordered sequence'.

For Piaget the disappearance of ego-centric speech is the onset of a new more mature stage - a time when the ego-centric speech has withered.

Vygotsky (1962), on the other hand, proposes that language develops in a social context. The child is part of an interacting environment which contains models of how to do language and how to think.

Vygotsky believes we are socialised into internalised speech

patterns. Ego-centric speech does not wither but the child is taught by role models and the cultural environment to say the words inwardly. That is ego-centric speech becomes inner speech. This thesis is part of the nature/nurture debate.

The study of language is important to this thesis in two main ways. Firstly, faith uses language and therefore we can look to see if changes in the use of language are behind the changes that faith development theories highlight. I will examine whether it is reasonable to propose a link between changes in language use and faith change.

Secondly, I hope to show that an understanding of language development paradigms can bring, by analogy, fresh insights into the discussion of faith change.

Green (1986) points out that cognitive psychologists who study language are interested in the representation of knowledge, the ability to communicate and the ability to understand meanings (p20). These areas are obviously very important to the present discussion.

Writing in A Study of Thinking Bruner (1986) states:

'Cognitive socialisation means the taking on of culture. Because speech is so important in the process we are prepared to find some intimate relations between the structure of a language and the structure of non-linguistic culture'.

Vygotsky (1934/1962) also refutes the idea that we do not think and understand in words. He writes about the importance of language thus:

'Concept formation cannot be reduced to association, attention, imagery, inference or determining. They are all indispensable, but they are insufficient without the

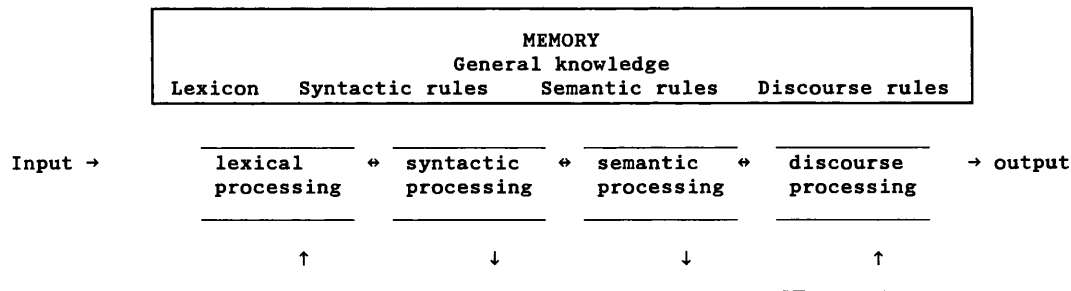
use of the sign or the word or the means by which we direct our mental operations, control their course and channel them towards the solution of the problem confronting us' (p59)

He continues:

'Learning to direct our own inventive processes with the aid of words or signs is an integral part of the process of concept formation, although this kind of activity is seen to be one which does not come to the fore until adolescence' (p60)

Bruner and Vygotsky both point to the importance of language in forming and communicating concepts. As faith is the focus for many language-based concepts I now turn to the four areas of language: lexicon, syntax, semantic and social context analysis in order to examine faith development theories.

In practice it is very difficult to examine language in watertight compartments and the following diagram taken from Greene (1986) illustrates the complex inter-relationships that exist between the different components:



It can be seen from this model that the processes for interpreting information are not hierarchical or linear. As Greene (1986) writes:

'In heterarchical models control of processing passes from one component to another so that information from different types of processing can be pooled before deciding on appropriate representations for linguistics inputs' (p97)

The separation of these concepts provides a framework for the

discussion on faith development.

The Lexicon: the difficulty of agreeing a definition

The Lexicon is concerned with the dictionary meaning of words. It can be seen that there may well be problems of agreeing the lexical meaning of mundane words like dog. (From Bertrand Russell's 1940 analysis in 'An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth'). Words such as God or faith underline the problem of agreeing lexical meanings. For example, Fowler (1980) writes in Faith and the Structure of meaning:

'Faith has to do with making, maintenance and transformation of human meaning'.

Oser (1980) writing in the same volume has difficulties in understanding Fowler's lexicon.

'We think that Fowler, in the final analysis, aims at some category of ego development with all its emotive and empirical components'.

Craig Dykstra (1986) is even more certain that his lexicon does not match Fowlers's.

'What the two of us mean by faith is . . . so different that what Fowler calls 'Faith Development' is not what I mean at all when I try to think about what it means to grow in faith'. (p191)

In 1984 a consultation was held in Driebergen, Netherlands, which drew together researchers and educationists working with young people. The problem of defining spirituality was discussed. Brenda Lealman (1986) reported:

'Among the suggestions made were the following: that spirituality means a capacity for transcendence, for 'seeing-double', for seeing a world behind a world; that spirituality is a universal or innate feature of human nature but that it may remain dormant for years, even for a whole lifetime, unless it is activated; that spirituality when activated involves loss of self, though paradoxically it may also mean an enhancement of the same sense of self; that it includes an ability, paradoxically too, to believe the unbelievable'. (p65)

And so the lexical discussion continued!

It also continued back in England when the Christian Education Movement began a dialogue between Christian and other world views - in this case Humanist. The question they posed was 'Can people who approach education from different philosophical/theological viewpoints find a common working definition [of Spirituality] ?' (Lealman 1986 p67)

Again Brenda Lealman (1986) reports:

'There was keen support for the following definition as one that could be used and worked with by people of all traditions; Education in spiritual growth is that which promotes apprehension of ultimate reality through fostering higher forms of human consciousness. (p68)
'Spiritual', members of the group have come increasingly aware, is a vague, imprecise word, one of historical and semantic richness and complexity'" (p70)

Lexical meanings display difficulties. 'Spirituality' is merely one fact of faith. By using MacQuarrie's (1982) analysis of faith as Actions, Prayers and Community life interacting with each other and with the Beliefs we can become aware how important it is to understand that lexicons shape beliefs and that our lexicon may well differ from those we are studying.

Syntax: some crucial ways syntax contributes to meaning and understanding

The second aspect of the study of language I have chosen to look at is syntax. Syntax is the sets of grammatical rules for combining words in sentences.

For this discussion I shall touch upon the work of Naom Chomsky (1965 1986) and some syntactic aspects of the work of Basil Bernstein

(1975) and Joan Tough (Phd Thesis Manchester).

In 1965 Chomsky revised his theories and made explicit the ideas of surface structure and deep structure of each sentence. Take for example, 'the cat was hit by Jill'. The order of the words is the surface structure. The deep structure, according to Chomsky's theories, would read 'Jill hit the cat'. Syntactic information is necessary to interpret statements.

Syntax is learnt in the same social context as the lexicon. Meaning, therefore, is a matter of interpretation.

By analogy each faith community carries the grammar which sets the rules for interpreting faith statements. We understand the world of faith in terms of the received grammar.

The rules of grammar which enable or constrain us to interpret statements, change over time. For example, 'Boy hits girl' is to many ears uncomfortably incomplete but is now currently a type of statement frequently used as a headline on television. The deep structure that we can interpret from this statement is 'At a particular time and place one particular boy hit one particular girl'. People of a later time may well have difficulty in extracting the correct information. This difficulty is perceived in statements of faith. The Christian idea that 'He rose from the dead' was written using the grammar of the 1st century Middle East. We now interpret that statement using the grammar of our time. The move away from the literalism that stems from interpreting 1st century grammar in terms of 20th century empiricism is important to Fowler's

faith development scheme where the conjunctive faith of mid-life and beyond will see a new appreciation of symbol and story, metaphor and myth. (Fowler 1992).

Bernstein was Professor of Sociology and Director of the Sociological Research Unit at the University of London Institute of Education.

When considering the differences between restricted and elaborated codes Bernstein suggests that the attributes of a restricted code are the crudity of the syntax; adjectives and adverbs are used in a limited way; sentence grammar is simple; and sentences are short and unfinished. Bernstein's theory of Class, Codes and Control (1975) invites us to look for cultural hegemony in any area of pedagogic or androgogic development. In his chapter on the 'Classification and Framing of Education Knowledge' Bernstein (1975) asserts that:

'Formal educational knowledge can be considered to be realised through three message systems: curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation. Curriculum defines what counts as valid knowledge; pedagogy defines what counts as a valid realisation of this knowledge on the part of the taught". (Vol 3 p85)

We may translate this into our field of study by saying that faith is defined in terms of beliefs and activities which in turn define what counts as valid (or appropriate for the age or stage). These 'valid' encounters with faith are evaluated in terms of the controlling context - for example - an enlightened, liberal and developmental context. Far from being peripheral, the particular aspects of syntax chosen for discussion have taken us into a key area of faith-change study. They ask us to analyse the findings of our study and ask whether or not a cultural context is being used to define what is valid faith and to explain differences over age bands.

I now turn to the work of Joan Tough (1976 1977) to help make a link between social class, education and faith development. Though not syntactical in the standard sense, but functional, she treats the language children use within the functions in a Bernsteinian sense. Thus their syntax is part of the way judgements about the children are made. It is another example of how the theme of interaction between different cultures works when a dominant culture is able to define and attribute value.

Joan Tough's experience led her to ask

'whether the educational disadvantage of many children might to some extent, be a reflection of their disadvantage in the linguistic environment of the school'.

Following the linguist Michael Halliday she put the language of 3 year olds from advantaged and disadvantaged groups through a functional analysis.

She used the following functions of language:

- 1) Directive Function - language that directs actions and operations eg a running commentary about the actions of oneself or others; language used to plan and to co-operate.
- 2) Interpretative Function - language used to communicate the meaning of events and situations which are in the present or the past
- 3) Projective Function - language that is not tied to the past or present experiences, or time. Nor is it tied to actual experience but it uses imagination.
- 4) Relational Function - language used to establish or maintain relationships eg the position assumed towards others.

Joan Tough found that:

'the children in the disadvantaged groups used language much less frequently than children in the advantaged groups for:

- a) analysing and reasoning about present and past experiences and recognising overall structure;
- b) projecting beyond the present to future events, possible alternative courses and consequences and into the feelings and experiences of others;
- c) creating imagined scenes for their play which were dependent on the use of language for their existence for

others'.

Faith systems use language to analyse and reason about past, present and future. They also use language to create imagined scenes.

Faith systems use language to create, validate and order experience. If experience does not fit with the particular faith system's pattern it will not be validated.

And so we may enquire whether studies such as Tough's explain why only 10% of the population of England takes part in a system of faith whereas the results of the Alister Hardy Research Centre at Oxford appear to show that 30% of people admit to experiencing 'they were close to a spiritual force that seemed to lift them out of themselves'.

? 60

On some surveys the percentage of people admitting to being aware of or influenced by a presence or powers is closer to 70% (after getting to know the questioner). David Hay 1987 writes in his fascinating study Exploring Inner Space ✓

"We found that the more education people have, the more likely they are to claim to have had a religious experience. 56% of those who had gone through some form of higher education reported it, while only 29% of those who left school at fifteen said 'Yes'. (p126)

Returning to Joan Tough, she writes:

'It would seem from this (her study) that there is justification for stating that 3 year old children coming from different home environments had established different priorities for expressing meaning and different orientations towards the use of language'.

The children from the two groups are using language in different ways

but one group (using Bernstein's and others' analysis) come from the group that set the rules for validation.

The language studies we have looked at so far indicate the need for a cautious approach to faith development theories.

Semantics: Meaning-making in sentences

The third area of language development, Semantics, is closely related to the previous categories. Traditionally, Semantics is the study of the means for combining the lexical items and syntax into sentences that are meaningful. Much of our discussion on Lexicon and Syntax relates to the question of semantics. As M Bierwisch (in Lyons 1970) states

'In order to understand the meaning of a sentence and its semantic relations to other experience, one must know not only the meaning of its lexical elements but also how they inter-relate'.

In this thesis little use will be made of the traditional ways of studying semantics where the subject was treated as 'pure'. It is claimed by researchers into 'pure' semantics that meaning can be extracted from a sentence without reference to the context. It is part of the contention of this thesis that meanings are part of the cultural context.

The Lexicon, Syntax and Semantics can be said to be interactive in the process of language understanding and as the making of meanings is a cultural process this discussion leads naturally onto the aspect of Social Context Analysis.

Social Context Analysis: 1. The Context of maturity

Take the sentence 'Fred gave Susan a tap'. The meaning of this sentence can only be understood if we know something of the context. In order to make sense of the sentence we need to know how the language users are using the lexicon, syntax and semantics. Is Fred a plumber? Is Susan falling asleep whilst driving a car? Do we know what a plumber is? Are there cultural ideas attached to driving a carriage with four wheels and an internal combustion engine?

Halliday (in Lyons ed 1970) asserts in answer to his question "What is language?":

'The nature of language is closely related to the demands we make on it, the function it has to serve. In the most concrete terms these functions are specific to a culture' (p141)

As soon as we discuss faith we are dealing with social contexts that differ with time and place. Language, culture and social context are inter-related. Bruner (1986) asserts:

'Cognitive Socialisation means the taking on of a culture. Because speech is so important in the process we are prepared to find some intimate relations between the structure of language and the structure of non-linguistic culture'. (p248)

I will now illustrate the complex relationship between culture and language by summarising some descriptions of maturity. The descriptions are chosen from cultures varying in time and place. Many faith development theories seek to describe a mature faith and the steps needed to attain this end goal. The evidence from language studies indicates that the end goal may be culturally defined.

What does a mature faith look like to the Platonic community. In his Dialogues Plato discusses a concept closely associated with faith - Wisdom. He perceives three kinds of Wisdom. Sophia is the special preserve of philosophers and contemplatives. Phronesis, practical wisdom, is the domain of the lawgivers and statesmen, who need prudence. Episteme is the province of those who seek to know the nature of things. We may well be led to expect different qualities of faith development in a Platonic community.

A mature faith based upon Epicurean philosophy would recognise that life should be so organised so that the pains of life, which destroy pleasure, should be avoided as far as possible.

This end goal may well be very different from those who organise their lives within a Christian framework. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man may lay down his life for his friends". (John 15:3) Here the end goal is not the avoidance of pain but its embrace for the sake of others.

CG Jung (1963) records a visit to Pueblo Indians of New Mexico. These people he discovered were extremely secretive about their religion. But he did discover that the Indians were very upset that the Americans did not allow the children out of school to be initiated into adult ways. A great secret of adulthood was to know that the Sun is their father. The tribe's prayers and rituals held a very important mystery for the survival of the whole world. Jung asked a chief of the Taos Pueblos:

"You think then that what you do in your religion benefits the whole world?"

The Chief replied with great animation, "Of course. If

we did not do it, what would become of the world?" He continued, "We are the people who live on the roof of the world; we are the sons of the Father Sun, and with our religion we daily help our father to go across the sky. We do this not only for ourselves but for the whole world. If we were to cease practising our religion in ten years the sun would no longer rise. Then it would be night for ever". (p278ff)

The mature faith of the Pueblo Indian is one which a son aids the creator and sustainer of life but looks very different in understanding from, for example, Christianity.

At first sight Christmas Humphreys (1961) appears to contradict our understanding that different religions, different contexts, will display different attributes of a mature faith. Talking about Zen Buddhism he writes:

'It is the Light in the darkness of Ignorance, the Life within all changing and perishable forms. It is the Truth and the Way. This Light is the goal of mysticism and the subject matter of all religions'. (p11)

But, he continues, 'Zen is unique' and he quotes from the Kegon School.

'The fundamental idea of Buddhism is to pass beyond the world of opposites, a world built up by intellectual distinctions and emotional defilements and realise a spiritual world of non-distinction which involves achieving an absolute point of view. Yet the Absolute is in no way distinct from the world of discrimination, for to think so would be to place it opposite the discriminating mind and so create a new duality'. (p21)

Moran (1983) describes three stages and six moments of religious development:

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | Simply Religious | a) Physical - being born, fed
b) Mythical - imagery |
| 2. | Acquiring a Religion | a) Our people and beliefs
b) Disbelief |
| 3. | Religiously Christian
(Muslim, Hindu, etc) | a) Using Parable
b) Detachment |

Social Context Analysis has encouraged us to look for culturally shaped functions of language. One of the functions is to validate and order experience. Far from being the 'development of innate patterns of behaviour in ordered sequence' (Hadfield 1962 p48) maturity is a culturally defined and shaped process.

As we have said before we are asking the question are there differences in faith? Are differences seen over time? Are any differences developmental, are they stage related or are there other explanations for change ? The discussion about context analysis may help in making proposals likely to answer these questions. The recognition of different faith statements does not necessarily mean that faith is governed by a genetically controlled maturing process which produces universal features at certain stages. Neither do the differences between World Views not preclude the idea of one aspect of faith developing from a necessary prior aspect. We are saying that our questions and understandings are set in a particular context. Context analysis leads us to look at further aspects of language development.

Social Context Analysis: 2. The dominant ideology defines meaning

Social Context Analysis also asks the question,

'To what purpose is language being used?'

Bruner (1975) writes,

'Language is acquired as an instrument of regulating joint activity and joint attention. Indeed its very structure reflects these functions and its acquisition is saturated with these'.

So language, and therefore the language of faith, is an instrument of 'regulating joint activity'.

Bruner (1986) goes further:

'There are two important things to say about naming behaviour. For one who has already acquired a category the meaningful utterances of another can provide evidence that the speaker possesses the same category. For one who has not yet acquired a given category the meaningful utterance of another can function as an attribute of the category to be acquired'. (p248)

In the chapter in which I focused on the work of Piaget I asserted that children tend not to question the veracity of those in authority. This assertion is backed by evidence from, for example Milgran, whose study used subjects having to give electric shocks in order to help a learner. Being 'under authority' produced pressure on the subjects to inflict severe pain (or so they thought) on learners who were feigning ignorance. Men under orders!

In his book Protestantism and Repression, Ruben Alves (1985) uses the construct of Right Doctrine Protestantism to show how faith is used in hierarchical and prescriptive relationships. He cites, for example, the need to be certain about Salvation, in particular Protestant circles in Brazil. "Are you saved?" The experiences surrounding this experience are described. This definition becomes the benchmark for measuring whether salvation is certain for a particular person. Dogma and ideology become a checklist for appropriate belief, behaviour and experience. The words of faith become a measurement and means of exclusion.

In this fascinating study of Brazilian Protestants, Alves (1979) makes the following points:

1. The Protestant universe is structurally identical to the medieval universe. The visible is explained by the invisible, the immanent by the transcendent, time by eternity. Catholics and Protestants

- inhabit the same world.
2. The structure of reality is fixed. No transformation of its essence can take place. Here we find a radical break with the modern world, which has replaced the category of essence with the category of function.
 3. All points in time and space are split by a basic dualism: damnation versus salvation.
 4. Dualism is resolved in the unity of divine providence (or, double predestination). Both salvation and damnation are effects of one and the same cause.
 5. Human activity cannot be creative. It is movement within a fixed universe, a journey along roads leading to eternity.
 6. Life is not an end, only a means.
 7. This scheme functions ideologically insofar as facts are elevated to the status of values. They serve as the visible face of an invisible divine intention. Protestantism sacralizes tragedy.
 8. Once visible, facts and events are seen to be theophanies, tolerance and democracy become impossible. Tolerance and democracy presuppose that facts and knowledge remain ambiguous. Such a presupposition is ruled out in a universe of theophanies, one which is known absolutely by a certain religious community. There are many affinities between the doctrine of divine providence and a totalitarian theory of power and authority - a theocracy in this particular case. Tolerance would be possible if Protestantism postulated divine providence but admitted only imperfect knowledge. It would even be possible if RDP claimed absolute knowledge of the world but admitted that the world was open-ended and incomplete. But Protestantism absolutizes both poles: reality and its knowledge of reality. So, despite Protestant disclaimers, it seems to me that epistemology contains, in its articulation with the Protestant vision of the world, the seeds of authoritarianism embedded within it. (p113-114)

Karl Mannheim (Ideology and Utopia 1955) asserts that:

'It is the nature of the dominant wish which determines the sequence, order and evaluation of single experiences. This wish is the organising principle which even moulds the way in which we experience time. The innermost structure of the mentality of a group can never be as clearly grasped as when we attempt to understand its conception of time in the light of its hopes, yearnings and purposes. On the basis of these purposes and expectations, a given mentality orders not merely future events, but also the past". (p209)

Faith may develop serially over time but when studying faith change we must be aware of the pressure of the "Dominant Wish" and also the "Dominant Wish" (if I may use that expression) of the researcher's

paradigm.

This assertion can be seen to be more than a philosophical nicety or a problem of research. The acquisition and use of language, which is learned in a social context which has contending dominant wishes, can shape experience and thinking in a most fundamental way.

The biological basis of language

At this point I wish to make an excursion into biology to ask whether evidence from this field of study can support the idea that culture shapes experience and learning.

J Bruner (1986) in A Study of Thinking writes:

'It is my belief that when someone learns to understand an utterance his nervous system is partially 're-wired' (in the sense of changes in synaptic resistance ...) so that he is disposed to behave appropriately with regard to that utterance'. (p203)

Studies have shown that there is an increase of protein synthesis in the brain during learning. (Rose 1984 quoted in Toates Biological Foundations of Behaviour 1986) Toates himself summarises the section on Learning and Memory as follows:

1. The durability of memory leads us to suppose that a structural change in the brain is involved. A change in synaptic connections between cells is considered to be the most likely long-term embodiment.
2. It is widely assumed that the holding of a memory in a relatively fragile form tends to create structural changes that transcribe the memory into a more durable form.
3. For a given memory, possibly the synaptic connections between cells are strengthened in such a way as to facilitate activity in those circuits that initially held the memory (in its more fragile form). Thus there might be a kind of interdependence between two aspects of the same memory: dynamic and structural aspects.
4. Protein synthesis is assumed to form the biological base of synaptic restructuring, and increased rates of

synthesis have been observed at the time of learning'.
(p83ff)

Biology does appear to give support to the proposed links between culture, language experience and learning.

Some models of language understanding

I will now return to the discussion concerning the social context of language by using the concepts of schemas, frames, scripts, bridging inferences and memory organisation packets. These are some of the attempts, through the use of metaphor, to describe some of the processes of learning, organising and interpreting language.

Bartlett (1932 quoted Greene 1986) posited the idea of Schemas as the way in which memory organises representations of objects, structures and events. Bartlett's understanding that memory is the product of high level structures which encapsulate our knowledge about situations was developed by Minsky (1977 quoted in Greene 1986).

Schemas can be represented as Frames which have slots. These slots are filled with compulsory values and optional values.

The values given to each slot may change over time. Concepts such as 'God' or 'Heaven' will have compulsory and optional values given to the slots dependent upon the faith community.

A personal conversation with an 79-year-old woman may serve to help this discussion. Sarah (aged 79) told her vicar about the way she started each morning with her "box of promises". There were, according to Sarah's information, a total of 365 promises in the bible. Each one had been written onto a piece of paper and placed in

a box. As part of her morning prayers she would read one of the promises eg "Those who sow in tears will reap in joy". She was faithful in this daily act of devotion and prayer. She also recounted how, each Sunday, she was picked up from her home and taken to church. God was certainly looking after her.

Insights drawn from theories about language-related functions may help us to reflect on these words of faith. She had been told, long ago, that there were 365 promises in the bible. This information became part of the Schema or Frame about her faith and prayer life. This information made sense. There are 365 days in most years. The conversation illustrates what Schank (1982 1985 quoted in Greene 1986) calls Dynamic Memory. In terms of religious belief faith is strengthened when semantic knowledge (ie, general knowledge) is reinforced by episodic knowledge (ie, personal experience).

The stories of faith, the words of preachers, and the liturgy had informed Sarah that God is good and compassionate to His children. He is also omniscient. The personal experience of being taken to church while other old people (non-prayers) from the same home were not given lifts corresponds to this information. "God is looking after me". When asked why Christians suffered the 79-year-old replied that God must have his reasons.

This leads us to use another concept from language development theories, Scripts. Scripts organise information in ways that are expected. Schank (1982) uses the theme of going to a restaurant as an example of a Script allowing the subject to memorise and understand the event of attending a restaurant.

In addition to organising the information values of frames, Scripts allow the subject to use a default value system. If information is missing the default system is activated. This may leave understanding untested. Often the default system is used without question: 'It is what we believe'. It may be discovered that the default system of values is 'the dominant wish which determines the sequence, order and evaluation of single experience'. (Mannheim 1936 p209)

Sarah's semantic and episodic knowledge appeared to be congruent. The default values in the Script concerning God's relationship to one who prays remained unchallenged.

A further insight is drawn from the concept of 'Bridging Inferences' (Clark quoted in Greene 1986). Users of language operate on the expectation that there is sufficient shared knowledge. Receivers of communications are constantly making inferences in order to interpret. Bridging inferences have to be made between what is known and what is new, or between causal statements. Studies show that when the meaning is obscure effort is made to discover the reasonable inferences.

Schank's (1982 quoted in Greene 1986) work on artificial intelligence leads him to propose the idea of Memory Organisation Packets. This is the way that collections of knowledge are organised around central themes rather than stored in scripts of pre-set memories. From these themes inferences are drawn to make up new scripts. Schank's work leads him to believe that in order to extract meaning syntax is ignored as much as possible; understanding comes

about when inferences are generated which go beyond the words in the sentence. Expectations are set up by the need to incorporate inference programmes.

The primary goal of language processing is to connect words with data in the memory in order to fill out meaning. The primary process, therefore, is to find such data in the memory and map the new utterances onto them. The processor commits itself to a particular interpretation at the expense of other radical interpretations. If there is no discourse situation matching there is a failure to understand.

Encounter with new language or new ideas leads to the attempt to identify a suitable background knowledge structure in the long term memory. The new ideas are mapped out onto this structure.

If the ideas are not sufficiently relevant, the structure in the long term memory is not activated. If the long term memory structure is too limited, the subject may have a compelling feeling of understanding even though his conception of the idea may be inappropriately narrow and probably leads to error.

But if the primary process finds a suitable representation in the long term memory then the new information appears to fit. There is the feeling of "Yes. That's the way it is".

To sum up the chapter thus far, language is learnt in a social context where motives and intentions are important. Language is more than learning the lexical meaning. Schemas, Frames, Scripts and

Memory Organisation Packets, the processes of long term memory are learnt in social contexts. Knowledge can be semantic (general) or episodic (personal). When there is insufficient knowledge subjects use scripts giving default values. Studies show there is a tendency to make sense of new data by using scripts and default systems already in the long term memory. The closer the new data fits existing schemas, scripts or memory organisation packets the greater the feeling of rightness. In other words the expectations set up by inferences are fulfilled. There is a commitment to particular interpretations at the expense of others.

Stage theory, language and culture

If we return to MacQuarrie's (1982) view of faith this understanding is important to our question about stages of faith. MacQuarrie asserts that faith implies beliefs about man and the world and it involves being in community. The concepts of language development help us understand how faith is learnt in community and how even the structures of brain have a conservative tendency, how new knowledge may be met with incomprehension or a misplaced feeling of understanding. But we still ask the question: does faith develop through stages ?

Gates (1977) asked questions of primary and secondary children using stories such as Where the Wild Things Are, or the Buddhist story of the blind men and the elephant; he also questioned them about themes such as space exploration, thunderstorms and the importance of familiar people.

He discovered a developmental sequence of stages of faith -

From: random undifferentiated responses
Through: concrete and specific responses
To: personally interpreted and objectively weighed responses.

Gates states that extreme variation in subjects' responses were 'relatively infrequent' and that their general comprehension level was indicated by personal consistency.

It could be viewed that what Gates has discovered is not faith development but language development.

Young children with relatively little language experience (which comes about in a social context) will have relatively few suitable memory maps, frames or scripts with which to make sense. Their answers appear random. The default values are limited.

When sufficient experience has been gained and more long term memory organisation packets and maps have been formed, then matching new data with existing memory will produce concrete ie literal matching. A "perfect match" is expected and therefore found.

With further experience and the development of maps drawing upon themes and scripts from a variety of data schemes, the ability to use metaphor may be developed. Metaphor allows the subjects to weigh alternatives with the important possibility of not finding a perfect map.

The expectation of finding a perfect match between new data and existing memory and/or the expectation of memory and information being in the form of metaphor appears to be culturally shaped.

Kay (1981) claims to find a linear relationship between test scores and age which would not be the case with stage development.

Using 3,000 pupils Kay attempted to test for the ability to distinguish between concrete and abstract thought using Pealting's Test of Religious Thinking Scores: Highest literalism scores were found in subjects in the Ulster Protestant Community; Highest Liberal or abstract scores were found among the Protestants of Eire.

Language development theories, therefore, lead us to look at the cultural context as an illumination of faith development.

This is not really surprising. The 20th century continues the search for meaning through linguistic endeavours. The tension between designative and expressive theories continues in this century and in so doing we perceive how language both frees us to control our environment and paradoxically forms our thoughts, ourselves and our world.

Charles Taylor (1985) writes about language being a web that:

'is present in any one of its parts', 'From another angle: the background web is only there in that we speak. But because we cannot oversee it, let alone shape it all, our activity in speaking is never entirely under our conscious control . . . our deployment of language reposes on much that is preconscious and unconscious'.
(p232)

Taylor likens language to a medium into which we plunge rather than merely a method of thinking or a method of designating meaning.

Moreover, this medium comes to us from a community. Of insights of expressive language he writes: 'What is made manifest is not exclusively, not even mainly, the self, but a world.' (p232)

The 'medium' according to Nietzsche (1966) is full of arbitrary interpretations imposed in a relationship of power. Derrida's (1974) playful deconstruction attempts to negate the hierarchical nature of language. Jean-Francois Lyotard (1979) writes:

'In contemporary society and culture - post-industrial society, post-modern culture - the question of legitimation of knowledge is formulated in different terms. The grand narrative has lost its credibility regardless of what mode of unification it was, regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation". (p37)

The use of concepts from language theories from a cognitive standpoint has given us insight into many of the possible processes of faith change. This analysis has allowed us to see why it is possible for some commentators to see development while others see change and why some can see universal end goals of human change while others see culture.

Summary

Fowler and others claim to have discovered universal hierarchical and stable stages of faith. Fowler's theory was based in the first place with interviews with 350 people. Each interview lasted about 2½ hours. Our discussion using concepts from that area connecting the domains of cognitive psychology and language studies gives us, I believe, a clearer insight into what is happening when people discuss faith and when their words are analysed by others.

The discussion about the lexicon brought to our attention the difficult task of understanding and agreeing definition. It is also the contention of this thesis that lexicons will shape our beliefs.

The discussion concerning Syntax questioned the possibility of analysing the meaning of a person's faith statements (especially after only 2½ hours). Bernstein's assertions make us look carefully at claims to be able to sort people into a programme of development. We are invited to look for a cultural hierarchy at work.

The work of Joan Tough described the cultural influence upon the way words and syntax are used.

Semantics, the rules for joining lexical items in sentences, are learnt in a social context.

Social context analysis took us into the heart of the discussion relating to maturity. Maturity, or the end goal of human endeavour, is defined by culture.

In the discussion stemming from a review of Social Context Analysis it was claimed that it is the 'dominant wish' that defines meaning and determines the order and validity of experience.

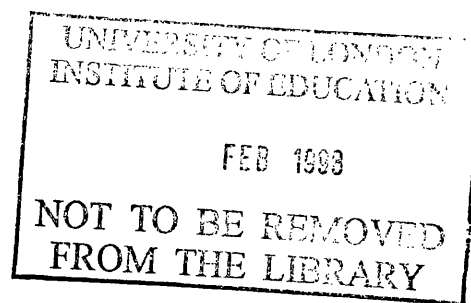
In the section on the biological basis of language, it was shown why there tends to be a conservative aspect to learning. If synaptic connections and patterns of electro-chemical activity are thought to be the basis of learning then new learning will require different brain activity. In other words, we become what we learn and new learning will involve structural changes. It may be pertinent to ask if this is why moments of conversion can be experientially powerful.

The discussion about schemas, scripts and memory packets allowed us

to use the idea of semantic (general) and episodic (personal) knowledge. When people discuss their faith they use both kinds of knowledge. Both types of knowledge are part of the culture in which the person is living. Default systems and bridging inferences allow us to see two of the processes at work in any discussion about faith.

I turned to concept of language processing in order to give one reason why metaphor becomes a possibility. In Fowler's scheme the move away from literalism towards a metaphorical understanding is a move through the stages towards maturity. I asserted that abstract thinking is a cultural activity.

Language studies have indicated just how important social context is. The medium of language tells us not only what to say but also how to be. In a post modern culture the general narrative of legitimation is thought to have fractured. The descriptions of maturity are contained in the social context. We can now expect to find a plurality of developing faith paths.



Chapter 5
THE TIME OF OUR LIVES

A mainly theological reflection on time

Faith development theories presuppose ideas of people existing in time. Faith, time and being are major theological concerns and theology, therefore, has a legitimate part to play in this discussion.

This chapter explores some of the theological issues concerning time. Christianity has been influential in the formation of Western scientific enquiry and in creating everyday language about time. A framework will be developed in which Faith Development theories can be located. This discussion will illuminate how we generally view time and what aspects may be missing from the views of the 'narratives' that compose '20th century Western Thought'.

After examining time as chaotic, cyclic and linear, an eschatological understanding is described. I use the concepts of Tillich (1963) and Moltmann (1967, 1974, 1977) to propose the idea that the future can shape the present. Finally, these philosophical/theological ideas are related to some current scientific concepts in order to find support for the notion that time has an openness to the future.

Time, History and the Cult

It is asserted (eg by Eichrodt 1961) that time began to be regarded as linear when history became part of the cultic activity of the Hebrew Tribes.

During a period of migration it appears that the hope of a permanent and secure land for future generations became part of a cultic promise. After escaping from Egypt some of the tribes eventually settled in Canaan. Events in history were recorded to show God's activity. Time and history were brought into the cult and, as this passage of scripture illustrates, became to be thought of²⁸ the place/time of God's purposeful work.

'When you come into the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance, and have taken possession of it, and live in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the LORD your God gives you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place which the LORD your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, 'I declare this day to the LORD your God that I have come into the land which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us. Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God.

And you shall make response before the LORD your God, 'a wandering Aramean was my father; and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number: and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us and laid upon us hard bondage. Then we cried to the LORD the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice, and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which thou, O LORD, hast given me.' And you shall set it down before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God: and you shall rejoice in all the good which the LORD your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you." (Deuteronomy 26:1-11)

It is believed that this process brought about the transition from an understanding of time as cyclic to the understanding of linear time.

(See for example Eichrodt 1961 p41ff)

Time as cycles

The culture surrounding the Hebrew Tribes predominantly described time as cyclic. In Egypt, for example, a hymn was composed by Pharaoh Akhenaten portraying the natural cycles and using this rhythm to symbolise a god.

"You shine out in beauty on the horizon of heaven,
O living disc, the beginning of life.
When you have appeared on the eastern horizon,
you have filled every land with your perfection.
When you set on the western horizon,
the earth lies in darkness as in death.
The earth lies in silence,
for the one who created it has gone to rest on his horizon.
Then the earth becomes bright: you have arisen on the horizon.
As solar disc, you shine by day.
Men awaken and stand on their feet.
Their arms are bent in worship, because you appear.
The whole land goes to work.
All beasts are satisfied with their pasture,
the trees and plants become green.
The birds flutter in their nests,
raising their wings in worship before your spirit.
The ships sail upstream and down.
The fish in the river dart before your face.
You make the seed grow in women,
make fluid into mankind.
How manifold are your works!
They are hidden from the face of man,
O sole God, apart from whom there is no other.
You have made people for yourself,
The Lord of all of them,
wearying himself with them,
the Lord of the whole land, rising for them.
You are in my heart . . .
(Near Eastern Religious Texts SCM & Westminster Press 1978
quoted in Charpentier 1981))

The land of Mesopotamia was less comfortable than Egypt or Canaan. Perhaps this accounts for the endings of the cyclic journey in the Epic of Gilgamesh. In one ending of the Epic, the search for the flower results in disappointment, in the other it results in death.

'Gilgamesh saw a well of cool water and he went down and bathed; but deep in the pool there was lying a serpent, and the serpent sensed the sweetness of the flower. It rose out of the water and snatched it away, and immediately it sloughed its skin and returned to the

well. Then Gilgamesh sat down and wept, the tears ran down his face, and he took the hand of Urshanabi; `O Urshanabi, was it for this that I toiled with my hands, is it for this I have wrung out my heart's blood? For myself I have gained nothing; not I, but the beast of the earth has joy of it now. Already the stream has carried it twenty leagues back to the channels where I found it. I found a sign and now I have lost it. Let us leave the boat on the bank and go''. (Sanders 1960 p117)

The Epic also contains a flood story similar to the Biblical story. But in the Mesopotamian account no order, and no purpose is served. Time and events remain chaotic. Even the gods who caused the floods "covered their mouths".

We can see three main strands of thought in the cultures of this area; Time as cycles of sustenance, cycles of chaos, and linear history with a purpose. We can also add a fourth:- the Moment, God's moment, "when the time is right".

Time and future hopes

The Hebrew religious cult reflected on the promise of a secure land. After times of national disaster such as the Exile the promise was put further into the future.

Eventually the fulfilment of the promise was believed to be possible only if God intervened in supernatural power. Later reflections brought about by the Persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes saw this thinking develop even further.

"If Yahweh is now to establish his supremacy it has to be done by an act that comes from outside history and puts an end to history". (Brown et al 1968 p764)

Eschatological thought saw history as a line from a beginning to an end.

The Hebrew cults believed in a transcendent God who somehow breaks into the present in order to bring in his kingdom. In the intertestamental period the sense of transcendence developed. The supernatural winding up of this age, it was believed, would bring in the new age and God's purposes would be triumphant. The New Testament and later Christian understandings can be seen to take up these themes. As WD Davies asserts of first century Judaism 'In Jewish eschatology, in the time of Jesus, as at other times the end was to be the beginning.' (Black 1962 p710) History, as memory, obedience to the law and an intense longing for the kingdom of God, or the Day of the Lord, provided a fertile environment for Messianic claims to flourish.

The expected end of time: hopes for a better future

In AD 40 Emperor Gaius ordered his statue to be placed in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. In AD 70 the temple was destroyed. These events, among others, were thought to be evidence pointing to the cataclysmic ending of the world. 'The end of all things is at hand. Therefore keep sane and sober for your prayers'. (1 Peter 4:7)

Paul, in the letter to the Romans, understood that the parousia, (Christ's appearance at the end of the age) ie the winding up of time, was at hand. But he understood that all creation was waiting eagerly for it.

'The Kingdom of God is at hand', a phrase at the beginning of Mark's

gospel, summarises much of the New Testament expectation. Carl

Braaten writes:

'The primitive Christian community looked forward to the glory of the coming of the Lord in end times. In this respect the New Testament continued the trend inaugurated by the Old Testament to portray the people of God, as an Exodus community that lives by faith toward a fulfilling future embodied in the word of promise. All three dimensions of time - present, past and future - determine the structure of eschatological thought in the early church.' (in Hodgson & King 1982 p289)

The end of the world is postponed

The expectation of the Imminence of the End of Time had waned by the Second and Third Centuries although occasionally there was an eschatological call for purity, as, for example, in Montanism.

In the Patristic Age it was the nearness of death which could suddenly strike a person that was the eschatological emphasis.

Eventually the end of the world was postponed indefinitely. Of course, there is no pure form of Christianity just as there was no pure Yahwehism or Judaism. Christianity was formed in a cultural environment rich in various forms of Judaism, Gnosticism, Fatalism, Epicuriamism, Stoicism and Neoplatonism. Being rooted in Judaism, Christianity benefited from thought forms that had incorporated mythology and ritual and Greek speculative thinking but, of course, these were held firmly in history. History was seen to be the arena of God's activity.

Greek and Christian concepts and their relationship to development

Surprisingly, perhaps, the distinctive Christian voice in the encounters with Hellenistic thought was the eschatological

perspective.

In much Greek speculative thinking, all that has existence must coincide with what is held necessary for existence. All is held in eternity. The cosmos is eternal. There can be no innovation, merely cycles. As the aeons go round and round everything remains essentially the same.

As we have already stated eschatological thought brings with it the idea of history from creation to consummation. This linear, as opposed to cyclic, idea of time subsequently brings with it the ideas of advancement, achievement and maturity. This is especially true if the Parousia is indefinitely postponed.

Hellenistic thought can be summarised as "The end is like the beginning". Christian thought can be summarised as "Behold I make all things new".

When the expectation of the eschatological event fades "linear" Christianity and cyclic Greek "essentialism" merge. The One who "Makes all things new" is the One who is the "Same Yesterday Today and Forever". The Alpha and the Omega are seen to be essentially the same. Maturity, therefore, becomes the historical (existential?) process of fully becoming, in existence, that which it will be in the essential eternity.

Eschatological concepts: Middle ages to pre-Enlightenment

In the Middle Ages the Kingdom of God was identified with the Church as it looked back to the first coming of Christ and awaited the

Second Coming. Millenarian hopes were only occasionally raised and judgement at the end of the world were popular themes in a few piety movements.

The Scholastic Thinkers countenanced revelation only in scripture and eschatology became solely the doctrine of 'last things and things after death'.

Strange how a system purporting to rely totally on scripture can miss the message of many New Testament witnesses in their understanding of realised eschatology eg 'Now is the judgement of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out'. (John 12:31)

If realised eschatology is missing in Scholastic thought, what is evident is pessimism concerning history. In no way can the world be seen to be gradually progressing in the direction of the new heaven and new earth. It will come to nothing. All that will be left is the complete separation of the righteous from the unrighteous after the judgement.

The Enlightenment

The latter part of the 17th century saw the rise of several schools of thought such as rationalism, naturalism, romanticism, idealism and positivism.

Newton was pre-eminent in the scientific movement. God was seen as the rational divine being. His eternal laws could be discovered in systems and the rational laws of nature. God's invisible hand was also seen guiding social order towards an ever more visible harmony.

The chaos or disorder that is apparent in society and nature were seen to be underpinned by the good order of God's laws.

The enlightenment described the God of history as entering into or guiding the laws of nature. The eschatological vision became the understanding of the harmonious social order. The Kingdom of God became realisable because human reason was able to conform to the law of nature. All that was natural and reasonable, even religion, even eschatology, was transformed into the realisable Kingdom of this world.

Compte understood there to be three stages of history:

- 1) The Mythological stage
- 2) The Metaphysical stage of Western philosophy
- 3) The Positivistic Scientific stage.

Eschatology, therefore, became absorbed into the dialectics of progress in history. Until recently this has been the dominant viewpoint.

Challenges to the received wisdom of the Enlightenment

In the 19th century the "myths" of evolution and irresistible progress through science and technology were challenged by such thinkers as Marx. He believed that a new world order would only occur after the proletariat revolution.

Generally, though, the dominant Western cultures were influenced by liberal protestantism. The Kingdom of God, a development in history, would be brought in as a result of human activity and moral progress therefore it must have come as a shock to the theological system to

discover that a person such as Schweitzer could write *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* in 1906. Schweitzer believed that eschatology was at the core of Jesus' thinking, healing and suffering.

Barth (1949) developed Schweitzer's thinking. Barth reasoned that there is an unbridgeable gap between human history and God in heaven. Braaten describes Barth's understanding of eschatology. 'The eschatological event as the eternal now can only touch history at a tangent, but cannot itself have a history'. (Hodgson & King 1986)

Barth (1949) himself writes:

'If this existence of Jesus Christ at the right hand of God is real existence and as such the measure of all existence, then it is also existence in time, although in another time than the one we know Infiniteness is a comfortless business and not a divine predicate, but one that pertains to fallen creatureliness. This end without an end is frightful. It is an image of man's lostness. Man is in such a state that he is precipitated into aimlessness and endlessness. This ideal of the endless has nothing at all to do with God. A limit is set to this time. Jesus Christ is and brings real time. But God's time also has an end, as well as a beginning and a middle. Man is surrounded and upheld on all sides. That is life. So man's existence becomes visible in the second article. Jesus Christ with his past, present and future.' (p131)

Bultmann (1960) used Heidegger's existential categories. He talked of being enslaved to one's past, being in bondage to sin. Faith is freedom from the past and openness to the future. Eschatology therefore becomes a symbol of meaning in each person's existence and has no cosmological category. It is purely personal experience.

Tillich's understanding of time, history and the Kingdom of God

Tillich (1963) describes eschatology as the meaning and goal of history or the quest for the Kingdom. He proposes that the Kingdom

has two sides, the inner-historical and a trans-historical side. He asserts:

'History, we have seen, is creative of the qualitatively new and runs toward the ultimately new, which however, it can never attain within itself because the ultimate transcends every temporal movement.' (Vol 3 p396)

Tillich uses existentialist concepts to begin exploring the ontological structures of theology. He believes that 'Creation is creation for the end'. This does not mean that he would expect to see cosmic/historical or individual/historical progression. Tillich distinguishes three types of progressivism, and claims that they are all inadequate treatments of history:

1. Neo-Kantianism which developed the idea of infinite unlimited progress.
2. Utopianism which looked forward to the end of progressivism in history. In this movement the earth becomes the location of the end of ambiguous living, through revolution.
3. The 'Transcendental' type of eschatology which envisages there to be no relationship between the Kingdom of God and the historical process.

Tillich (1963), however, understands that if history is to remain in process it will retain all its ambiguities:

'The aim of history can now be expressed in terms of the three processes of life and their unity in the following way: History, in terms of the self-integration of life, drives toward a centredness of all history-bearing groups and their individual members in an unambiguous harmony of power and justice. History, in terms of the self-creativity of life drives toward the creation of a new unambiguous state of things. And history, in terms of the self-transcendence of life, drives toward the universal, unambiguous fulfilment of the potentiality of being.

But history, like life in general, stands under the negativities of existence and therefore under the ambiguities of life'. (Vol 3 p332)

In this way the Kingdom of God becomes the symbol of the goal of life's drives. The Kingdom of God can be seen to contain several

elements; political, social, personal and universal. These symbols allow us to perceive the 'not yet' of any line of progress in history or personal history. Where a subject (anyone with a sense of "I") treats another "I" as an object it can be seen the Kingdom of God is not realised. Similarly, where peace and justice are not totally realised, where individuals are not totally fulfilled and where every one of life's ambiguities are not held in perfect balance and where 'God is not all in all' in all of creation we may say that the symbol of the Kingdom of God remains the goal towards which the 'whole of creation longs and strains'. (Romans 8:22)

Is maturity utopian, teleological or eschatological ?

Can this scheme be seen as a measure of maturity ? The symbol of the Kingdom of God can inform us that the polarities of life can never be "in balance". If in Christian terms the more one loves the more one can suffer other's pains, then it follows that to love is to know the discrepancy between the present reality and the symbol of the Kingdom. Eschatology becomes not the end of time in Tillich's view, but the end of each moment. A straight historical line will not suffice as a model of time 'as coming from and going to the eternal'.

'This drives us to the question as to whether we can imagine a diagram which in some way unites the qualities of "coming from", "going ahead," and "rising to". I would suggest a curve which comes from above, moves down as well as ahead, reaches the deepest point which is the *nunc existiale*, the "existential now", and returns in an analogous way to that from which it came, going ahead as well as going up. This curve can be drawn in every moment of experienced time, and it can also be seen as the diagram for temporality as a whole. It implies the creation of the temporal, the beginning of time, and the return of the temporal to the eternal, the end of time.

But the end of time is not conceived in terms of a definite moment either in the past or in the future. Beginning from and ending in the eternal are not matters of a determinable moment in physical time but rather a

process going on in every moment, as does the divine creation. There is always creation and consummation, beginning and end." (Tillich 1963 Vol 3 p393)

This means that at any given moment an individual or a society may realise a 'fragmentary victory of the Kingdom of God' (Tillich 1963 p394) in a life where the ambiguities remain. The eschatological framework indicates that only at the 'end of history' would existentialism and essentialism be held in balance in more than a fragmentary way. The Kingdom is a symbol for the 'negation of the negatives' of life. This is the creation of the new. In the present, life, while remaining incomplete and ambiguous also contains the possibility of balance in contrast to polarity between the ambiguities.

Moltmann: Theology of hope

I now turn to the work of Moltmann (1967 1974) who, beginning from a very different theological position from Tillich, has given the understanding of eschatology renewed vigour. In similar vein to Tillich he writes that

'As long as 'everything' is not 'very good' the difference between hope and reality remain, and faith remains irreconciled and must press towards the future in hope and suffering'.

Moltmann (1967) begins firmly in the Christian Tradition:

'Christian theology has one way in which it can prove its truth by reference to the reality of man and the reality of the world that concerns man - namely, by accepting the questionableness of human existence and the questionableness of reality as a whole and taking them up into that eschatological questionableness of human nature and the world which is disclosed by the event of promise. 'Threatened by death' and 'subjected to vanity' - that is the expression of our universal experience of existence and the world. 'In hope' - that is manifestly the way in which Christian theology takes up these questions and directs them to the promised future of God." (p215)

Moltmann: The Eschatological Hope

The promised future is focused in the event of the resurrection of Christ. If the world is to be seen as 'Contingent creation out of the freedom of God' and 'ex nihilo' then the raising of Christ becomes intelligible as 'nova creatio' and all experience becomes provisional in the light of the resurrection because reality can be seen not yet to contain what will be.

'[Theology] must develop an historical understanding which works with eschatological analogy as a foreshadowing and anticipation of the future'. (Moltmann 1967 p215)

Hope is born on the cross and the reality of the world of suffering and of negative aspects are seen as the 'not yet's' of the future. For Moltmann, the contradictions of the world do not end in nothing and in using the Marxist philosopher Bloch's (1986) assertion that the future creates history, Moltmann in his turn asserts that God's promise creates history. In the cross and resurrection of Jesus we perceive the contradiction of the world. We can see the promise of righteousness as opposed to sin, freedom as opposed to bondage, glory as opposed to suffering, or to use Tillich's phrase, 'the negation of the negatives'.

According to Moltmann the dialectic of the cross and resurrection cannot be assimilated into an understanding of world history because the Promise totally contradicts world history and is only resolved in the new creation of things. Therefore the eschatological future is not a tendency or process in history.

Bloch's view influenced Moltmann toward the idea that the future can remain open. Bloch, as an atheist, perceived the world as

unfinished and in process. It is therefore open to change; changed, in his perspective, to a Utopian Marxist future. As the future of the world is radically open it can be shaped by human activity. It is clear that these views did indeed influence the Christian, Moltmann. The resurrection is the ground of hope and the measure of future reality. Hope is the liberation from the status quo formed by the givenness of the past. In Theology of Hope Moltmann (1967) takes the idea of promise forward into the concept of mission. The attempt to change the world in the direction of the promise as seen in the cross and resurrection means being self-involved and being involved in world transforming activities.

In the Church in the Power of the Spirit (1977) he writes that the Church must suffer until the end of all suffering. Men and women become free to identify with the victims of the world.

Moltmann has been accused of turning Barth's understanding of the wholly transcendent God breaking into the present from above through ninety degrees. The qualitatively other future breaks into present. But Bloch has given us a viewpoint that the openness of the future has the ability to shape the present. This process or ability does not necessarily need a transcendent God or transcendent 'Future' to make meaningful the discontinuity with the past. Being open, the future can shape the present which therefore is not totally bound to the past.

As Moltmann (1967) writes the future can both appear as the new in the present as 'anticipation' and also be extrapolated from the present. But the future, although being able to be anticipated,

cannot be foreseen even though hope can shape it. The future can show itself in the past as the 'first fruits' of what will be. It is also clear that a radical openness to the future or eschatological hope does not justify the expectation that everything is possible. The tension remains between extrapolation and anticipation, between possibility and givenness.

Discussion: understandings of time and the construction of Faith Development Theories

In the religious experience of the cultures influencing present day European thought there can be seen to be four understandings of time or history. While it is not the purpose of the chapter to assert that experience directly shapes culture it is asserted that there is a relationship. Thus the purpose of this chapter has been to provide a framework in which to describe and analyse faith development theories. The analysis in turn aids the process of asking further questions as well as drawing some conclusions.

The first appreciation of cultic time that was discussed stemmed from some of the Nomadic tribes of the Fertile Crescent. There appears to have been the dialogue between the nomadic ideas of covenant and promise and the cyclic ideas of the surrounding cultures. The dialogue continued between the linear history of the Hebrew religion and the later Greek philosophies. This dialogue appears to have influenced the understandings of history as we now apprehend them.

The nature cults of Mesopotamia appear to have sensed the chaos and apparent randomness of time.

The cults of Egypt appear to have sensed the regular nourishing cycles of time.

The fertility cults of Canaan provided the background to the attempts at uniqueness in Hebrew religion so that history, as covenant and promise, became linear.

Because the fulfilment of the promise (of land) became a future event an eschatological viewpoint developed.

Where does faith development fit into this scheme? The theories, being developmental, tend to be linear; time produces history. The history of the individual unfolds through the ages of man. In theological terms the history of the individual is a movement (inhibited or not) towards the realised Kingdom of God.

As James Fowler (1992) writes in Stages of Religious Development (Fowler et al 1992):

'In the course of completing the account of stages in *Stages of Faith* it was necessary to engage head on the question of the normativity of the theory's end point, and the precommitments informing the theory. The chapter on Universalizing faith acknowledged that the normative image of most developed faith derives principally from H Richard Niebuhr's complex representation of the Christian and biblical traditions' vision of mature faith. There we see persons whose wills, visions, and patterns of living are grounded in and congruent with the divine intention and modes of action disclosed in the elaborated eschatological metaphor 'kingdom of God'. Citing the proclamation of the kingdom of God as the central image and impulse of Jesus' preaching and mission, the chapter tackled the question of the particular and the universal as they are raised by this entire discussion. Its fundamental claim, misunderstood by many critics and interpreters (Moran 1983; Schmidt 1984), derives in part from the spirit of Wolfhart Pannenberg's theology (Pannenberg 1976) as well as from that of Niebuhr: It is that claims to *revelation* in the biblical tradition, if justified or justifiable at all, must be taken seriously

as the disclosure of the nature and *Tendenz* of Ultimate Reality and of the appropriate human response of obedient partnership." (p25)

The protestant liberal theologians, writing at the rise in prominence of liberal ideas of education and empirical science, might well have agreed with James Fowler's phrases 'Congruent with the divine intention' and 'Tendenz of Ultimate Reality"' They, too, believed that history and humans can progressively tend towards the reality of the kingdom of God.

It has already been asserted that when the eschatological viewpoint fades or is believed to be concerned with 'last things' or beyond, the Kingdom of God becomes 'the nature and Tendenz of Ultimate Reality and the appropriate human response of obedient partnership'. The Kingdom of God is therefore a metaphor for what is, or will be, 'essentially true'. The goal is described and prescribed. History is a measure of how close existence comes to fulfilling the ideal essence.

There can be seen some congruence between cyclic and teleological understandings in faith systems. If we understand the Nature Religions correctly they appear to be cyclic with nothing new under sun. The philosopher in Eccliastes 1:2, 12:8 bemoans the fact that all is vanity; nothing is new. The platonic view of the cosmos meant there could be nothing new as fulfilment was achieved by attaining to the ideal that was already set in heaven. From these systems of thought we can know what true humanity looks like and can measure our maturity or our learning against the ideal. We can move up the ladder of perfection, up the liberal ladder of education, up the

mountain of 'normative visions deriving from particular philosophical commitments and traditions'. (Fowler 1992 p25)

The arguments as set out in chapter 5 (The Time of our Lives) of this thesis informs us that this is a merging of linear Christianity and cyclic Greek essentialism. This does not make developmental theories wrong but it does locate them as resting in the teleological understanding of time. This would state that we mature towards a future that is 'essentially' known.

On the other hand, Moltmann's understanding of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and Tillich's use of the symbol the Kingdom of God, give us a picture of eschatological hope rather than a teleological process of maturation.

A truly eschatological perspective talks about the discontinuity of the historical line. It talks about an openness to the future and an openness of the future. An eschatological perspective would lead us to expect to see 'fragmentary victories of the Kingdom of God' (Tillich 1963). We might use another metaphor. We could expect to see blossoms of the tree of life that bear no linear or historical relationship to each other. We could expect to see particular visions of the future giving rise to activity and thought in the present with no (or little) linear relationship to the past.

* * *

I wish to develop this point further and build on the framework of this chapter by exploring more material that is discordant with the

general developmental theme of 'time plus change equalling progress'. In the cycles of life, for example, disintegration is a well attested phenomenon. The increasing ability of the use of fine muscles in childhood may result in loss of ability in old age. The data concerning the aging process appears to point to the understanding that we can expect physical and mental abilities to reduce with age. The cyclic understanding of history would take this phenomena into account. Chaos and disintegration may be the lot of many people as they travel through their historical lives. But the theory of Chaos has given birth to the theory of Antichaos and this can be seen as part of the openness to the future and openness of the future. In nature, systems that are linear and regular appear far less frequently than systems displaying non-linear, chaotic phenomena. Systems such as the weather appear far more often than systems such as pendulums. Again the eschatological viewpoint is the one that best fits experience in all its variety. Furthermore, there can be seen to be 'grades' of eschatological thought, from weak to strong.

A weak eschatological view remains heavily influenced by Platonism. The Kingdom of God remains essentially the same for ever and history cannot change the symbol. Mankind can see flashes of the coming kingdom. Existence is surrounded by a past that has gone but is affecting the present and by a future that is eschatologically known through 'anticipation' and extrapolation. Theologically this can be stated as God is the same Yesterday, Today and Forever.

A strong eschatological stance is a radical departure from Platonism. As the world experiences existence so the symbol of the Kingdom of God is transformed. The future is not known but a risk. God is

passable and therefore the future is also a risk to 'Holy Being'. God as well as the world are at the forefront of creating and redeeming. But now it can be held that the Omega is different from the Alpha and in terms of the Kingdom of God the horizon changes as time is experienced. This means there is a very different interpretation to the expression given to Jesus in John's gospel 'I have gone on ahead to prepare a place for you'. (John 14: 2, 3) The God of our fathers is nomadic.

The strong eschatological framework also means that education, knowledge, culture, myth, beliefs, etc. take on new meaning. No longer are these to be seen to reveal or re-search or to be attempts to describe and live up to that which is essentially true for ever.

The strong eschatological stance means that science, myth, theology, etc. create an ever changing future by changing the hopes of and for the future. Education's sense of purpose is revitalised by the Bloch/Moltman assertion that the future creates history. This is not necessarily asserting a strong anthropic principle where the universe is brought into being by the act of conscious observation as proposed, for example, by J Wheeler. (in Davis 1980) The future has an openness to it. As our vision changes so does our history. As our history changes so does our vision.

To illustrate this important point I draw attention to some selective scientific thoughts about time. Following which I conclude this section and the chapter with a summary of the relationship of faith development theories to the ideas discussed in this chapter.

Twentieth century physics has asked some hard questions about the common-sense view of time. No longer can we imagine we live in a mechanistic universe with absolute time and absolute space. At the very least time is relative and part of space/time. This means, for example, that time runs slower at greater gravities and speeds.

More disconcerting perhaps is the direction of time. At a subatomic level time appears to be able to go in either direction. Particles can come into existence or go out of existence. As John Polkinhorne asserts: 'A film of two elementary particles interacting would have no intrinsic time sense: it would make sense to run it either forwards or backwards'. (Polkinhorne 1986 p91)

Einstein said that at the level of Relativity 'the distinction between past, present and future is an illusion, though a persistent one'. (Quoted in Davis 1980)

For Einstein and others such as Herman Weyl (in Davis 1980) space/time simply is. Past and future are equally now. In a universe of cause and effect, time is the effect of entropy rather than the cause. Entropy is like a direction pointing from order to disorder. But entropy means that in terms of a film it would make no sense to run the events of birth to death backwards. When asked about time Prigone (1984) answered to this effect:

'We can now see that the universe is structured in such a way that it will spontaneously produce its own astonishing novelties. Time is essential to the creativity of the universe.'

Or, as Prigone puts it, 'time is construction'. (Prigone & Stengers 1984 p294)

In human terms perhaps we could say that time and free choice are linked in some way. Paul Davies cites an experiment with a polarizer and a photon.

'By choosing which quantity to measure it is rather like a lucky dip in which you can choose from either of the two bins ... There is some element of chance and some of choice'. (Tilby 1992 p174)

This also brings us back to some physicists' assertions concerning quantum mechanics that the potential became real when it is observed. Whether this is a strong eschatological view remains unclear to me.

Summary

In the discussion about the four understandings of Time I located Faith Development Theories in the Enlightenment. In the Enlightenment, time and progress were to be seen as coincidental. In a Newtonian mechanistic universe moral and individual development were believed to be teleological, ie time moved things forward to completion.

In the post-modern environment it is no longer possible to take this understanding for granted. I questioned the received wisdom that time plus change equals progress.

I have asserted that our culture shapes what we think and who we are to a great extent. This will be explored more deeply in the next chapter. I explored another fruitful way of understanding time, the concepts associated with the eschaton.

The eschatological understanding allows us to see other patterns of time apart from the developmental, the teleological. In the present

chaos we may see fragmentary glimpses of wholeness without the need to devise a linear scheme to account for the changes. This at least begins to explain the discrepancies between stage theory and reality.

But the eschatological concepts provide us with much more than a more realistic view of time and history. If the concept of development as teleological is brought into question then faith development theories must be wrong and we must look for other reasons why faith changes. The eschatological vision of maturity can be seen to become part of the cultural environment in which we are formed. The vision of maturity becomes formative. In a pluralist society there will be many such hopes for the future that remain unfulfilled, and remain outside the normal process of ageing. These eschatological visions of maturity become part of the givenness of our culture. They also keep the future open. Our future is not necessarily fixed by the past or present.

Life remains ambiguous. The givenness of the past and an openness to the future are part of man's existence. In the randomness and in the order of life 'fragmentary visions of the Kingdom of God' (Tillich 1978) may be seen. Anticipatory visions of the Kingdom of God may result in early blooms. But it is just as likely that disorder and chaos appear.

Having found wanting the teleological explanation of maturity I now seek to answer what it is that appears to mature. The concept of self is therefore important to this exploration.

Furthermore, if each person is not teleologically constrained to

develop through 'innate patterns of behaviour in ordered sequence'
(Hadfield 1962) then we need to know if we are constrained in other
ways and if freedom is a possibility.

Therefore we are left with the questions 'What am I ?' and 'How free
am I ?'

Chapter 6

I AM DETERMINED TO BE FREE

An enquiry into the understanding of self and the question of freedom.

It was asserted in the previous chapter that faith development theories are located in a particular understanding of time. Developmental theories also presuppose that some-one (thing) develops. This chapter examines some of the things that can be said about the phenomenon of consciousness and whether freedom plays a part in existence.

Chapters 4 and 5 began the process of building a theory. Chapter 6 explores the mind/brain debate in order to evaluate what actually changes in faith development. Then because they form the basis of Fowler's faith development theory, Erikson's (1950) assertions are challenged.

The issues of free will and determinism are explored and the theories of antichaos and emergent behaviour are found helpful in providing a link between brain activity and mind activity. I explore aspects of agency and matters of significance.

Finally, the chapter's flow of ideas is set out. This leads to the final chapter.

Existence, Awareness and Self Direction

Why am I writing these words? Perhaps the question should be "Am I writing these words?" or even "Am I?"

There appears to be no proof I exist. There is no proof I do not exist. Generally speaking I align myself with most human beings and behave as if I existed as one autonomous individual among others, or at least one member of an organism.

To use the term 'exist' in this way may prove to be a holiday for language and therefore a problem for philosophy. I may be mistaken. I may be most mistaken concerning autonomy. But for the sake of this discussion I am going to assume I exist. I stand out. I am going to assume that there are processes at work which have produced stars and planets and on at least one planet life has resulted. I am going to assume that on this planet (at least) this process has become aware of itself.

MacQuarrie (1966) says:

'Man's unique status in nature arises from the fact that in him the evolutionary process has for the first time (at least on earth) become transparent to itself and capable to some extent of self-direction.' (p61)

This assertion is not to be taken uncritically, of course. The 'evolutionary process' is probably not quite as Darwin portrayed and the extent of 'self-direction' is one of the areas being debated in this present discussion. But MacQuarrie's statement is useful in pointing towards the relationship of 'self' and 'past, present and future'.

The understanding of past, present and future, as we have seen, is a major source of debate in Western Christian thought. For much of its history, Christianity has been Platonic. Plato described a substantial soul that could exist apart from the body. The soul had

existed prior to incorporation and would exist after death. Popular Christianity has consistently, but not without debate, claimed immortality and stability for the self or soul which sort of gets implanted in the body (at conception?) and leaves on death. Plato contrasted the differences between existence and essence. Existence is mere opinion, open to error and evil. Essence is our true being and true ideas that are eternal. Existence, therefore, is a fall from essence. The myth of The Fall coloured much Christian thinking and therefore Platonic and Christian story-telling affirmed each other.

Dualism

The current literature (eg Hay & Morisy 1978) contains elements of story or biography that appear to support the substantive soul theory. Accounts of 'out of body' experiences at times of crisis appear to support the assertion that consciousness exists apart from the functioning of the brain - the Ghost temporarily leaves the machine.

The Ghost in the machine is, of course, the phrase applied to Descartes (1975) famous words. Descartes' conclusion 'I think therefore I am' is dualistic. (Mind stuff and matter stuff).

Property Dualism

Popular introspection can also lead to the dualistic position of a belief in an immortal soul controlling the mortal body. Another type of dualism claims that the brain is physical but has the special effect of causing 'mind' Actions, emotions and the sense of 'I' are determined by the brain. This epiphenomenalism is known as property

dualism. The brain has special effects.

Property dualism is unchallenged by the major source of evidence contradicting substantive soul theory. As Churchland (1979) writes:

'If there really is a distinct entity in which reasoning, emotion and consciousness take place, and if that entity is dependent on the brain for nothing more than sensory experiences as input and volitional executions as output, then one would expect reason, emotion and consciousness to be relatively invulnerable to direct control, or pathology by manipulation or damage to the brain. But in fact the exact opposite is true. Alcohol, narcotics, senile degeneration of nerve tissue will impair, cripple or even destroy one's capacity for rational thought'.

Culture, learning and the mind

Churchland sets out other ways of thinking about the mind/body problem. As a philosopher he is interested in neuroscience.

Recent research into brain damage and electro-chemical reactions has begun the process of locating some of the mind processes within the brain. But, as Churchland (1979) asserts 'Some levels of consciousness are not innate to humans anyway, but require extensive learning activity on the part of the subject'.

This is certainly in keeping with the claims of this thesis. It was claimed that if Piaget had discovered any empirical information, the stages appear to be culturally defined. The evidence I put forward in Chapter 4 A Web in a Text pointed to the learning process as a way of creating, organising and dealing with information, emotions and the awareness of self-consciousness. Language is part of a social network. When discussing perceptual judgements Churchland outlines the network theory as follows:

1. Any perceptual judgement involves the application of *concepts* (for example, *a* is F)
2. Any concept is a node in a *network* of contrasting concepts, and its meaning is fixed by its peculiar place within that network.
3. Any network of concepts is a speculative assumption or *theory*: minimally, as to the classes into which nature divides herself, and the major relations that hold between them.

Therefore,

4. Any perceptual judgement presupposes a theory.

The mind/brain, it is thought, learns about itself, its own inner states in a way that is parallel to the ways it learns about the world outside. As a social scientist therefore I do not have to believe in a soul to account for self consciousness. I am writing these words because I have learnt who I am in response to a complex relationship between brain, central nervous system and input from a social context which is both general and specific.

Descartes' "I think therefore I am" becomes "I think I am because I am in a community, tradition and culture". Though perhaps this is too extreme a position and a truer though weaker position is "I think I am what I am because I am in a social context".

Definitions of the Self

Many of the ways of defining "self" over the past century have been given to the philosophical and psychological question of consciousness.

William James (1902) thought of the self as the sum of all that any individual can own - the body, mannerisms, abilities, material, social and spiritual. He saw the self as both object and process.

The self, according to Freud, (Brown 1961) comprises the Id, Ego and Superego, whereas Jung (Stevens 1990) saw the self as an archetype motivating the quest for wholeness and the centre of the whole personality. The Ego, according to Jung, is only the centre of personality.

Adler (1961) believed that the self is only discernible by its effects as it responds to its heredity and environment to create a meaning for life.

Stressing responsibility, Rogers (1951) saw the self as developing out of the interaction with the environment.

Fromm (1978) understood the goal of human existence as the recognition and acceptance of our uniqueness in the inherent contradictions of life.

It may be noted that these descriptions of self are highly influenced by Western thought forms (at least up to the modern period), whereas the self in the Buddhism context is viewed differently.

Christian Humphreys (1961) writing in Zen Buddhism asserts,

'This nature is hsin [soul], the personal veil which hides from us the Essence of Mind. It is everywhere and everything, and when anything is suddenly seen for what it is, the hsin is seen, and Zen' and 'Things, in brief, are not symbols, but things, and the whole of Samsara, the manifest universe, is only the Essence of Mind in reverse. See it 'right' and it is One, though none the less a rose, or a committee meeting, or a pint of beer. Such is the nature of things', and 'This Nature is the Mind, and the Mind is the Buddha, and the Buddha is the Way, and the Way is Zen. To see directly into one's original Nature, this is Zen' (p61)

The Self is operated on by the unceasing law of Karma. Humphreys quotes Chuang Tzu:

'Follow the wheel of life, follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of Karmic retribution ...' (op. cit. 64)

Thomas Merton (1976) was a 20th century Christian monk who was interested in Zen Buddhism. He quotes verses composed by two Zen masters. In a pantheistic universe, ruled by the law of Karma, mind and self are clearly important topics of discussion.

One master wrote:

The body is the Bodhi-tree* (under which Buddha was enlightened)
The mind is like a clear mirror standing
Take care to wipe it all the time
Allow no grain of dust to cling to it.

His successor wrote:

The Bodhi is not like a tree
The clear mirror is nowhere standing
Fundamentally not one thing exists
Where then is a grain of dust to cling. (p8,9)

In the Doctrine of the Bhagavad Gita, Pandit Bhavani Shankar (1966) sets out his own understanding of the topic.

'Aham-Kar is the sense of I-ness, the false or artificial 'I'. In the course of evolution, Buddhi comes first and presents itself merely as consciousness without the sense of I-ness, and thereafter comes Aham-kara. Next comes the mind (Manas) the function of which is Sankalpa (selection) and Vikalpa (rejection). Then come the Indriyas, the Inanendriyas and Karmendriyas, and the five gross elements.' (p74)

Pakriti is, apparently, responsible for the mental and moral qualities of man. Pakriti is the very life by which the universe is upheld, its source and its dissolution.

Until quantum physics these ideas sounded strange to many

westerners but they do add weight to the argument that our sense of self is a product of our cultural environment. Charles Taylor (1989) writes,

'So my lineage is part of my identity because it is bound up with certain qualities I value, or because I believe that I must value the qualities since they are so integrally part of me that to disvalue them would be to reject myself'.

Erikson's Eight Ages of Man

In much Western psycho-analytical literature, the Ego, Super Ego and Id are matters of discussion. Gordon Lowe (1972) in The Growth of Personality defines the Ego as the sense of 'I', the self; the Super Ego is defined as 'conscience' (ie mainly negative imperatives); the id is comprised of the unconscious primitive drives and urges. Lowe asserts that while we are born with an id ("a baby psychologically speaking is almost pure id") we acquire our ego and superego.

Lowe is highly influenced by Erikson's work. Erikson's (1950) theory 'Eight Stages of Man' has also influenced many of the faith development schemes.

The following chart shows how (as the theory asserts) at each stage the person undergoes a crisis. The outcome of each crisis is put into an axis. Erikson describes how, at each stage, the child's developmental outcome determines the ability to resolve the crisis of the subsequent stage. The Chart outlines Erikson's scheme.

ERIKSON'S (1950) EIGHT AGES OF MAN

ORAL-SENSORY	Basic Trust v Mistrust
MUSCULAR-ANAL	Autonomy v Shame, Doubt
LOCOMOTOR-GENITAL	Initiative v Guilt
LATENCY	Industry v Inferiority
PUBERTY AND ADOLESCENCE	Identity v Role Confusion
YOUNG ADULTHOOD	Intimacy v Isolation
ADULTHOOD	Generativity v Stagnation
MATURITY	Ego Integrity v Despair

Moran (1983) in his criticism of Erikson asserts that the first of each pair denotes the desirable qualities and the second of each pair denotes the "minor player". The ratio between the desirable and minor qualities is important. Moran claims that Erikson hopes to avoid the "determinism of a pre-ordained end" (p33) by this ratio but Moran acknowledges that the chart of outcomes is a programme for normality. The distinction between childlike and childish, for example, is very unclear. We have therefore to ask are bi-polar outcomes too limiting to form the foundation to faith development theories ?

By majoring on one area of psychological crisis at each 'age' eg Trust/Mistrust, Erikson effectively reduces the possibility of noticing the inter-relatedness of all these areas of being human and the processes at work through all the ages and 'stages'. The research evidence (see eg Hamblin 1983) of secondary school age people shows how trust/mistrust models are just as important at this stage as at Erikson's oral-sensory stage. Adults who begin to notice

a crisis of identity or a renewed vigour in their search for meaning are not undergoing a second adolescent stage! Erikson's "crises" occur throughout life.

Another major criticism of Erikson's analysis of human development comes from feminist writers (eg Gilligan 1982). This critique points out that bipolar axis and 'ladder' schemes tend to be male constructs.

At one level, for example, a dichotomy such as night and day seems self evident. But imagine a tribe of people who eat animals which could only be caught at dusk. Dusk would be a major part of the 24 hours. The day would then be split up as dusk, pre-dusk and post dusk.

Carol Gilligan's (1982) criticism of Kohlberg's (1958) scheme of moral development pointed out that male premises were being used. Women, Gilligan concluded, perceived morals as a web of relationships as opposed to an hierarchical ladder.

Feminist writers (eg Fischer 1989) also assert that female constructs of reality tend to allow for relationship. In theology, for example, the bipolar top/bottom axis of "we are climbing Jacob's ladder" becomes "we are dancing Sarah's circle". (Nelson 1992)

The strands within this critique allow us to question whether Erikson is right to assert bipolar outcomes for each crisis even if we allow the clear separation of outcomes into age-related stages. Erikson's dependence/independence axis could easily be a relationship of

dependence/independence/inter-dependence or partial dependence/independence.

A further critique of Erikson's work notes the culture-bound terminology. We can note that the negative resolution of the crisis in the locomotor/genital stage is inferiority, whereas the positive outcome is industry. Do we see here the cultural influence of an industrialised society? Why is Inferiority the opposite of Industry?

One final question to ask of Erikson's theory is whether stages are genetically controlled ie universal. We can legitimately ask whether it is likely that 1.8 million years of genetic sifting have resulted in a programme of human development that accurately fits the life experiences of 20th century man living in an industrialised society. The probability would appear to be low. On the other hand, if a genetic development programme shapes society we would expect cross cultural and trans-historical differences to be less marked than they appear to be as we displayed in the chapters on Piaget and Spiritual Development.

The role and relationship of genes and culture

The role and relationship of genes and culture is, however, central to my thesis and therefore I will now explore the role and relationship of genes and culture in forming the self.

Genetic studies are beginning to discover the role of certain genes. For example, one set of genes is thought to be responsible for producing cystic fibrosis. Another gene (or set of genes) is thought to be responsible for an increase in the likelihood of depression or

alcohol dependency. David Suzuki (1993), Professor of Genetics at the University of British Columbia, writes:

'Kendler has confirmed what other studies have found: out there in the population there are genes which can influence our chances of suffering from depression or alcoholism. But he's also interested in an unexpectedly powerful social factor'. (p15)

In studies of religious affiliation the rates of alcoholism were 500% higher in the non affiliated group than in the fundamentalist group.

Suzuki quotes other research and asserts:

'Results like these are making scientists realise what effect genes have on us depends upon our environment. Our personal circumstances, our religion, even our sex can change the way our genes affect us' (p17)

Moran (1983) asserts:

'If human life is to remain open, as the modern meaning of development requires, then it cannot simply follow pre-ordained instincts or fulfil some set plan'. (p158)

Why then do researchers such as Fowler (1981) find age related structures in their data? The answer appears to be tied up in the phrases "Be your age" or "Be a man" or "We don't do that".

We are born with a particular genetic make-up. As humans we have instinctive needs and drives. This is part of the givenness of life - what MacQuarrie (1966) calls the 'facticity'.

In addition to this facticity we are born into a particular life setting. This particularity relates to wider cultural settings in particular ways. So while each person is an individual, each individual is relating to and adding to a wider context. In this plurality of contexts it can be seen that "Be your age" has

similarities and differences for individuals depending upon genes and on the life context. "Boys will be boys" will have local contexts (household, family, street, local area, town, etc) as well as wider contexts (class, nation, hemisphere, decade, etc). These expectations will relate to experience and shape experience.

The experience and physical capabilities of the average two year old will not lead most cultures to expect this age group to learn calculus or drive a car.

On the other hand, expectations shape experience. The findings of Fowler and Oser are, in part at least, the discovery of age-related expectations. Our context tells us what to achieve, how to behave and what activity is acceptable and at what age.

Moran (1983) distinguishes four areas that are important to the understanding of learning and education. Each area is emphasised at different times in the life cycle. Each area is dependent upon context for its age-related emphasis.

Family and other forms

Job and other forms

Community

Work

Schooling and other forms

Leisure and other forms

Knowledge

Wisdom

(p165)

Individual contexts are composed of strands of information and

expectations drawn from a variety of contending contexts. For example, those within a particular kind of church will learn what to believe and how to behave from the contending narratives in that organisation. This 'learning' will have congruence with and differences from the church down the road. Both church communities will be influenced by the contending contexts in society 'outside'.

In a pluralist society there appears to have been a weakening of the authority structure that defines 'Be your age'. But it is difficult to imagine a society that is not to some extent pluralistic. Even in the most isolated tribe there will be different life experiences and different access to the process of legitimation of knowledge and power.

We can imagine what inter-tribal contact does to these processes.

The pluralism of social contexts

In their book 'Resistance through Rituals', Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1976) write:

'The dominant culture of a complex society is never a homogeneous structure. It is layered, reflecting different interests within the dominant class (eg an aristocratic versus a bourgeois outlook), containing different traces from the past (eg religious ideas within a largely secular culture), as well as emergent elements in the present. Subordinate cultures will not always be in open conflict with it. They may, for long periods, coexist with it, negotiate the spaces and gaps in it, make inroads into it, "warrenning it from within" (Thompson, 1965). However, though the nature of this struggle over culture can never be reduced to a simple opposition, it is crucial to replace the notion of 'culture' with the more concrete, historical concept of 'cultures'. (p12)

Jean Francois Lyotard (1979) develops Musil's theme of the self amounting to little in his "The Post Modern Condition":

'A *self* does not amount to much, but no self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before. Young or old, man or woman, rich or poor, a person is always located at "nodal points" of specific communication circuits, however tiny these may be. Or better: one is always located at a post through which various kinds of messages pass'. (p15)

If, in McQuarrie's (1966) terms, our genetic inheritance is part of the facticity of existence, so also are the 'nodal points' of existence. At any given moment we are what we have been given - genetically and culturally. Where then is freedom? This argument appears to replace a genetically determined process with a position of determinism produced by the interaction of environment and genetic make-up. But the process remains deterministic. Therefore the question now to be asked is whether or not there is evidence to suppose that some aspects of life are not totally determined by prior causes. In other words can we find evidence of free-will.

Determinism, Predestination, Fate and Freewill

The existence of free will is supposed by theology, by law (which provides punishment) and by natural understanding. Philosophically, the debate between libertarianism and determinism continues.

When we examine some of the statements that compose the "Natural Narratives" that make up the description of life and ways of behaving, paradoxes may reveal the continuing debate between determinism and libertarianism. For example, a man may willingly join his country's army to defend liberty and yet believe "What will be will be" or "if the bullet's got your name on it"

The sense of pre-destination and fate appear to run deep. The narrative line that describes luck or fate or control by a Deity as some of the main factors in human activity has a long history.

Sophocles in *The Antigone* explores the relationship between these concepts. He writes:

'Tis Chance upraises, Chance hurls down again
The lowly and the exalted among men,
And what seer knoweth aught that shall abide?'

Later he writes:

'To Pluto there
And Her of the Three Ways we made our prayer
In mercy to withhold their wrath'

The play ends:

'Supreme in man's felicity
Is Wisdom; and the wise in awe
Bow them beneath God's ancient law.
Vain-glorious lips and vanity
In heavy stripes their payment earn
And men grow old before they learn'. (Murray 1941)

Fatalism works on the assumption that all statements about the future are right or wrong. But as Lukasiewicz points out the principle of bivalence could well be wrong. There may be three positions for statements about the future - right, wrong and indeterminate. This would mean that some actions could be free and that freedom is not all or nothing but a matter of degree.

The Determinist view points to the predictability of the future. The future could be determined by a complete description of the present. This appears to be the position arrived at in this chapter so far. The facticity of genes and circumstances are the causes of future events. Every event has a cause. The causes of the present events have prior causes. There are logical reasons why this argument is

correct. If decisions are the outcome of activity in the brain, that brain activity is the outcome of genetic make-up and environmental input then decisions are the events of prior causes. This would mean that while we think we are making decisions we are merely responding to stimuli. The life (on this planet at least) that has become aware of the process of evolution is merely an observer and a deluded observer at that. He is deluded inasmuch as he thinks he is more than an observer. He thinks he is an agent. In this hard deterministic position consciousness is simply a result of brain events. Research produces an increasingly detailed picture of the correlation between brain activity and features of consciousness. A complete description of brain activity would allow accurate descriptions of decisions. It would also mean that there is no voluntary activity.

As Ryle (1963) says in the Concept of Mind

'If I cannot help willing to pull the trigger, it would be absurd to describe my pulling it as 'voluntary'. But if my volition to pull the trigger is voluntary then it must issue from a prior volition and that from another ad infinitum'.

The determinist position describes two major features: given sufficient information about the present the future is predic~~able~~ and therefore free will is illusory; and every event has a cause.

Are there reasons to question these assumptions ? Sir Karl Popper (1972) asserts that the outcome of all large scale events cannot be predicted. He gives the example of the calculating machine not being able to predict certain of its future states. In addition, the more precisely a measurement is made the more likely error will occur. At

a subatomic level this error can be enormous. Also, at the subatomic level, predicting the outcome of an event is a matter of probability rather than certainty.

In his chapter entitled 'God does not play dice' in Other Worlds Paul Davies (1980) writes:

'To summarise the significant features of the quantum revolution we find that the rigid laws of motion are really a myth. Matter is allowed to roam more or less at random, subject to certain pressures, such as the reluctance to engage in too much activity. Complete chaos is thus averted because matter is lazy as well as undisciplined, so that in a sense the universe avoids total disintegration because of the inherent indolence of nature. While no definite statement can be made about any particular motion, certain paths of behaviour are more probable than others, so that statistically we can predict accurately how a large collection of similar systems will behave. Although these strange features are only pronounced on the atomic scale, it is clear that the universe is not, after all, a clockwork machine whose future is completely determined. The world is ruled less by rigid laws than by chance. The uncertainties, moreover, are not merely a result of our ignorance of initial conditions, as was once thought, but an inherent property of nature'. (p33 ff)

This understanding is made more complex when we consider that the 'whole is greater than the sum'. Emergent phenomenon arises when the components of a system have one kind of behaviour (neurones, axons, synapses) but the system as a whole (consciousness) has a different kind of behaviour that is not reducible to an analysis of the individual components. The theories of antichaos and emergent phenomena give us frameworks in which to ask further questions of agency in the brain/mind debate. How far is the observer involved in the observation and how far will the observer be created by or create the observed ?

Further insights from modern science may help to illuminate our question concerning free will. The empirical reductionist approach describes an observer/observed system. The observer is seen as independent of the objective reality. Philosophically and empirically this model is now radically questioned.

Strawson (1992) writes:

'It would be absurd to deny, and I have not denied, that we learn by experience, as we say, about the propensities of things of different types and indeed about the propensities of individual specimens of those types: most notably the latter when the type is the type of fellow human beings. But the learning takes place in a pre-existing, in an already prepared framework of conditional expectation". (p121)

More than this many scientists now recognise that the act of observing causes disturbances in the observed. Observed and observer become an interacting system. This is especially true at the subatomic level but we also know of this phenomenon in the world of human behaviour.

We can say with Davies (1980) that indeterminacy is part of our condition.

'We have now arrived at some idea of the nature of reality according to the usual interpretation of quantum theory, but it is a pale shadow of the common sense image. The indeterminacy of the micro world is not just a consequence of our ignorance (as with the weather) but is absolute. We are not merely presented with a choice of alternatives, such as heads/tails unpredictability of daily life, but a genuine hybrid of the two. Until we make a definite observation of the world it is meaningless to ascribe to it a definite reality (or even various alternatives), for it is a superposition of different worlds. In the words of Niels Bohr, one of the founders of quantum theory, there are 'fundamental limitations met with in atomic physics, of the objective existence of phenomena independent of their means of observation'. Only when the observation is made does

this schizophrenic state collapse onto something that is in any sense real.'

An extreme example of this thinking is that the observer actually creates the universe by the process of observing (see eg Capra 1976).

Are there principles here that can help us answer questions concerning free will?

Theories concerning complex systems show us that we may know all the prior causes concerning the components of a system but the system behaves in ways that are not predictable from the components.

An observer, not only sees what he does due to an "already prepared framework of conditioned expectations" but indeed he will 'disturb' that which is observed and may even 'create' that which is observed.

The future event therefore, is in some way, created by the observer. The cause/effect system is not purely mechanical and deterministic. The future is not necessarily determined by the present. In the discussion relating to luck, fate or control by a deity we can say that chaos is not total randomness; fate is felt but not proven because of the indeterminate nature of the event resulting from prior causes; control (either by a deity or by prior events) still leaves room for agency and choice through emergent phenomena.

This would mean the individual components of the complex system we call the mind may be events of prior causes but the whole system is not compelled. Nor do we have to rely on the position of Hobbes in Leviathan of the Consistency Theory. If a stimulus causes a range of

responses in the components the whole may have free choice. If the responses are undetermined until observed the role of the observer could well be also the role of agent.

The Concept of Agency and choice

The concept of agency and choice would appear to accord with an existentialist position. Man does not have his essential nature given to him. He is not an inevitability but a possibility that lies in the future. Heidegger (1953) asserted that he was more fully himself in recognising the call of something that was both integral to him and yet which also pointed beyond him.

For Jean-Paul Satre (1943) self-consciousness was a nothingness coming out of the separation of being into subject and object. Freedom is to be aware of the possibility of choosing the next moment. The conception of future possibilities and the activity of choosing the possibility is not causally determined because (according to Satre) no existing thing determines one's envisaged action - the future possibility is not yet manifest.

Strawson (1992) appears to support part of this understanding:

'In the higher-order desire which determines what we call our choice we identify ourselves the more completely; and this is why we call it our choice.' (p121)

He continues:

'The fact that we find ourselves in ourselves in our desires and do not in general find them as alien presences within ourself; the experience of deliberation which heightens and strengthens our sense of self; and the constantly repeated experience of agency - all contribute to - perhaps constitute, the sense of freedom.' (p122)

Satre is extreme when he asserts that man is what he makes himself. We have noted that the givenness of a person's existence appears to be a reality. We do not start with a blank sheet, but freedom is the space not filled by that already determined.

MacQuarrie points out that human beings distance themselves from nature and are no longer totally governed by nature's laws. The animal, he asserts, survives by adapting to nature; humans adapt nature. The human agent appears to initiate situations that event causes do not. For example dams and refrigerators are built to alter entropy gradients. In addition, the human agent has a degree of reflectiveness and the ability to evaluate desires.

H Frankfurt (1971) uses the ideas of first and second order desires.

He writes:

'Human beings are not alone in having desires and motives and making choices [but] no other animal appears to have the capacity for reflective self-evaluation that is manifested in the formation of 2nd order desires.' (p6,7)

Charles Taylor (1985) distinguishes between strong and weak evaluations that is within the concept of Agency there is not only choice, but choice is governed by matters of significance. Strong evaluations are concerned with the sense of self or self identity. He asserts that we cannot merely list the properties of physique, provenance, background and capacities to identify ourselves. Lineage is bound up with valued qualities but our identity is defined by our evaluations. 'A self decides and acts out of certain fundamental evaluations.' (p35)

The thing that distinguishes a person from an animal or from artificial intelligence (at present) is not performance but that agents 'attribute purposes, desires and aversions to things'. (p99)

On the one hand an agent is one who can make choices, make plans and act upon them. An alternative view asserts that what distinguishes a person is that things matter, that things are subjects of significance. Consciousness does not merely allow us to depict matters of significance but to constitute them.

Taylor writes:

'This supports a quite different reading of the essentially personal capacities. The essence of evaluation no longer consists in assessment in the light of fixed goals but also and even more in the sensitivity to certain standards, those involved in the peculiarly human goals. The sense of self is the sense of where one stands in relation to these standards and properly personal choice is one informed by these standards. The centre of gravity thus shifts in our interpretation of the personal capacities. The centre is no longer the power to plan, but rather the openness to certain matters of significance. This is now what is essential to personal agency.' (p105)

A review of this chapter

This chapter has been an attempt to follow a certain flow of ideas.

I asked what constituted the sense of 'I'.

The substantive soul theory was questioned.

The mind/brain question was discussed.

Some understandings of 'self' were described.

Erikson's development theory was criticised.

A post modernist position was given.

This arrangement allowed me to suggest that the self is the effect of prior genetic and social causes. The question was asked whether we were deluded in thinking we were making choices as human beings or whether all was given. Are we objects of causes who misguidedly think we are subjects?

The flow of ideas continued.

Modern Science has questioned the predictability of future events.

The universe can no longer be seen as mechanistic.

Cause and effect systems have been questioned.

Observers are part of the observation.

Emergent systems have a different kind of behaviour from their components.

The emergent system called man has choice and is an agent.

Consciousness not only depicts significance but constitutes significance.

'I' am one who is open to certain matters of significance.

I claimed, as I claimed in the chapter on Time, that the conception of the future was important to our sense of selfhood and our sense of freedom. This allows me to stand with MacQuarrie (1982) when he writes:

'Basic to the constitution of existence are possibility (openness to the future) and facticity (the heritage of what has been), and that the existent stands in the tensions between these, which is the present.'

We may want to go further in the light of current scientific thinking to say that the existent stands at the point where both future and past are waiting to be created by the observer. But perhaps it is

just too disconcerting to agree with Wheeler (in *Other Worlds*, Davies 1980), a physicist who asserts that what an observer will do in the future defines what happens in the past.

Chapter 7
TIME TO REVIEW

A staging post

It is time to take stock; to ask some questions, make some tentative assertions and then ask some more questions. The process of reviewing a held position in the light of contending views has been at the heart of this thesis.

Running through this exploration has been one major question:

Is there evidence to support the claim that humans develop through universal stable hierarchical stages of faith ?

Behind this question has been three other questions:

Is human nature solely the product of socialisation ?

Is human development a private unfolding of a universal genetic process ?

Do we find no solidarity in the depth of human beings ?

In exploring these questions, another layer of important questions was uncovered:

Does time plus change equal development ?

How is the sense of "I" formed ?

Are we free in any real sense ?

It is time to draw the threads together.

As has already been noted Lyotard (1979) claims that the Grand Narrative has fractured. He asserts that the western, developed

world has entered the post-modern period. It would appear that traditional modes of authority and legitimation have dissolved. But in a post traditional society new forms of meta narrative can be seen to be forming. I note with Anthony Giddens [1991] that the relationship between local and world-wide perspectives is a phenomenon with which all but the most isolated of people are having to deal. The multi-national pattern of economics affects attitudes to place, time and identity. The relationship to expertise or to structures of knowledge would appear to mean that the role of reflexivity plays an important part in the narratives of pluralist societies. So even in the most fractured, pluralist society a form of solidarity can be discovered. As I will note later, changes in life's demands, that were met in pre-modern, traditional societies with an accepted wisdom, for example a rite of passage, are dealt with differently in a modernist society. Changes in the demands of life create the need for a reinterpretation of the self. As there are contending narratives that meet the demand for reinterpretation we would expect to discover both patterns and differences.

The questions about socialisation or genetic programming are based on the proposition that can be seen to be a determinism; either a determinism of a pre-ordained beginning or the determinism of a normative ending.

Human behaviour, founded upon genetic possibilities or patterns of normative socialisation, develops along tracks whose end is discovered in the beginning or whose end determines the process.

This thesis has wrestled with the proposition that development is totally shaped by prior causes, either genetic or social. Tillich (1963) writes about 'Telos - the end towards which the temporal process points as its goal'. This thesis has found wanting the teleological argument. The utopian argument was also criticised.

In his book Contingency, Irony and Solidarity, Rorty (1989) writes:

'One of my aims in this book is to suggest the possibility of a liberal utopia: one in which ironism, in the relevant sense, is universal.

A post-metaphysical culture seems to me no more impossible than a post religious one, and equally desirable.

In my utopia, human solidarity would be seen not as a fact to be recognised by clearing away 'prejudice' or burrowing down to previously hidden depths but, rather, as a goal to be achieved'. (pXVI)

For Richard Rorty, a 'liberal ironist', the ideal society, where language does not reflect any external reality or deep truth, has no purpose but freedom.

The Enlightenment position emphasises the rationality of an individual self as the means achieving justice and happiness for society and the individual.

The Romantic position emphasises the role of imagination of the individual self as the means of achieving the same ends.

It is the contention of this thesis that the utopian and teleological positions do not account for human development in all its variety. Another strand of understanding is needed to complete the pattern.

Tillich (1963), in discussing the Eschaton, writes,

'The theological problem of eschatology is not constituted by the many things which will happen but by the one 'thing' which is not a thing but which is the symbolic expression of the relation of the temporal to the eternal.' (p395)

Just as the fall is a metaphor for the transition from essence to existence so the eschaton is a metaphor for the move from existence to essence. The eschatological vision contains the metaphor of maturity: a hope described, never achieved and always set before us; a hope whose vision changes as it is approached. These eschatological ideas of maturity are contained in the narratives that form and inform self-identity. The different narratives contend with each other.

With these ideas as background I will now review the main themes of the thesis.

A review of the main ideas of the thesis

The Old Testament witnesses give us a clue about the processes of development. There was little evidence concerning individual development. Most of the witnesses were concerned with the story of the community. The community narrative shaped the individual's ethical and liturgical responses. But it was the cohesion of the community that was held to be important.

For many of the early New Testament witnesses the expected end of time curtailed any hopes for long term paths to maturity. But in later New Testament writings there appears to be developing the hope of 'ripening fruit'. The gifts given to the Church were

'for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of God.' (Ephesians 4: 12,13)

Unity of purpose and doctrine were perceived by Paul to be a sign of maturity in the Ephesian Church. In another letter the Christian community is told:

'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control'. (Gal 5:22)

The Christian community was to separate itself from ideas and ways of other faith communities just as the Hebrew tribes of the Old Testament appear to witness to the persuasive power of separatist movements.

In these Scriptures there can be seen the descriptions and community understandings of mature or 'good' Jews and Christians. While recognising the diverse nature of these writings, it is possible to see some goals towards which it was hoped humans would grow. Unity of purpose was a description of maturity in one community. In another, gentleness was the description of maturity. This thesis has argued consistently that the narratives of the different faith communities allow for different descriptions of maturity. These descriptions are not universal but are specific to particular communities at particular times. For example, one of the major differences between parts of the early Church and parts of 20th century culture is the way people are expected to cope with contending ideas. The New Testament canon contains phrases such as 'people in the light' or those 'being saved'. Christianity, as it was perceived by the particular faith communities was right - other ideas were seen as wrong. The expectations of a post-modern

environment would see perspectivism and relativism as the more mature position to hold. Oser, (1992 in Fowler et al 1992) for example, writes of Stage 5 'This total integration renders possible universal solidarity with all human beings'.

I will return to the concept of the eschatological description of maturity. However, one thing is clear after a careful reading of the Old Testament and New Testament witnesses. Membership of the faith community was considered essential. **The faith community contained the descriptions of the ideal to aim for and the means to achieve the ideal.**

Some of the New Testament discourse can be seen to be arguments to counter the gnostic influence. There were many contending gnostic philosophies but generally they describe bodily matter as evil and the spiritual/heavenly things as pure. There were steps between the impure and the pure. Christian dogma countered these philosophies in a variety of ways. Even so, the step-like process of self-formation became part of later Christian thought. Chapter 3 of this thesis 'Does this ladder have rungs ?' discussed several such schemes. This study made clear that the idea of stages of development appears in many faith communities. The degree of congruence between schemes is less obvious.

Overall, the following features were perceived:

- 1) There are great variations in the schemes of spiritual maturity.
- 2) The cultural influence is clear.
- 3) The stages are not stable. Some witness pointed out the dangers

of slipping back or of not remembering we are all beginners.

- 4) It was pointed out that not all people in the faith community were expected to follow the same path.

In the Platonic scheme the philosopher leaves the cave of unreality and ascends to the light of reality. He then descends back to the cave for the benefit of others. Echart writes that our eternal birth in God means that the ideal man is refulgent in God's image. These are two narratives of the ideal man, two pictures of a hope set before the faith community and thereby helping to shape the activities and expectations of those communities. The understanding of selfhood is so shaped.

Having discovered little evidence to support the proposition of stable, hierarchical and universal faith stages in the spiritual traditions, I examined the work of Piaget.

Of course, there are two opposing schools of thought. One school repeats Piaget's experiments and endorses stage theory. The other is highly critical of Piaget's methods and reasonings.

These latter researchers point to cross-cultural differences. They point out that children infer or decentre at ages that stage theory denies. They highlight the similarity in thinking strategies as used by adults and children. This is especially true when confronted with new material. Adults make less sense of new material if it is outside their real life experiences.

In other words, the evidence to support universal stable hierarchical

stages is not good. And yet people appear to change. I turned to language development theories to try to build a theory.

The case was made that 'language is a medium into which we are plunged'. (Taylor 1985a)

Kay's (1981) research quoted in chapter 4 'A Web in a Text' exemplifies the way communities use language differently. This research found that the Ulster Protestant community produces the highest literalism score while the highest abstract scores are found in the Protestant community in Eire. This is a good example of the relationship between community, language and self-understanding.

This way of thinking is contrary to the thinking of Ralph Waldo Emerson. He believed that if we could explore the depths of the self we would discover universal truth. (Pone 1982)

Language theory asks this. Is it not more the case that what we discover is what a community expects of a self rather than deep universal truths? Language is seen to be part of a hierarchy. Many of these expectations are subtle. Scripts and bridging inferences are a good example of the unrecognised default system. There are many such assumptions about truth or about human development. Faith development researchers are less likely to find universal truths in the depths of the self. More likely to be found are the culturally shaped aspects of the self-hood.

The work on language mapping sheds light on this topic. Congruence between known and new is replaced by approximation. As more

information is stored in the brain, ideas are found to be less congruent with the existing 'map' and less certainty is produced. When ideas are found to be less certain the community (or the faith community) have narratives on how to deal with contending ideas. For any one person who is exposed to more than one narrative, the ways of dealing with plurality may contend with each other. The Yes/No of a faith community may contend with the relativism of a post-modern society. In a person's faith story we can expect to see the process of contending philosophies and strategies used. **But the evaluation of the process in terms of maturity depends chiefly on the power to legitimise.**

So far, this thesis has come to the conclusion that it is not likely to be true that faith develops in stages which are hierarchical, stable and which hold true for all cultures.

I propose it is far more likely that culture shapes expectations. There are many contending philosophies and expectations in any culture. Each person is in contact with many strands of narrative each finding a level of legitimisation.

This is the givenness, the facticity of life. This is our history which produces our present. Both our nature and our nurture are 'givens' of our existence.

In summarising the programme (broadcast BBC 2nd November 1993) 'Cracking the Code', David Suzuki (1993) (Professor of Genetics at the University of British Columbia) asserted:

'The Child (himself) that ran free through the Slocan Valley 50 years ago was not passively moulded by his environment. Nor was he simply an expression of a genetic pre-programme. Like every human being he was preparing his own way through life. That I'm still doing it is really a tribute to our D.N.A. For it was that remarkable molecule that long ago fashioned an organ with the power of choice".

A Self is a recipient of this givenness. Freedom of choice is part of our exploration.

Chapter 5 'The Time of our Lives' highlighted how the learnt tradition can begin to shape future activity. The eschatological future contains the picture of what it is to become a mature human being without being teleological. The aims and purposes of human life are contained in the narratives. It answers the question 'What does a full, true, whole, satisfied, human being look like'. These narratives also answer the question about what is expected and at what age. This is not to say that the maturing and ageing process does not happen at a physical level. It is saying that cultural expectations influence our understanding of maturity. More, the narratives shape our responses in age-related ways.

It is proposed that contact with these expectations influence development as well as our description of development. These expectations are held in cultures, religious, philosophic or political traditions and in sub-cultures. Most societies are pluralist. There is a kaleidoscope of contending visions of the eschatological hope.

Moran (1983) pointed out how the relatively simple structure of family, schooling, job and leisure provides different cultural

influences. This structure becomes very complex when sub-cultures and local contexts are considered.

An historical perspective makes it possible to perceive cultural differences. The culture of a stone-age village may look very different from the urban cultures of the late 20th century. In no way is this to affirm structuralism. In his critique of Foucault's work JG Merquior (1985) quotes Roland Barthes:

'As Roland Barthes liked to say, structuralism is very fond of 'arthrologies' - of reasoned disquisitions on links and connects'.

Eric Fromm (1985) believes he can see some changes in culture. For example, the arranged marriage of the Victorian Age has given way to the idea of romantic love. (p10,11)

He also describes the effect consumerism has had upon the art of loving. To buy something is to make an exchange of those things that are desirable.

'Two persons thus fall in love when they feel they have found the best object available on the market, considering the limitations of their own exchange values'. (p11)

He notes that different cultures define value differently.

In Chapter 5 'The Time of our Lives' I attempted to show how development theories are a cultural proposition. The theories are normative. As has been proposed the concept of the eschatological ideal gives shape to changes in style and thinking and to self understanding. **These concepts contain age-related expectations which are not necessarily linear or deterministic.**

The general narrative (eg Western European Christian culture of late 20th century) will contend with narratives that are local and specific. All these narratives describe what it means to be human, how to respond to situations and what attitudes are valued. Perhaps we can see these narratives in Essex Man, the True Yorkshireman or the New Age traveller. We can possibly see the narratives at work in the University Lecturer, the Baptist Minister or the Church of England Vicar. Stereotypes are dangerous and crude. Where they fall short of the truth is in their lack of ability to perceive the contending narratives that inform and shape the self understanding of an individual.

What can be noticed is the pattern of power to legitimise self-understanding. The Church of England Vicar, for example, has been selected, trained and works in a particular set of narratives. His own history has been formed of other narratives. These contend in the process of legitimisation. Each institution, each culture, sub-culture, family has processes of legitimisation. These narratives contain age-related expectations. What is deemed acceptable in a young curate is considered unacceptable for a canon. A successful businessman who becomes a curate soon finds out what is acceptable. His age and experience contend with the age-related expectations of the institution.

It is the contention of this thesis that larger narratives and localised narratives contain age-related expectations. It can be noted that in Erikson's (1950) scheme of 'Eight Ages of Man' dependency/independency, for example, becomes important at a time when most narratives inform the participants that the ability to

leave mother for a while is important at that age. This stage is the age for starting nursery school and reception classes. The narratives inform the participants what to look for if the story-line does not happen or happens at the 'wrong age'.

A young child who is too independent and who keeps running off to explore his world causes concern to his family or to the authorities (depending upon the narratives).

A young man, at university, who has to ring 'mummy' twice a day also causes concern.

These age-related expectations are, too, part of the narratives of being male or female. They allow us to evaluate our self understanding.

Throughout my reading for this thesis I have noted the critique of the narratives coming from the feminist positions. Margaret Whitford (1991) notes in her book 'Philosophy in the femme':

'However, modern theory is pushing feminism towards the notion that the subject, the human being, is socially constructed. Not that biology, for example, is not one of the parameters or constraints on this process of construction, but that human beings have no essential self; they are created in the process of socialization, and that there is therefore no ideal society. So a certain feminist utopianism, the attempt to define the future ideal society, comes into conflict with the theory that we are the sort of persons we are because society has largely (or at least significantly) made us that way. If a human being is at least partly a social product, then to project our current version of ourselves into the future would be to arrest change, to see the future as an alternative version of the past. Such a future would be closed to the possibility of new social or ethical forms still to be invented'. (p13)

Whitford proposes that the future is an important element in changes in self-identity but that this future is not teleological or normative. So now we can note the phrase such as "Be your age!" is subtly part of Taylor's "medium into which we plunge" as is "Be a man". "Be your age" or "Be a man" are related to the expected outcomes or the eschatological hopes. These are part of the givenness of life. They are subtly part of our past and present. They are part of our self understanding. These age-related expectations are prior causes to our self understanding.

I therefore explored whether freedom of choice is a possibility or a fantasy. I came to the tentative conclusion that although many of our actions and apparent choices are based upon prior causes there does appear to be the possibility of freedom of choice. This is important to the next part of the argument.

I have said that our narratives shape the way we perceive ourselves and respond to experience. If there is freedom can we choose to place ourselves in another tradition? Or on finding ourselves in another narrative are we free to adapt our expectations, adapt our goals? Religions, philosophies and life-styles contain narratives. These narratives will also contain the eschatological hopes and age-related expectations. The narratives explain and describe the outcome of interaction with the tradition and life demands. These world-views or localised life-styles interact with the 'Grand Narrative' and other specific narratives so it is almost impossible to be more than tentative about a person's position in the narratives. This will make us careful when examining claims to be free to be influenced by a particular narrative.

Conversion to a different world view or life-style will not exclude all previous narratives and age-related expectations. But we cannot help reinterpreting the past.

Augustine gives us a good example of the expectations and the interpretations of a self changing by converting from one world view to another. What at one time for Augustine was natural and enjoyable became 'noxious pleasures'. In his writing Augustine looked back on his 'remembered' (ie interpreted) history and saw that God had all along been orchestrating experiences. But Augustine, like St Paul before him, discovered that even reinterpreting the self in a major way did not free him from many of the constraints of his previous self-identity.

Even if Augustine was unable to meet the expectations of this newly discovered world view, this narrative can be seen to contain descriptions of maturity. These descriptions are part of the medium of culture.

In James Fowler's scheme of faith development (1981), for example, we can see that maturity is measured in terms of the ability to live with plurality. This is a valued skill of a post-modern society. We can see that this scheme is also contemporary in the way maturity is a measure of desirable attributes with which to bargain with or to influence society. Fowler's Stage 6 (the final stage) is peopled by Dr Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa, for example. In addition it can be seen that these people are not part of a teleological or normative process. They represent an eschatological hope.

Finally, I claimed, with Taylor, (1985a 1989) that the 'I' which reinterprets itself over time is the one who is open to matters of significance. These 'matters' are shaped by both general and specific narratives. These narratives contain purpose and meaning. Each narrative contains its version of the eschatological hope which carries information concerning significance. The vision of the goal of human existence shapes our desires and our choices. This is not to say that life-view narratives are necessarily purposeful or advantageous to society.

The picture of the local narratives as contained in Anthony Burgess' novel 'The Clockwork Orange' is no less eschatological for the participants of that piece of imagination than St Paul's hope of presenting the Christian community as gentle and forgiving.

Nor am I saying that the expectations, eschatological hope and matters of significance are always conscious. I cannot stress too much the part reflection and education play in allowing a critique of the narratives into which we are plunged. This reflection brings with it the possibility of freedom (another culturally shaped ideal!). At least we can be better 'life aware of itself'.

In her book The World I Live in Helen Keller (1908) writes that language does more than attach names to reality - language creates reality.

'Before my teacher came to me I did not know that I am. Without past, present, future, without hope or anticipation, without wonder or joy or faith'.

Rieff (1966) in his 'The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of faith after Freud' claims that current American society places great emphasis on a 'manipulatable sense of well-being'. (p13) This is very different from the narratives of a middle Eastern country run on an Islamic tradition where 'well-being' is the ability to accept the Will of Allah. These are very different from the mystical stance of St John of the Cross of 16th Century Spain.

In Chapter 5 I proposed that the ability to reflect upon our situation has shown that our cultural narratives lead us to expect that human development is progress. Yet this thesis challenges that stance.

On balance there seems to be more evidence to refute the claims that faith develops universally and sequentially through stable stages. **The stance taken in this thesis is that what faith development researchers have discovered are age related expectations contained in the narratives in which our sense of selfhood is formed.** Align this with the findings of language development and there appears to be age structures. This thesis is highly critical of taking the appearance for reality.

In his book 'What prevents Christian Adults from Learning' John Hull (1985) has a chapter entitled 'The need to be right and the pain of learning' which outlines many of the social and psychological forces at work. A later chapter in Hull's book is entitled 'An Evolving faith for an evolving self'. I have taken little evidence from the researchers and philosophers of the unconscious. But I believe the way I have set out the thesis on the basis of the past and present

causes of selfhood interacting with the eschatological hope of the narratives does give us an insight into the way we can profitably begin to use these schools of thought. What we can learn from psycho-analysis is that people are not totally rational and it may take many hours of reflection to glimpse even part of the truth about ourselves.

The self, that is perceived by some to develop, is at the nexus of past, present and future. The past and present are given. The future also plays its part in shaping who we are through the eschatological vision.

Eric Fromm, (1978) social scientist and psycho-analyst, writes:

'I suggest that the human character can change if these conditions exist:

- 1 We are suffering and are aware that we are
- 2 We recognise the origin of our ill-being
- 3 We recognise that there is a way of overcoming our ill-being
- 4 We accept that in order to overcome our ill-being we must follow certain norms for living and change our present practice of life'. (p165)

Fromm asserts that these four conditions coincide with Buddha's Four Noble Truths.

We may note that this is an example of Rieff's (1966) 'manipulatable sense of well being'.

We may also assert that modifications may see a fit with most narratives, even though 'the vision of present suffering' may be replaced with 'the recognition of not yet reaching full potential' or even more specifically 'It is time to settle down'.

Summary

In the introduction to this thesis I expressed the desire to look at the assumptions underpinning faith development theories and to build a theory of why faith appears to develop.

This work started out as a dialogue with the Stages of Faith theory of James Fowler (1981). Finding little congruence between the many schemes of development in the Western Christian literature and noting the critique of Piaget, one of Fowler's main influences, I attempted to explore the understanding of human nature from various standpoints.

The following is a provisional summary of that enquiry.

- 1) Human beings are complex animals whose genes create the possibility of freedom.
- 2) How we behave and interpret ourselves spring from a complex interaction between genes, culture, experience and chance.
- 3) Language is a medium into which we are plunged.
- 4) We learn our self identity in the same way as we learn about the external world.
- 5) We interpret who we are in the light of this language.
- 6) Significance is a matter of culture as well as experience.
- 7) We re-interpret ourselves in the light of later understandings and matters of significance.
- 8) Our sense of self is shaped by cultural contexts which contain age-related expectations and demands
- 9) The influence of contending narratives may confirm these age-related expectations or promote discontinuity.

- 10) Language theories and neuroscience indicate why there appears to be a) a conservative aspect to learning and b) why new learning may lead to approximation.
- 11) Genes and the teleological or utopian expectations of culture form the givenness of the present. The future remains open through the hope of the eschatological vision of maturity.
- 12) In a post traditional society reflexivity and relativism are valued attributes even though some parts of the faith communities find one or both of these concepts problematic.

Keen, (in Fowler & Keen 1978) who worked closely with James Fowler, postulates five stages of faith:

The Child, the Rebel, the Adult, the Outlaw and the Lover or Fool.

The Child is shaped by his/her culture(s).

The Rebel defines his/her self by using parts of the culture(s) that contend with those learnt in the family.

The Adult has an established self-identity.

According to Keen few people go beyond this 'crust of culture'.

The Outlaw seeks autonomy and freedom from the old authorities. The Lover or Fool is enlightened. For the Fool or Lover 'the world has ceased to be a problem to be solved and has become a mystery to be enjoyed'. (p123)

I believe Keen's metaphors would be more convincing if he had allowed for the possibility of each dimension being present, but more or less visible, throughout life. This would explain why wisdom and maturity do not necessarily correlate with age or why so many numinous experiences occur at an early age. It can also help us see how a person can use aspects of self-identity as different life experiences demand attention. ✓

Life cycle theories propose that changes in experiences facilitate

and create different expectations. For example, changing school, leaving school, setting up home, starting a family, divorce, family leaving home, changing job status, facing retirement or facing death bring the self into relationships with different opportunities and expectations, different constraints and demands. Our cultural narratives contain ways of dealing with these experiences.

In the modern world (high modern, post modern!) the self needs strategies for choosing between contending narratives as traditional modes of authority and structures of knowledge have fractured.

Reflexivity is a major tool for actualising self identity.

Our self identity is formed and bound up in our cultures, our genes and our experiences. Being reflexive in a pluralist post traditional culture means asking questions of ourselves.

How do we exchange one metaphor or culture for another ?

How do we choose one matter of significance against another ?

How do we use new information when all information has become provisional ?

How do we cope with the different demands of the life cycle ?

How do we use these strategies in relation to God or metaphysics ?

And most importantly for faith development research:

What happens when our self, formed in one set of contending expectations, comes into contact, either through age, experience or chance, with other legitimised visions of age-related expectations ?

These are the questions underpinning the faith development enquiry. I believe what Fowler (1981) and Oser (1980) are discovering are the narratives for dealing with these aspects of existence.

Together with our genes and our experiences the narratives of society form the givenness of a self's identity - the self's past and present. Throughout this thesis I have proposed that these 'facts of existence' interact with the hopes of the future. Freedom to choose is discovered in the space to become. Our narratives and especially the faith communities' narratives contain eschatological visions of the future. These are the hopes of maturity - never to be achieved and always receding and changing as they are approached.

As John MacQuarrie (1966) writes:

'These remarks suggest something further, namely, that selfhood is attained only insofar as the existent is prepared to look beyond the limits of his own self for the master concern that can create such a stable unified self. He must be prepared to accept the factual aspects of his existence, his finitude, transience, and mortality, and take these up into the potentiality which he projects for himself into the future'. (p66)

I am grateful to have been able to enter into dialogue with the faith development theory of James Fowler and others, even though I see things differently. For even though I am formed of my genes and I am embedded in my culture(s) I do not believe I am totally constrained to follow the path of universal, sequential and stable stages of faith. My future remains open. Even unsure. In the modern period, self identity, and not just life, is a risky business.

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