

Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years—Main Line of Development

William G. Perry, Jr. *Forms of Intellectual Development in the College Years: A Scheme.*

Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1970. Pages 9-10.

Position 1 The student sees the world in polar terms of we-right-good vs. other-wrong-bad. Right Answers exist in the Absolute, known to Authority whose role is to mediate (teach) them. Knowledge and goodness are perceived as quantitative accretions of discrete rightnesses to be collected by hard work and obedience (paradigm: a spelling test).

Position 2 The student perceives diversity of opinion, and uncertainty, and accounts for them as unwarranted confusion in poorly qualified Authorities or as mere exercises set by Authority “so we can learn to find The Answer for ourselves.”

Position 3 The student accepts diversity and uncertainty as legitimate but still *temporary* in areas where Authority “hasn't found The Answer yet.” He supposes Authority grades him in these areas on “good expression” but remains puzzled as to standards.

Position 4 (a) The student perceives legitimate uncertainty (and therefore diversity of opinion) to be extensive and raises it to the status of an unstructured epistemological realm of its own in which “anyone has a right to his own opinion,” a realm which he sets over against Authority's realm where right—wrong still prevails, or **(b)** the student discovers qualitative contextual relativistic reasoning as a special case of “what They want” within Authority's realm.

Position 5 The student perceives all knowledge and values (including authority's) as contextual and relativistic and subordinates dualistic right—wrong functions to the status of a special case, in context.

Position 6 The student apprehends the necessity of orienting himself in a relativistic world through some form of personal Commitment (as distinct from unquestioned or unconsidered commitment to simple belief in certainty).

Position 7 The student makes an initial Commitment in some area

Position 8 The student experiences the implications of Commitment, and explores the subjective and stylistic issues of responsibility.

Position 9 The student experiences the affirmation of identity among multiple responsibilities and realizes Commitment as an ongoing, unfolding activity through which he expresses his life style.