# Christian Counseling

## *An Integration View*

Mark R. McMinn, PhD, ABPP
George Fox University

1. Do you have a high regard for Christian ways of understanding and experiencing the world?
   (e.g., scripture, theology, doctrine, church, sacraments)

2. Do you have a high regard for psychological ways of understanding and experiencing the world?
   (e.g., psychological science, theory, practice)

3. Are you open to both informing, and perhaps transforming, the other?

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Chapter 1: Eruptions

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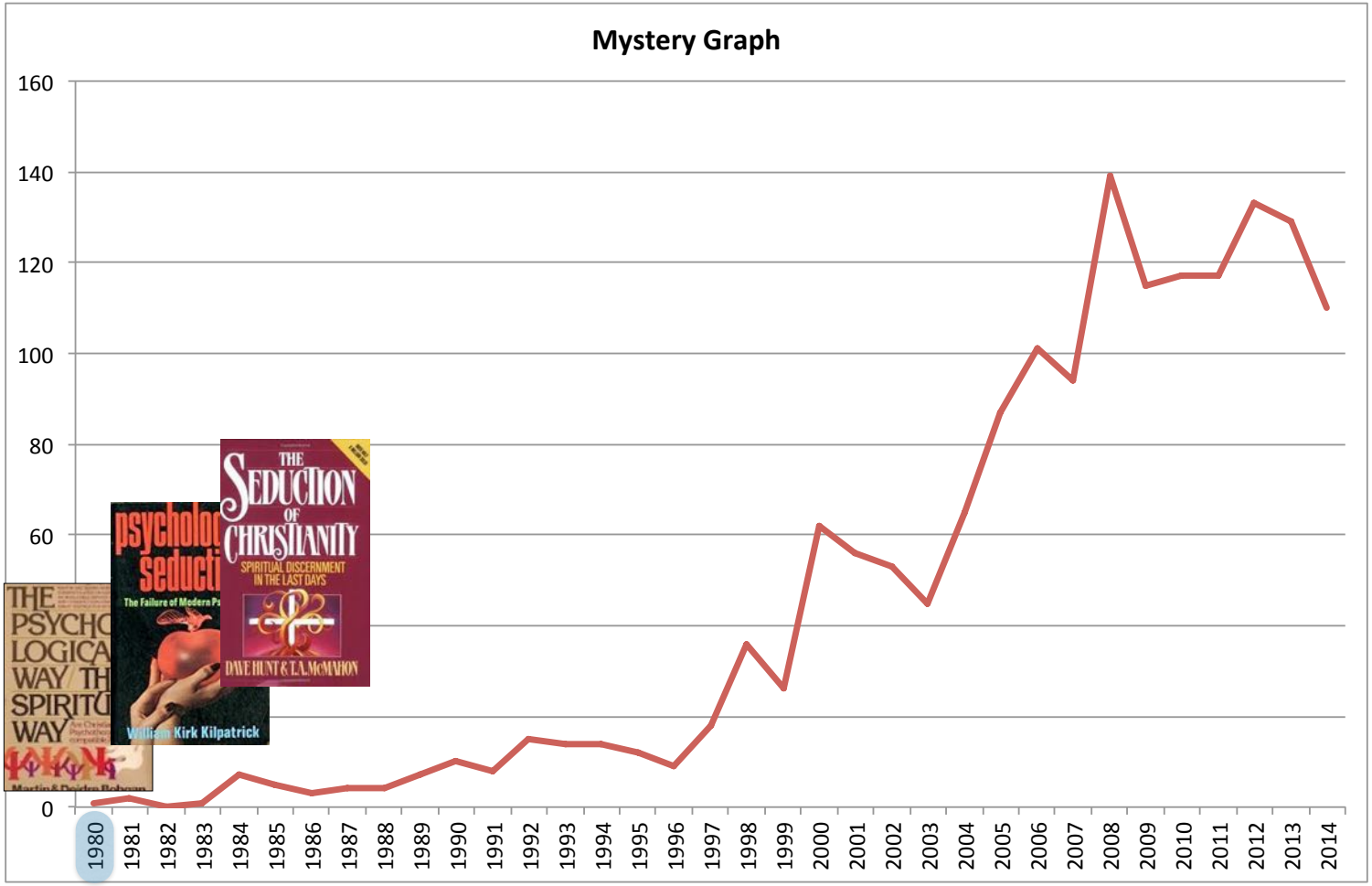
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THE SEDUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY
SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT IN THE LAST DAYS
DAVE HUNT & T.A. McMAHON
William Kirk Kilpatrick

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CHRISTIANITY TODAY

# The Mind Doctors

## *Questions to ask on the road to mental health.*

MARK R. MCMINN AND JAMES D. FOSTER

*Mornings are bleak for Sharon. At the end of a restless night she will lie in bed staring at the ceiling until her eyes blur, her mind filled with the dread of another day. Routine household chores have become monumental tasks, and formerly appetizing foods have lost all appeal. The joy of her new son, now six months old, has been overshadowed by self-doubt and sorrow that seem almost unbearable. Her sense of aloneness is not lessened by the presence of others. She thinks endlessly about her failures as a mother and as a Christian.*

Sharon is suffering the classic symptoms of depression. Counseling with her pastor has helped in recent months, but signs of progress have been overshadowed by the ominous emotions that remain. Her

sidered carefully. But their writings sometimes omit understandings that would foster a more balanced evaluation of psychotherapy.

### Questions about psychology

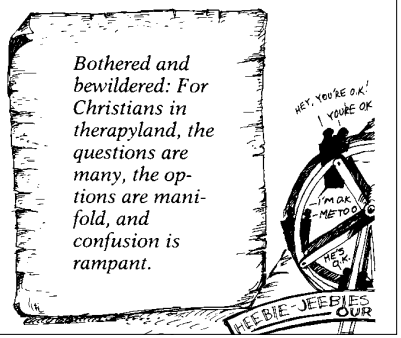
Sharon's struggle, and that of many Christians in her situation, centers on a series of important questions:

- *Does psychology advocate self-glorification?* For the past 50 years, psychologists have been interested in the self. "Self" psychologists, such as Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Erich Fromm, Abraham Maslow, Gordon Allport, and Carl Rogers, have written about self-esteem, self-image, self-realization, and self-actualization. In his book *Psychological Seduction*, William Kirk Kilpatrick identifies this emphasis on self as being antithetical to Christian thought.

observe whether self-esteem is low or high, but only for the sake of adjustment to accuracy.

Rather than concluding "the higher the better," the classic self psychologists distinguished accurate self-esteem from the excessive self-love of narcissism. Gordon Allport wrote that narcissism could not be dominant in the psychologically mature individual. Erich Fromm, Albert Adler, Abraham Maslow, and Carl Rogers all emphasized that an individual with healthy self-esteem is rarely selfish.

There is little doubt that the apostle Paul had a healthy self-esteem. He wrote frequently of his accomplishments and encouraged his readers to imitate him. But Paul was not narcissistic, focusing on himself to the exclusion of a concern for others. Moses also




*Bothered and bewildered: For Christians in therapyland, the questions are many, the options are manifold, and confusion is rampant.*

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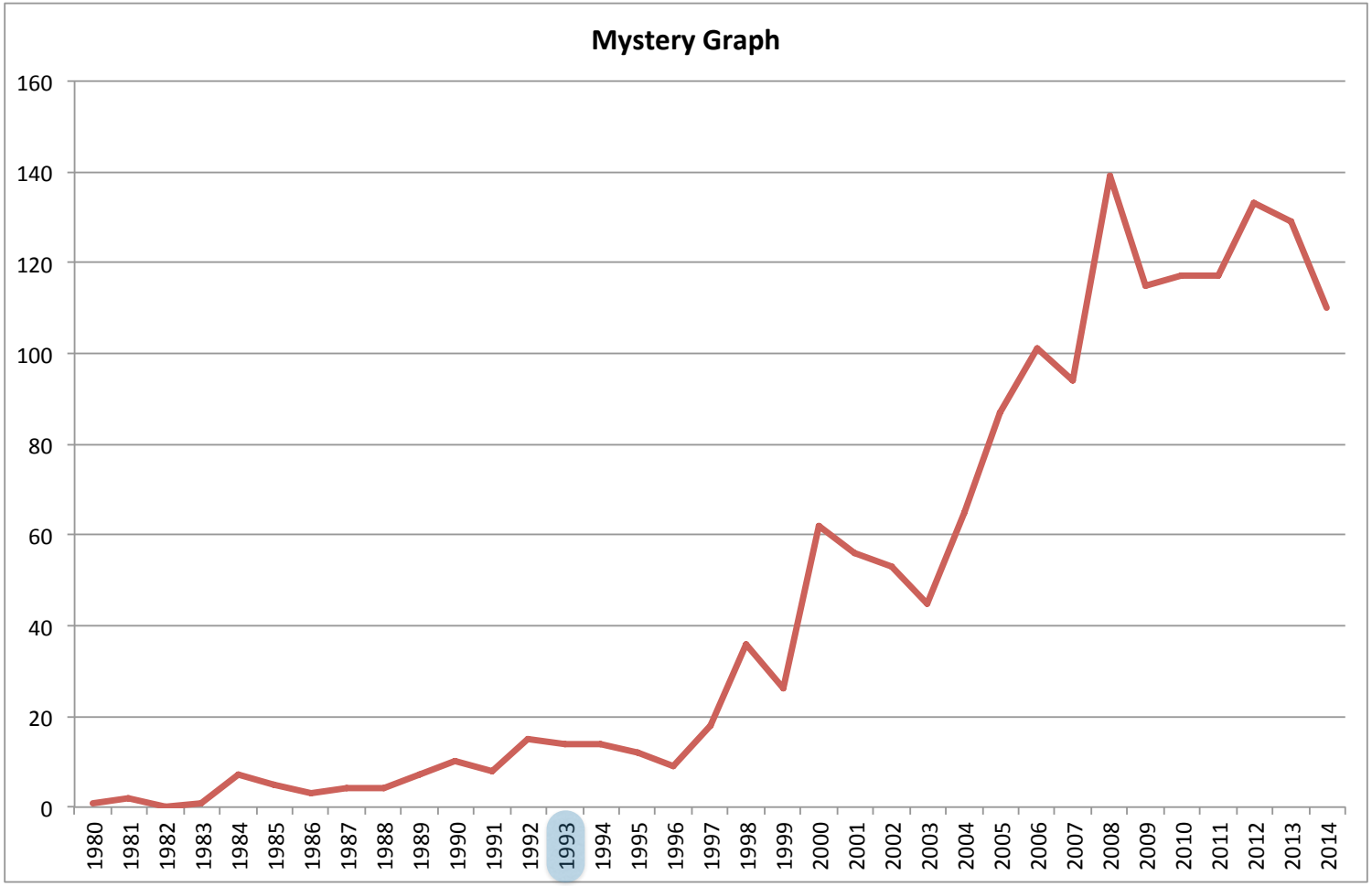
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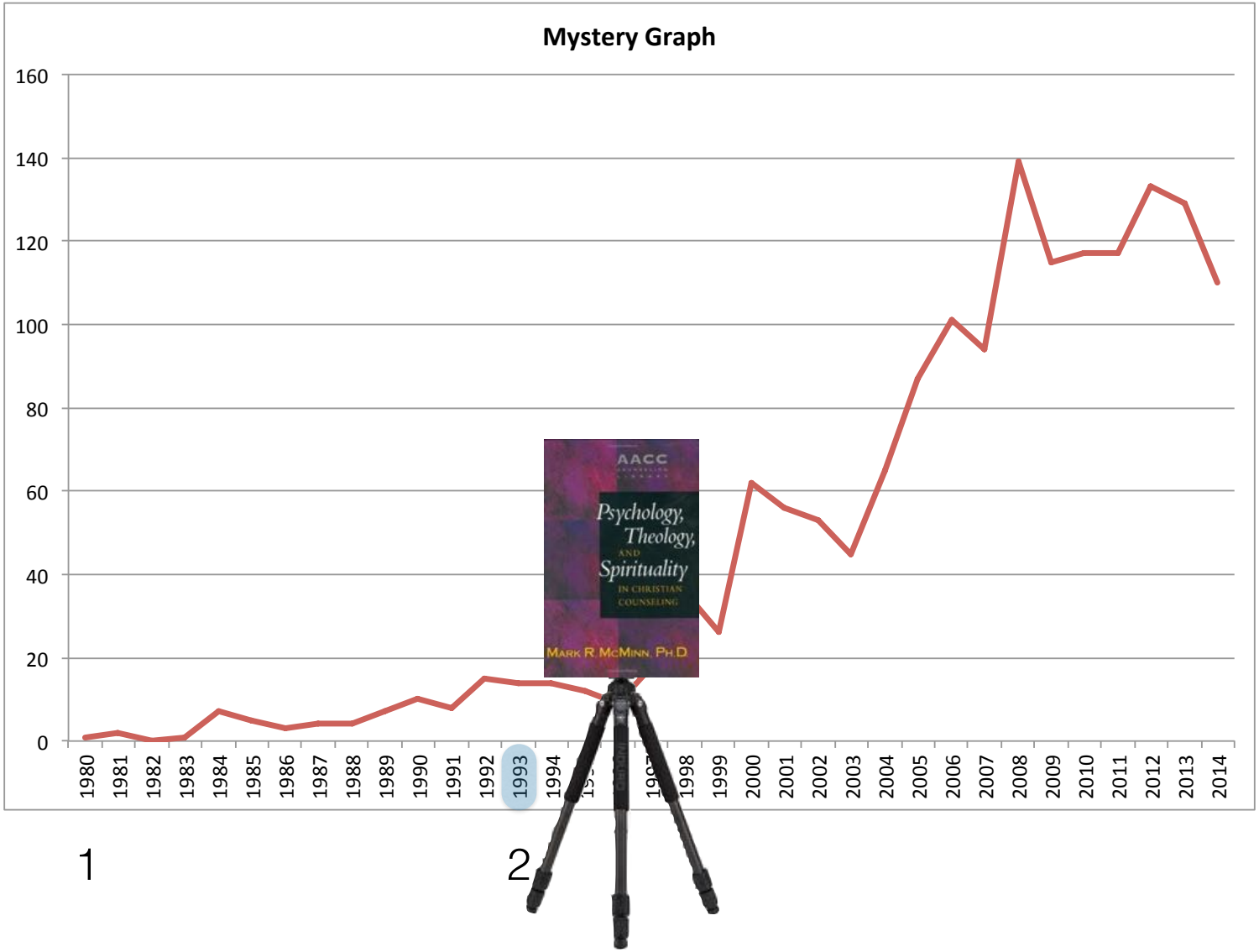
Dr. James Wilhoit

Dr. Philip Monroe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Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling
Mark R. McMinn, Ph.D.
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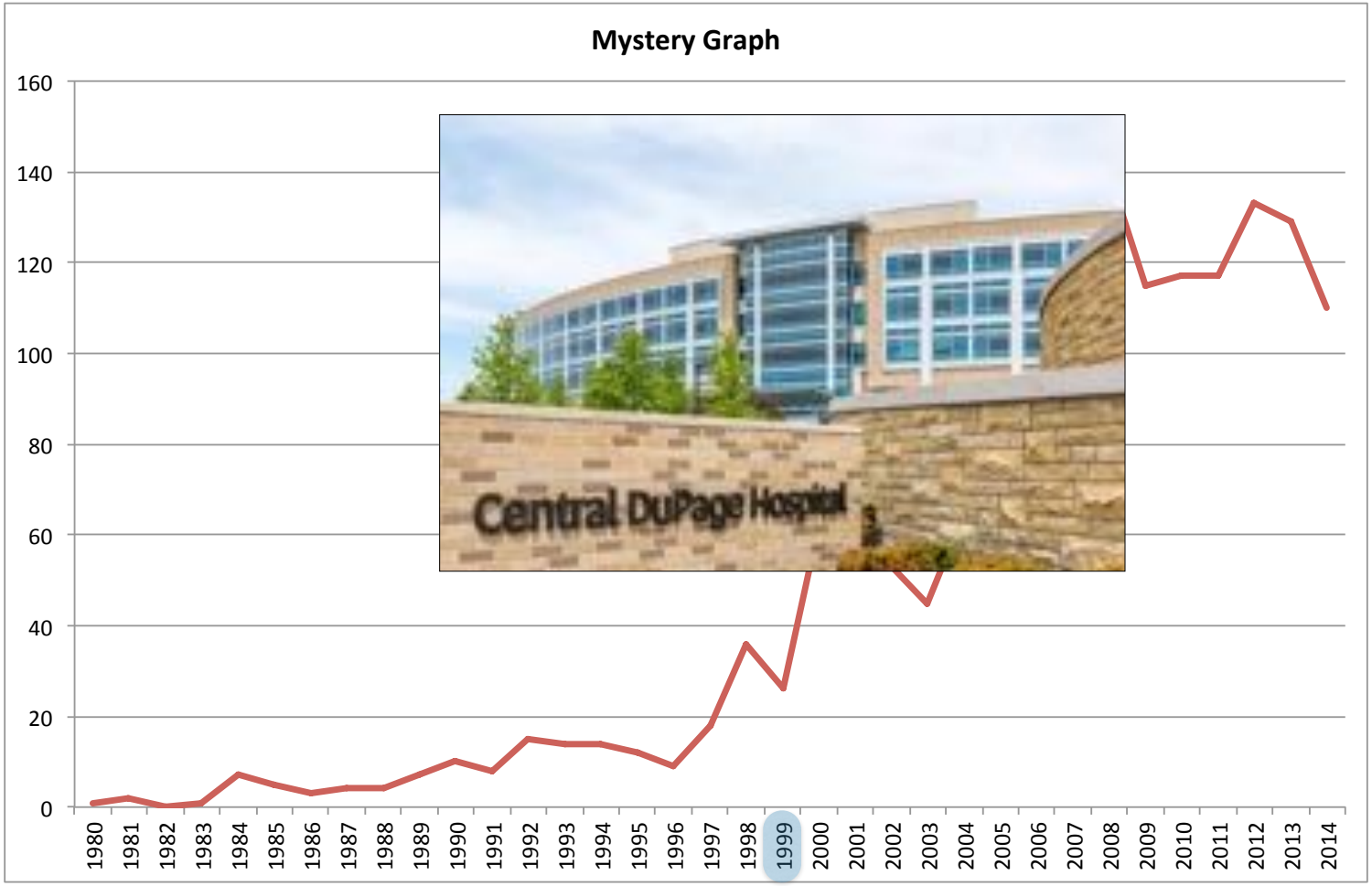
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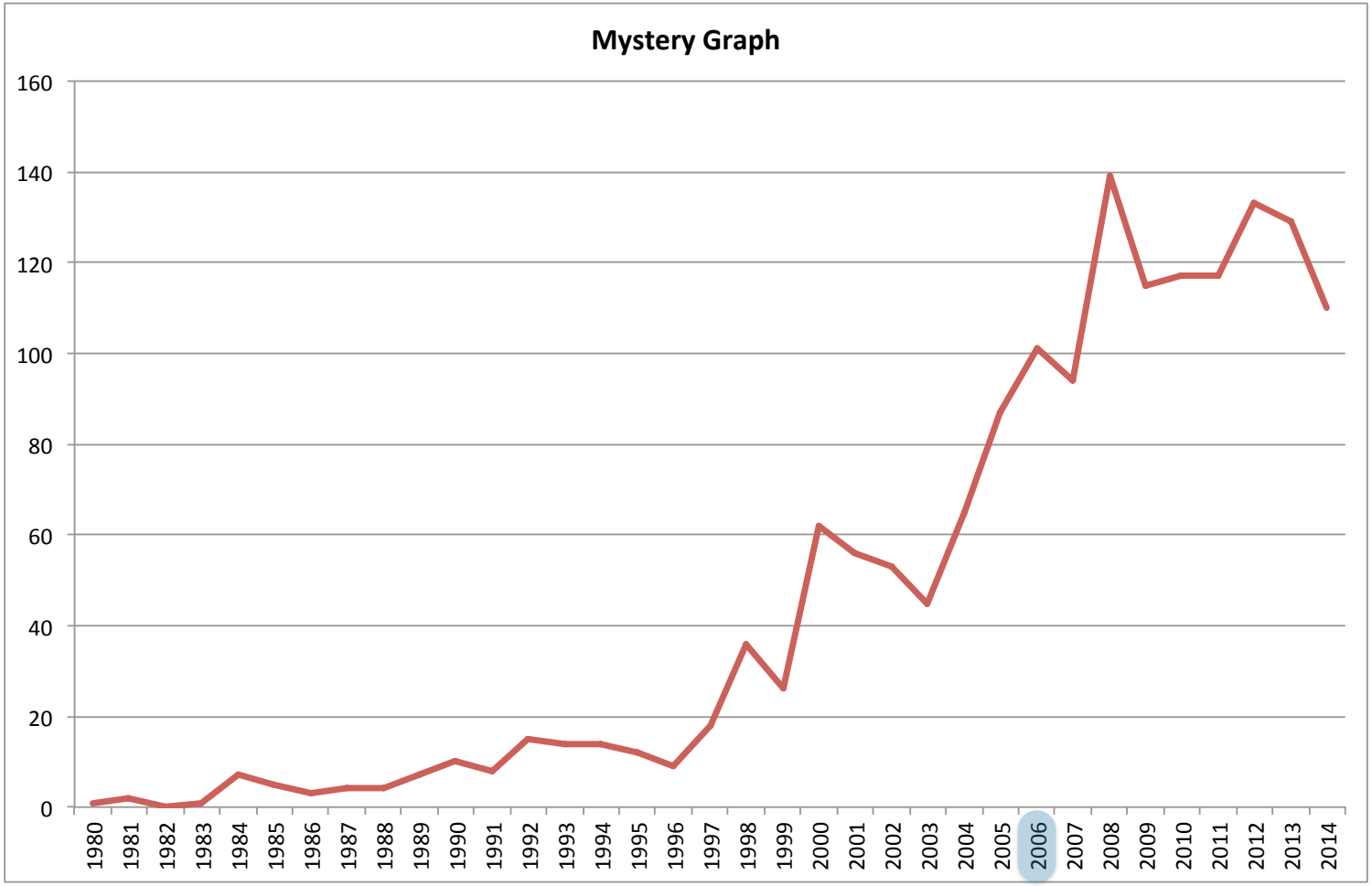
Chapter 4: Dirt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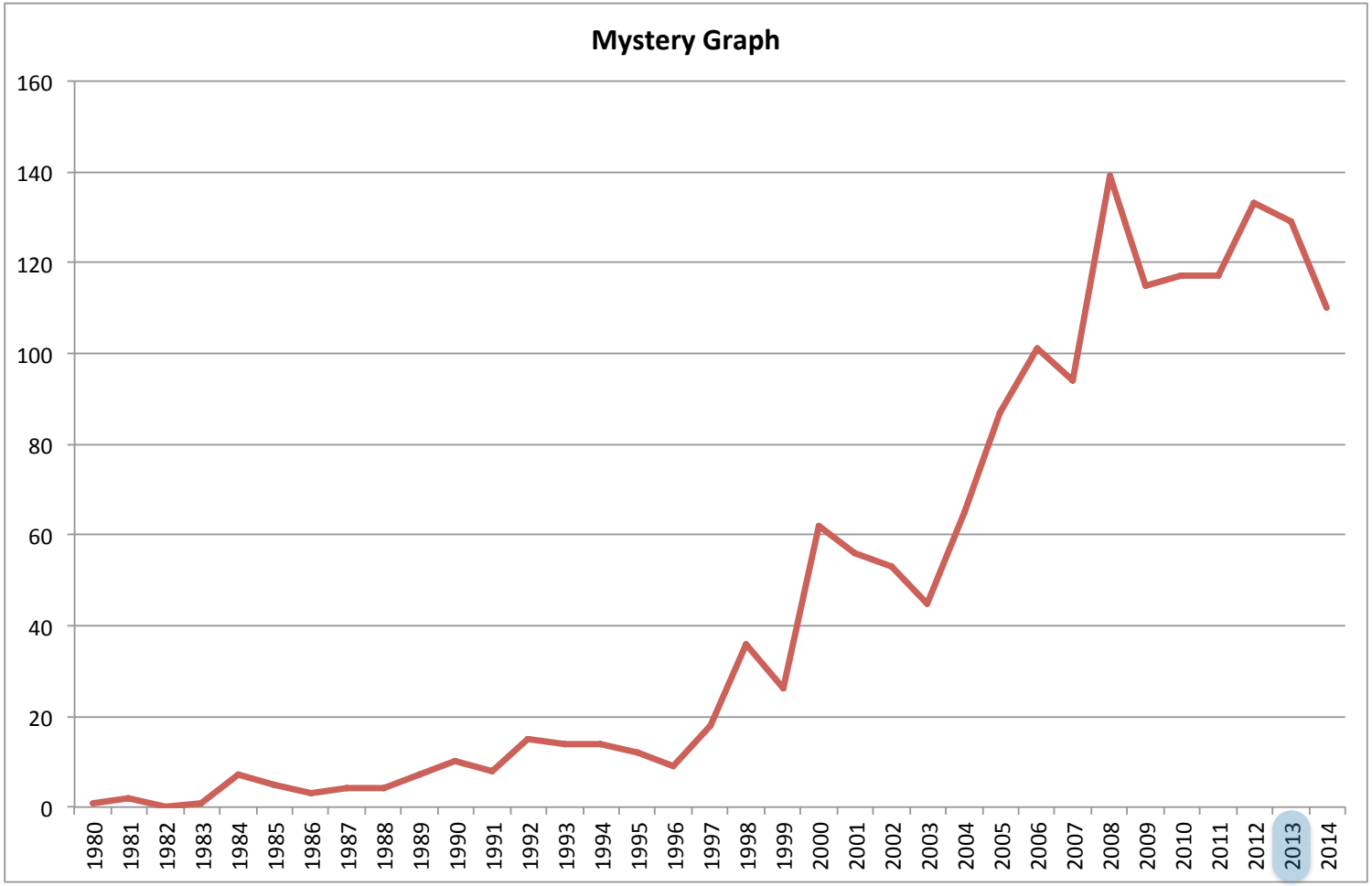
Chapter 5: Science and Virtue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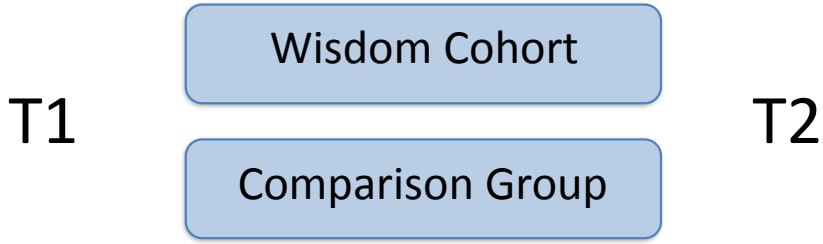
# Wisdom Mentoring




Wisdom cohorts meet twice monthly with mentors as part of a local church ministry. The wisdom mentors build relationships, engage in spiritual practices, and work through real-life situations

# Wisdom Mentoring

*Your friend has been diagnosed with a serious form of cancer that will require difficult treatment with an unknown outcome. You want to remain hopeful and encouraging to your friend, but inwardly you are worried and sad. Your friend mentions that the cancer has been difficult for her faith. She wonders how a loving and powerful God could allow such a thing. You've been pondering this, too, and aren't sure how to respond to your friend's questions about faith.*

# Wisdom Mentoring

- Experiencing God through a variety of spiritual practices (scripture, prayer, silence)
- Considering one's own experience in the context of trusting relationships with others who share common core values (small group conversation with leaders and peers)
- Understanding, adapting, and appropriating the values and practices that have become a vital part of a particular Christian community (discerning what wisdom looks like in this situation)

Life Satisfaction
Wisdom
Comparison
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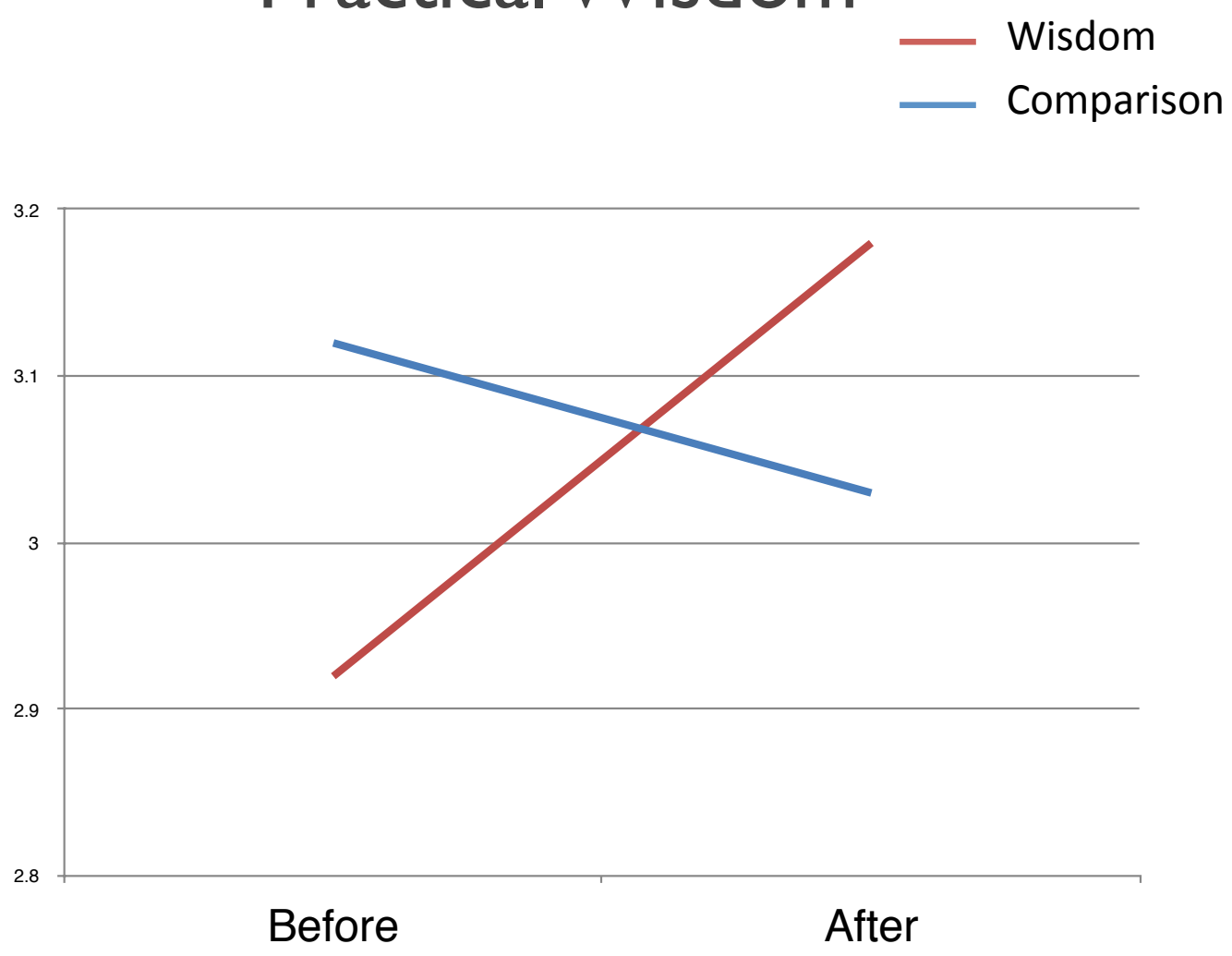
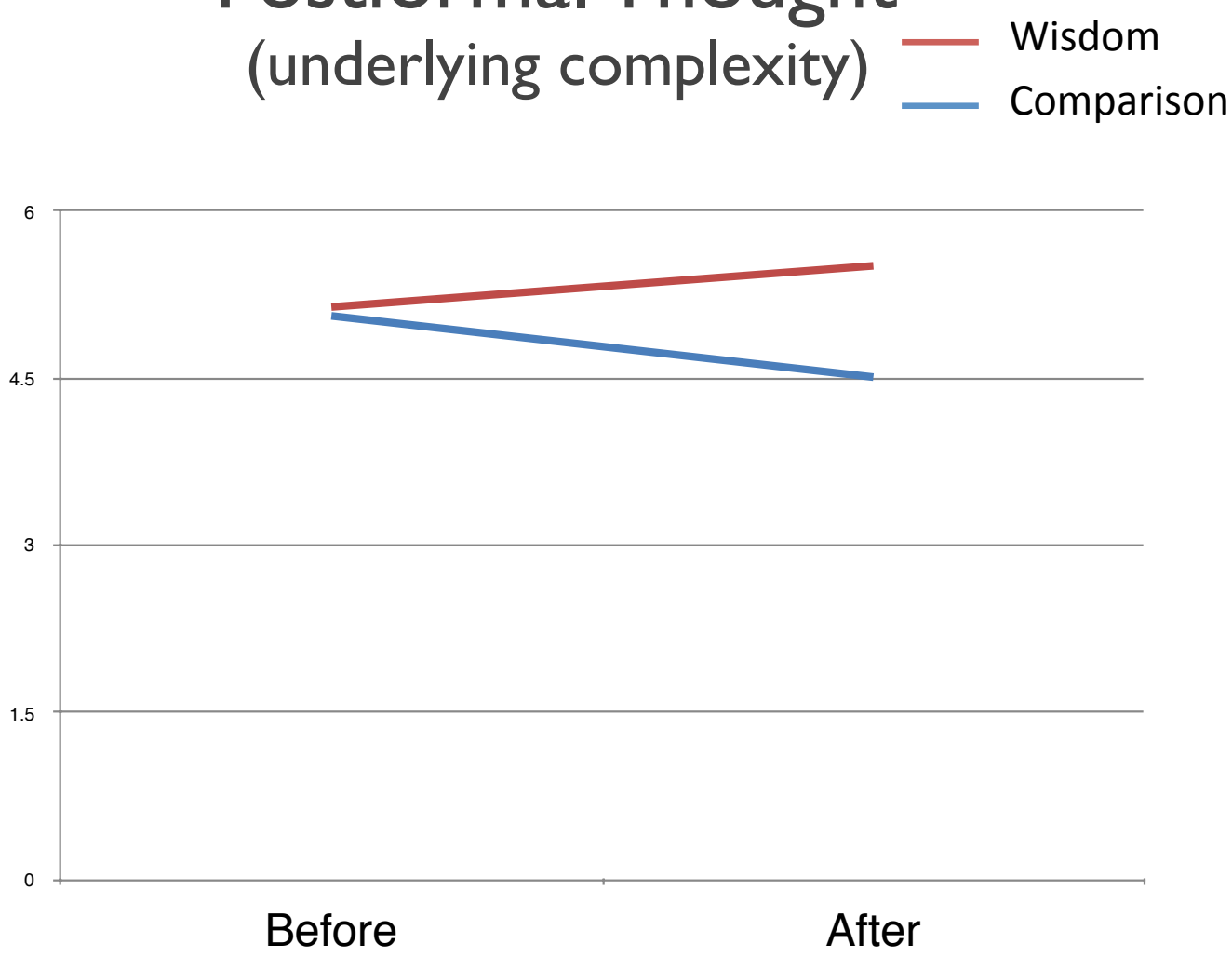
Before
After

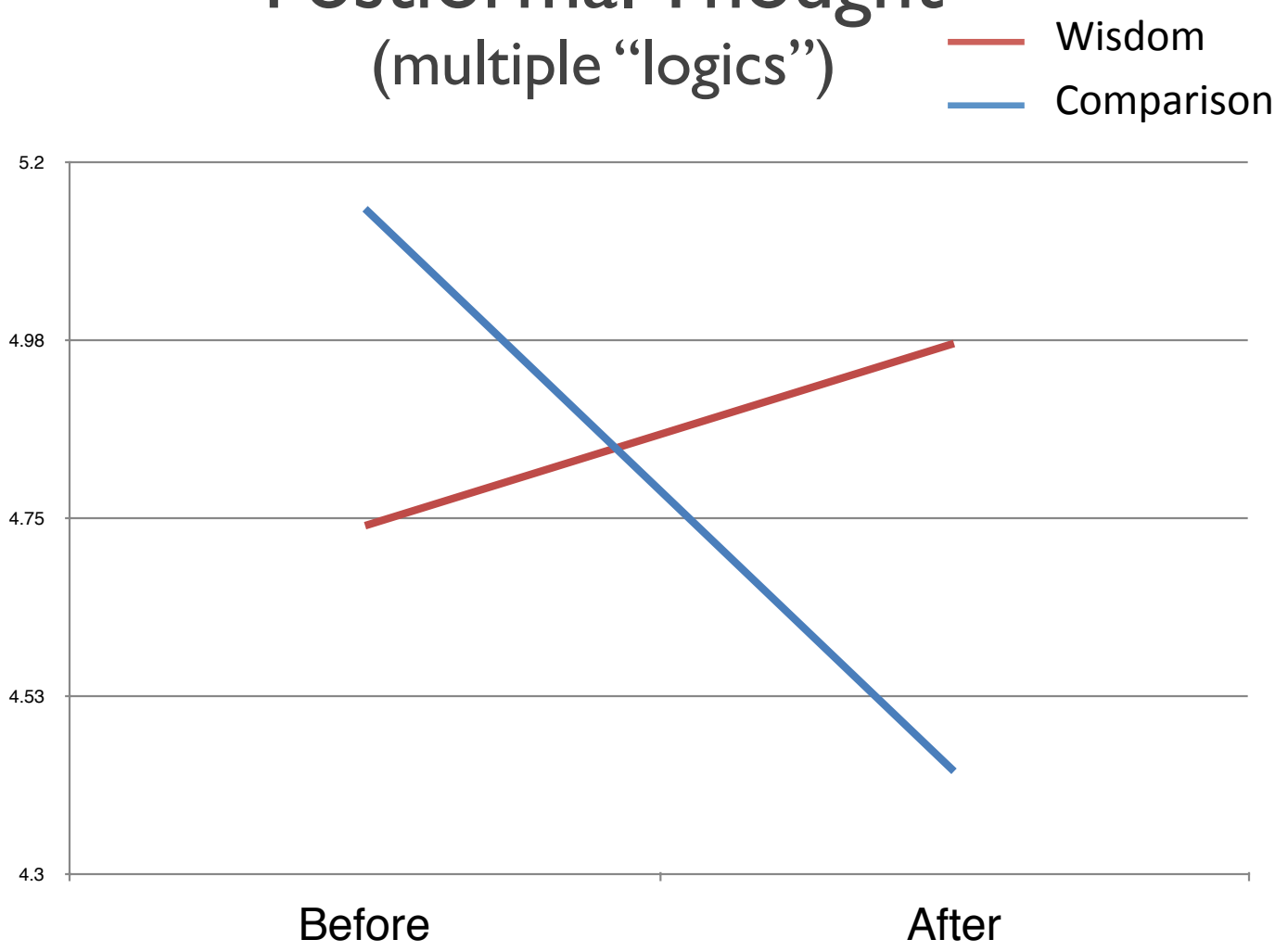
# Practical Wisdom

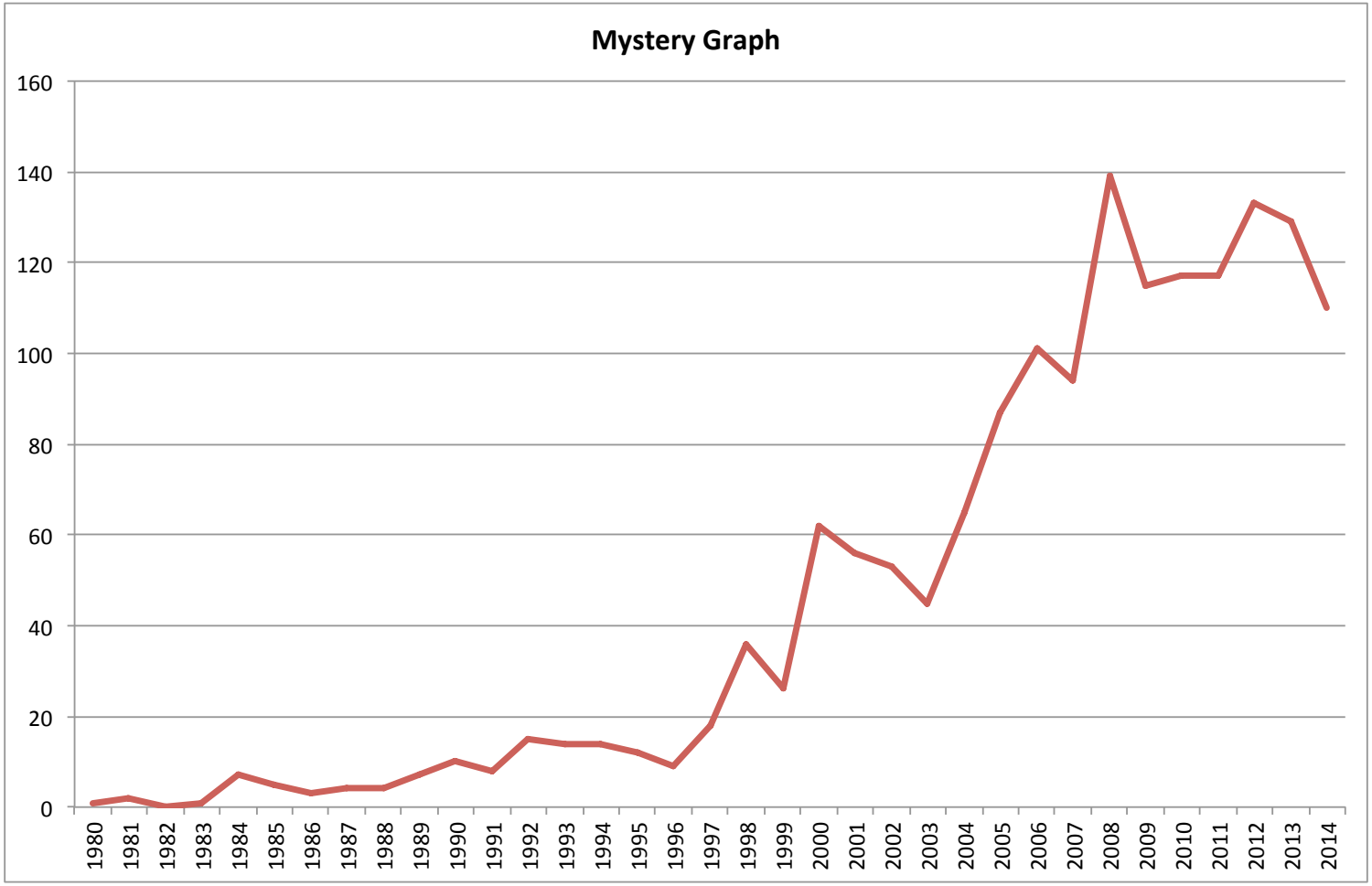


# Postformal Thought
## (underlying complexity)



# Postformal Thought
## (multiple "logics")

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