

## ***“Chaos and Order”***

XXXIV Annual Conference of the Jean Gebser Society  
for the Study of Culture and Consciousness.

**Rice University  
Houston, TX  
October 27-29, 2005**

### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

(We welcome completed papers and extended abstracts)

In its myriad forms of expression, culture manifests as an ordering force opposing chaos. Thus, understanding how chaos and/or order is/are constituted by cultures is illuminating to academic explorations throughout the humanities and social sciences. The structuring of human activity has been a central concern for many influential scholars and indeed for entire disciplines. In *The Ever-Present Origin*, Jean Gebser documents the development of “order” through various historical periods. Indeed, one might argue that the mental-rational concept of order is a kind of centerpiece of the structures. Inevitably, characterizations of the other structures are limited by their descriptions from within the mental-rational paradigm. Thus the expression of order is of central concern in Gebser’s work. Related to order is chaos, the lack of order or the absence of order. Yin and yang express this relationship as a polar relationship, not a binary one. Even the term “dis-order” must rely on a relationship between the two. How do humans express chaos? Various fields choose their starting points for an explanation of chaos and in doing so immediately order their descriptions or depictions of chaos. Chaos is already a systematic idea. Divergence from a starting point is an ordered phenomenon. The relationship between order and chaos, between the dynamic and the static, between permanence and flux is among the most basic in human expression and has been described as giving life to the various forms of civilization and culture.

Papers following the theme might explore the expression of chaos and order as ideas or ideologies, might explicate Gebser’s arguments concerning these concepts, might relate his work to others who have considered this problem, or might look at how the concepts have worked historically through civilizational perspectives. Given the breadth of this theme, numerous possibilities present themselves.

Submission deadline is Friday, July 1, 2005. Submissions on subjects other than the conference theme are welcome. Submissions from graduate students and advanced undergraduate students are welcome. Additionally, submissions of poetry, artistic exhibitions, performances, or other works are welcome. Please include any media requirements with extended abstract/paper. With written permission, we would also like to record presentations in video form.

#### **Please send submissions to:**

Dr. Philip Dalton  
Assistant Professor  
Dept. of Communication Studies  
Stetson University  
421 N. Woodland Blvd., Unit 8377  
386-822-8945

### **About the 2005 Conference**

The 2005 conference will be held at Rice University, located in the heart of Houston, TX. With approximately 2900 undergraduates and 1900 graduate students, the university is known for its friendly atmosphere, world-class scholars, and unique student body. The university is minutes from downtown Houston by train or car, across the street from the Texas Medical Center (one of the largest medical complexes in the world), a block from Houston's world-class Museum District, and an hour from the Texas Gulf Coast.

**Keynote presentations** at this year's conference will be delivered by:

Dr. Steven Crowell

Joseph and Joanna Nazro Professor of Philosophy and Professor of German Studies at Rice University.

Dr. Peter Gottwald.

President of the North American Division of the Jean Gebser Society of Europe & Professor of Psychology Universität Oldenburg, Oldenburg Germany.

### **On the Rice Campus**

Registration and meeting room information will be forthcoming as the conference nears. The conference will begin the morning of October 27 and end mid-afternoon on October 29.

Check website for updates: [www.gebser.org](http://www.gebser.org)

### **Lodging Information**

A special rate has been arranged at: Best Western - Greenway Plaza  
2929 S.W. FREEWAY  
HOUSTON, TX, 77098  
Tel: 1-713-528-6161

Room rates are set at \$59.00 per night plus tax for a standard double/double (1-4 people). This is a very good rate for central Houston. Rooms are at a premium in Houston so be sure to make your reservations early. Please refer to the "Gebser Conference at Rice University" to receive this rate. In order to get this rate, you must make your reservations with them directly at 713-528-6161. If you have any problems, ask for Amal and mention my name (David Worth). The hotel is approximately 2 miles from Rice.

Other hotels:

There are many hotels near Rice in the Texas Medical Center, but these will be substantially higher in price. Here are a few:

Holiday Inn Houston Medical Center  
6800 S Main St  
1-713 528 7744

Crowne Plaza Hotel MEDICAL CENTER  
6701 South Main  
1-713-7971110

Hilton Houston Plaza/Medical Center  
6633 Travis Street  
1-713-313-4000

Houston Marriott Medical Center  
6580 Fannin Street  
1-713-796-0080

## **Traveling to Houston**

Houston is served by two major airports. These are William Hobby Airport and George Bush Intercontinental. Hobby is the suggested airport because it is much closer to Rice, about 20 minutes away. Intercontinental is about an hour away. Both airports offer plentiful shuttle and taxi service. Both airports have counters for the major rental car agencies.

Given the distance, Houston traffic, and the small population of our department (there are two of us), pick up service from airports will not be available. Please plan to make your own way to the hotel and from the hotel to the conference.

Two of the major shuttle services are:

Express Shuttle

713-523-8888

<http://www.airportexpresshouston.com>

Rates from airport to the Best Western Greenway Plaza:

From Bush Intercontinental: \$20.00

From Hobby: \$15.00

This service takes but does not require reservations.

Texans Super Shuttle

713-781-6660

Toll free: 877-770-1655

<http://texansshuttle.com>

Rates from airport to the Best Western Greenway Plaza:

From Bush Intercontinental: \$20.00

From Hobby: \$15.00

This service takes reservations from hotel to airport. Reservations from the airport are neither taken nor needed.

Taxi Service

Taxis are regulated by zone. The flat rate from Intercontinental to the zone the hotel is in is \$43.50. The flat rate from Hobby to the zone the hotel is in is \$28.50.

## **Registration Fees:**

The registration fee for the conference is \$35 per participant for those who pre-register and \$60 for those who register on-site at the time of the conference. This fee is in addition to, but separate from the regular dues for membership into the Gebser Society.

Regular dues are \$30 and student dues are \$20.

Check for registration & dues should be made out to **Gebser Inc.** and may be sent by mail to:

Dr. Charlton McIlwain

NYU Dept. of Culture & Communication

East Building, 7<sup>th</sup> Fl.

New York, NY 10003

### **About The Jean Gebser Society**

The Gebser Society is similar to European societies, or circles, pursuing the work of a particular philosopher. The philosopher here, Jean Gebser, was born in Posen, Germany in 1905. He studied and worked in Germany until the rise of the Nazi party in 1931. From Germany he fled to Spain where he wrote poetry (*Poesias de al Tarde*, 1936) and served in the Republican Ministry of Culture. When war overtook the country in 1936 he fled to Paris where he associated with the circle of artists surrounding Picasso and Malraux. He finally fled Paris as the city fell in 1939 and went to Switzerland. He became a Swiss citizen in 1951 and in 1967 assumed the chair for the Study of Comparative Civilizations at the University of Salzburg.

It was in Switzerland that Gebser completed his monumental work on the comparative study of civilizations, *Ursprung und Gegenwart* (1949/53). The English translation was undertaken by Noel Barstad with Algis Mickunas and published as *The Ever-Present Origin* in 1985 by Ohio University Press. This massive effort of over 500 pages is a phenomenology of civilization. From a vast collection of work covering many fields, historical and contemporary, Gebser described the modalities of consciousness of historical cultures, as well as the extent and openness of human consciousness in general. His work is penetrating and offers an understanding useful to scholars from many fields of study.

When reviewing Gebser's manuscript for possible translation into English, the immanent Princeton Historian encouraged publication, calling the book "a very important, indeed in some respects pioneering publication" that is "vastly, solidly, and subtly documented by a wealth of anthropological, mythological, linguistic, artistic, philosophical, and scientific material which is shown in its multifold and striking interrelationship."