



# ***Integrative Explorations***

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**The Journal of the Jean Gebser Society  
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## ***Integrative Explorations*** ***Journal of Culture and Consciousness***

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Integrative Explorations ([http://www.govst.edu/ie\\_journal](http://www.govst.edu/ie_journal)) is the official journal of the Jean Gebser Society. The journal is edited in cooperation with Division of Liberal Arts—Communications Program, Governors State University. The journal publishes integrative explorations in the form of articles, bibliographies, or reviews of research about culture/civilization, consciousness, or Jean Gebser's life and thought; as well as, poetry, short essays, etc. Submissions should loosely conform to discussions of culture/civilization and consciousness, be scholarly and footnoted. The journal seeks interdisciplinary work and is open to creative and "alternative" styles of investigation.

The Cover was inspired by a cosmic "sun" and "starfield" used on the cover of one of Jean Gebser's publications.

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### **About Integrative Explorations Journal**

*Integrative Explorations Journal* is the result of thirteen years of publication as the Gebser Network Newsletter. The newsletter and the journal are the result of the efforts of Algis Mickunas to spread the word about the works of Jean Gebser. Elaine McCoy then a graduate student in the School of Interpersonal Communication at Ohio University began the Gebser Network Newsletter in 1980. In 1983 Michael Purdy took over the editorship of the newsletter and published the newsletter from Governors State University.

The newsletter was originally developed to be an information-sharing vehicle for the Jean Gebser Society. The Gebser Society is patterned after European societies, or circles, pursuing the work of a particular philosopher. The philosopher here, Jean Gebser, was born in Posen, Germany in 1905 and died May 4, 1973. 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 la Tarde*, 1936) and served in the Republican Ministry of Culture. When war over took 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 he assumed the chair for the Study of Comparative Civilizations at the University of Salzburg.

In Switzerland Gebser finished 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* (1985) by Ohio University Press. This work of over 500 pages is a phenomenology of civilization. From many works covering many fields, historical and current, 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, Erich Kahler, 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."

Those wishing to pursue the study of Jean Gebser's work must read *Origin and Presence*, still published by Ohio University Press. This work is very accessible and eminently readable. Back issues of the Gebser Network Newsletter also contain information about the Jean Gebser Society, short articles, poetry, translations of short works by Gebser, excerpts from longer works, poems of Gebser's with commentary, and reviews of books about Gebser's work. (All of the back issues of the Gebser Network Newsletter may be obtained from the editor as an email attachment.)

## A Gebserian Perspective on Organizational “Change Management”

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### **Abstract**

In a global economy driven by innovations in technology, business leaders continually seek ways for their organizations to remain economically viable entities. This paper discusses organizational culture and change, analyzes how business enterprises reflect Jean Gebser’s (1949/1985) dimensions of consciousness in their change management efforts, and considers how structural transformation occurs ‘toward’ integral awareness. Three contemporary organizational efforts that offer potential for integral awareness are reviewed, including organizational dialogue, spirituality in business, and organizational learning.

### **A Gebserian Perspective on Organizational “Change Management”**

We currently live in a “new global economy” (Rodrik, 1999) driven by innovations in technology. Models for calculating economic prosperity are based on acceleration in productivity, growth, and inflation. In our increasingly connected world, our economic system is dynamic, and change is constant and rapid.

The “new economy” includes industries that deal with computers and semiconductors, healthcare and medicine, communications and telecommunications, and instrumentation. These industries require “knowledge workers,” people with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to adjust to rapid change (Beck, 1998). Workers find themselves confronted with potential downsizing, unemployment, and job insecurity—which demands that they develop and continuously upgrade their skills. In a knowledge-based economy, issues such as intangible assets, knowledge infrastructures and flows, and intellectual property rights become important for businesses (OECD, 1997). Transnational firms are changing the organization of their operations within and across boundaries of nation states. Organizational leaders are responding to current trends toward “globalization” and “regionalization” with policies of protectionism and trade agreements, strategic alliances, competitiveness, and investment strategies (Mirza, 1999).

Business leaders continually seek ways for their organizations to remain economically viable entities within the global marketplace. One area they have emphasized is the process of organizational learning, which enables change to be more effectively managed. This paper discusses organizational culture and change, analyzes how business enterprises reflect Jean Gebser’s (1949/1985) dimensions of consciousness in their change management efforts, considers how

structural transformation occurs, and addresses organizational efforts which offer potential for integral awareness.

### **Organizational Culture**

The business climate has changed dramatically over the last 30 years. In the 1970s, an increase in global competition highlighted productivity problems as the United States found itself eclipsed by other nations in the marketplace (e.g., Japan). In the 1980s, many traditional organizations were failing financially as they recognized that strategies such as “management by objectives,” and “quality circles” were no longer effective. By 1990, many companies that were top performers in the 1980s had failed. The rules for success in business (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters & Waterman, 1982) had changed. “As business leaders began speaking of organizational change—in attitudes, values, and practices—they also began thinking about a holistic transformation in terms of organizational culture” (Eisenberg & Goodall, 1997, p. 133).

The study of “organizational communication” conceives organizations as having an industrial and corporate image; organizations rationally coordinate labor, technology, and resources to produce goods and services for capitalist markets (Carlone & Taylor, 1998). These processes are achieved through symbolic cooperation. All organizations have a need to communicate “to get information to the right place at the right time in order to divide labor appropriately and coordinate the effort of the organization’s members” (Schein, 1994, p. 130).

Bantz (1993) uses the term “organizational communication culture” to emphasize that organizational culture is constituted in communication. Culture can thus be understood as an outcome *and* a process that arises in the communicative activity of people. Organizational members use communication to create, maintain, and transform organizational meanings which shape and in turn are shaped by the organizational culture. The culture’s creator’s work from a consistent set of assumptions, often identified in the form of an organizational mission statement. Across the life of an organization, processes are developed to ensure that the task of the organization is fulfilled. Organizational culture messages which influence meaning include:

formal statements of organizational philosophy, design of physical space, deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching by leaders. Explicit reward and status systems, stories, legends or myths, leadership attention to measurement and control, leader reactions to critical incidents, organizational design and structure, organizational systems and procedures, and criteria for people management. (Morley & Shockley–Zalabak, 1997)

Based on these messages, members of a culture develop expectations about the activities of organizational members. The cumulative learning of a group of people is manifest, at numerous levels, as culture.

Culture may be defined as “the pattern of learned basic assumptions that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to the problems of survival and integration” (Schein, 1994, p. 128). Kramer (1992) notes that reducing culture to a set of behavioral rules for interpretation and action transforms “cultural studies into ethics” (p. 11). Ethical behavior is that which is guided by organizational processes regarding the production (reproduction) orientation of an organization. Culture (and ethics), then, become synonymous with behavior that supports economic efficiency. To retain their jobs, workers must be willing and able to learn to accommodate workplace changes—shifts in meaning structures and work behaviors.

### **Organizational Change**

Global economics is changing business, and business is changing the world. In “Handbook of the Business Revolution—Manifesto” (1995), editors of the business magazine *Fast Company* explained “With unsettling speed, two forces are converging: a new generation of business leaders is rewriting the rules of business, and a new breed of fast companies is challenging the corporate status quo.” With this shift, the wisdom of work and competition generated over the past 50 years is unraveling. An economy driven by technology and innovation makes borders obsolete. Change is exhibited in the structure of companies, the relationships between companies, the nature of work, and how success is defined.

For the blue-collar worker in the 1970s and 1980s, the driving force behind change was factory automation using programmable machine tools. For the white-collar office workers in the 1990s, the driving force behind change is office automation using computer technology: “enterprise-resource-planning systems, groupware, intranets, extranets, expert systems, the web, and e-commerce” (Peters, 1999, p. 116). The continually unfolding business revolution has taken us from financial engineering to organizational reengineering and beyond, from corporate restructuring to acquisition fever, and from intrapreneuring to startup mania (Fishman, 1997). Change is occurring at a record pace and is the common denominator of global economic shifts.

If a company is on the verge of losing its leadership position, leaders vow to reinvent the organization in an effort to become more efficient (reduce work/process redundancies, make strategic use of technologies) and better anticipate and meet the changing needs of their customers and the competition.



Change is seen as a practical business necessity for continued organizational operations.

### **Dimensions of Consciousness and Change**

Jean Gebser (1949/1985) considered the basic forms of perception (ontological perception) present in culture. Rather than focusing on transformations that took place within individually bounded cultures, he suggested that there is a *gestalt* within which all spheres of cultures coexist (Kavolis, 1992). Gebser identified five perceptual formations (or 'structures of consciousness') within which cultures are organized: the archaic, the magical, the mythic, the mental, and the integral. His work can be used to identify elements of cultural formations which are located within different modes of awareness. Every cultural cosmology emerges against an ever-present aperspectival ground. There is a tension and interpenetration of these modes of awareness (dimensions of consciousness)—“the dividing, disrupting, and dissolving aspects” that prepare the way for awakening consciousness (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 284). The ways in which the elements are organized generates the parameters that comprise a given cultural system.

Within a modern mental-rational consciousness, events and phenomena must be reduced to linear, mental-rational understanding to be understood/defined as “real.” This spacio-temporal positionality fragments the perceptual field.

Business leaders' attempts to drive organizational change calls into consideration how shifts within the mental-rational structure of consciousness are inspired by co-existing modes of awareness. The next sections examine how archaic, mythical, and magical structures call forth change that is pressed into comprehensibility within the mental structure of consciousness.

#### **Archaic Structure**

Archaic structure is “the structure closest to and presumably originally identical with origin” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 43). However, only in a terminological sense is 'origin' considered the 'first' structure to emerge from the initial unity of consciousness. Archaic structure is prespatial and pretemporal. The human is completely co-extensive with the world. Even though the soul may have further existed, it had not yet attained consciousness. Gebser identified deep sleep as a degree of consciousness in the archaic dimension, in view of its function in the awakening process. He recognized presentiment as the expression of realization and thought in the archaic structure. Presentiment indicates a connection with the past and an incorporation of the future. The soul is dormant, “a time of complete nondifferentiation of man and the universe” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 43), but is concerned with survival and movement toward awareness.

“[I]n the third century B.C. Chuang Tzu wrote of the archaic mode of awareness: ‘Dreamlessly slept the true men of earlier times.’” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, p. xvii). Today, remnants of the archaic are present within contemporary organizations. Archaic consciousness “has been hinted at in numerous metaphoric expressions, such as . . . the spontaneous rituals that dissolve the participants into a state of trance” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, p. xvii). Organizational workers may begin to operate on ‘auto-pilot’ because of the repetitive nature (ritual) of technical activity. Organizations that are technology-based have a propensity to resemble electronic sweatshops. Workers may go through the mind-numbing motions—simply present with their routine. One of the reasons employees resist organizational change is their obedience to the familiar (*stasis*). Business leaders move toward implementing change efforts in an attempt to awaken and vitalize the organization.

### ***Vital–Magical Structure***

Gebser (1949/1985) noted the magic structure releases humans from their identity with origin. That magical release opens the first process of consciousness, which is completely like sleep. In the magical structure, persons can understand the world in its sleep-like outlines. Persons do not yet recognize the world as a whole, but only the details that reach this sleep-like state wherein a part stands for the whole. Magical reality is “a world of pure but meaningful accident; a world in which all things and persons are interrelated, but the not-yet-centered Ego is dispersed over the world of phenomena” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 46). Kramer and Mickunas (1992) explained, “with the mutation from archaic unity to magic awareness, a rudimentary sense of space emerges as does its correlate, the self” (p. xvii).

Gebser (1949/1985) represented humans in the magical dimension by the one-dimensional point: “the point suggests the initial emergent centering in man and expresses the spaceless and timeless one-dimensionality of magic man’s world” (p. 46). Because of this spaceless–timeless unity, every ‘point’ (whether it be a thing, an event, or an action) can be interchanged with another ‘point,’ independent of time, space, and rational causal connection. In the magical dimension, every event is connected to and can be transformed into every other event—each has the power to become the other. There is no symbolic distance. “Everything is ‘connected’ to everything else. Accidents, probabilities, and coincidence do not happen here” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, p. xviii).

Magic is the consciousness of power to make and to transform. Industrial culture is obsessed with the magic of production as the *raison d’être*. In this way, the actor becomes his/her role: the person *is* his/her job. In recognition of this state, people outside of the organization may suggest to the worker that he/she needs to

‘get a life.’ If a CEO is unable to ‘turn a company around’ in one’s performance of “the stale and outworn rituals of the harassed executive” (Freeman, 1992, p. 160), he/she is no longer seen as viable/power-filled and must be replaced.

“Magic awareness tacitly integrates vital interests, technical production, rhetoric, and theatre” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, p. xviii). Magic-vital awareness can assume a variety of forms, including ritual, “incantations, appropriate sayings, assumptions of names, and even prayers” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, p. xviii). The change agent is a magician, using rhetoric as incantation. For example, “old-fashioned, face-to-face persuasion—including revival-style mass meetings” may be held to motivate change (Dillon, 1998). Rhetoric is also present in the selection of color combinations for logos, symbolic representations on lecterns and stationery/letterhead, and phrases (sound bites) used inside and outside the company to inspire movement. Magical power is present in the ‘spit and sizzle’ of presentations—in the slogans, sayings, and images that draw power from another entity. Some organizations may take on animalistic qualities in becoming the predator of smaller firms in attempts at corporate acquisitions or mergers. In efforts to bypass the competition, the organization/members become a frog to “leap forward” in the marketplace (Dillon, 1998). Perhaps the organization is perceived to be standing on a “burning platform” (Tichy, 1997, p. 76)—whereby the old is dispensed with and through the change process the company becomes “new”—like a phoenix rising from the ashes.

### ***Psychic-Mythic Structure***

In the psychic-mythical dimension, all symbolic thought is structured in terms of a cyclical process of polarities which constantly move toward and through each other. While the magical structure contains point-for-point identification of every vital event with every other vital event, the mythical structure relates events in polarities. Polarity refers to the dynamic movement of one event, image, or feeling that provokes, attracts, and requires another event. One is never given without the other, and one may replace the other. This movement comprises a rhythmic and synchronizing mode of awareness that is “cyclically temporic” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, p. xix)—the cycles repeat themselves over time. Organizational patterns change in response to economic shifts, reach a state of temporary permanence, and then adjust to feedback with further changes.

The mythological structure “has very little to do with storytelling or fables, although stories and fables usually manifest the ways, images, sayings, and human relations in which the mythological structure appears” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, p. xix). In this way, polarities and shifts in polarity are made available to organizational members. For example, consumer terms of ‘product’ and ‘service’ used to be distinct in the marketplace. However, this separation no longer makes economic sense. Product-service hybrids have

emerged. “Offers are ‘productized’ services and ‘servicized’ products” (Davis & Meyer, 1998, p. 22). For example, if you buy a car stereo, the price of the stereo often includes installation service—and you will probably be given a service warranty or encouraged to buy an extended service warranty.

Change has come to resemble the shape of the myth of progress. “Progress is not a sign of purposeful activity but becomes a self-referential and self-enhancing repetitive structure: Progress is for the sake of progress. It turns back upon itself and assumes a mythological structure of cyclical repetition” (Kramer & Mickunas, p. xxii). Various change programs have become so regular in organizations that they have been referred to as the “flavor-of-the-month” (Fishman, 1997, p. 64), thus ‘change’ has become a static ideology. Kramer and Mickunas (1992) note that one of the more dangerous aspects of our current consciousness is the collapse of mythical and magical structures. The myth of progress itself is identified with the ceaseless incrementation of power; the myth of change similarly reveals this structural collapse.

Myths are usually expressed by psyche, “characterized by unrational images and imaginings such as projecting, forecasting, prophesying, and dramatic representation” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, pp. xix–xx). Business futurists advise others to become “architects of destiny” in addressing what business people should know about the future (LaBarre, 1996, p. 50). “One threat to the accuracy of prediction is that changes that have not yet occurred, including ‘progressive’ ones, cannot be factored into a model very well. But the more insidious threat . . . is the fact that making predictions about the future helps to spur change that makes such predictions inaccurate” (Kramer & Mickunas, p. xv). The power of the word brings into awareness that of which one speaks—and alters the ‘trajectory’ for prediction. As Ed McCracken, CEO of Silicon Graphics stated, “Long-term planning weds companies to approaches and technologies too early, which is deadly in our marketplace” (Slater & Narver, 1999, p. 256). The ebb and flow of change activities within an organization exhibits the mythic dimension.

### ***Mental–Rational Structure***

“The mythical consciousness does not retain its polarizing and psychic character indefinitely; it undergoes a mutation that leads to the preeminence of a mental structure of consciousness” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, p. xxi). Kramer and Mickunas (1992) clarified four characteristics which distinguish this dimension. First, the mental structure is dualistic. Concepts are arranged in “rational opposition,” antagonistic to one another. Mental consciousness seeks to “overcome the oppositions and reconcile the alternatives” (Kavolis, 1992, p. 166). Thus, attention is given to “mind” over matter. Second, mind is regarded as a function of “directedness, orientation, and . . . linearity”. Third, orientation originates with a center called the ego which provides a spatial position “from which perspectives

become constituted toward the ‘object out there’’. Fourth, “the egosubject, as an orientational function, may be treated at a deeper level as constitutive of linear time, while the material side can be regarded as a representation of space” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, p. xxi). This implies a division of time and space. Further, dimensions of the future “necessarily lend a forward thrust to spatiality, giving both space and time the semblance of direction” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 178).

Rational awareness “combats and represses” the archaic, magical, and mythical structures of consciousness (Kavolis, 1992, p. 166). In this structure, abstract concepts replace experience as the dominant level of social reality. Reality in this dimensions of consciousness does not refer to what is present in experience—rather, reality is associated with matter that can be manipulated to yield predictable results. By defining reality in this way, humans can arrange objects in various ways, calculate their positions and movements, and predict their results (Mickunas, 1992). Organizations, operating from an economic framework, set target goals for production. By configuring business plans and manipulating changes in the ‘data,’ business leaders can reach their ‘real’ goal—enhanced economic status.

One consequence of the conception of man/woman as self-generated is the contemporary emphasis on *praxis*, theory driven action.

It is conceived that reflective thought, by its constituted metaphysics of numbers, is in a position to select freely from among those calculations that are to be ‘applied’ without any reaction to some preconceived human nature or to the qualitative and essential distinctions of the natural world. The only way to ‘realize’ such calculations is by selecting the ones that work, that make a practical difference. If some theoretical constructs cannot help to ‘handle’ and change, they are deemed merely speculative and essentially valueless. (Mickunas, 1992, p. 138)

This position assumes humans have full understanding and are in a position to control which theories we implement. By manipulating symbolic constructs, humans select an interpretation and produce an action perceived to be appropriate to accomplish one’s goal.

Gebser (1949/1985) noted the mental structure for expressing thought is representation. This conceptual form of realization, appropriate to the mental structure, is a ‘form of thinking.’ Mental consciousness manifests itself in discursive thought using symbols. Communication through the use of symbols reduces experience to allegory, then to mere formula. “In its extreme form of exaggerated abstractness, [the symbol] is ultimately void of any relation to life and becomes autonomous; empty of content and no longer a sign but only a mental denotation, its effect is predominantly destructive” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 88). Words express the energy of our thoughts and ideas. Through the use of words we can convey our ideas to others. For the individual, technological speed and connectivity means

people deal with scores of messages each day, creating nearly continuous communication (Davis & Meyer, 1998).

Although a person can obtain a technical education and a sense of security by functioning within one’s technical expertise, Mickunas (1992) notes that this is precisely the point of vulnerability. Building on previous technological innovations, new and more complex technologies are designed and produced, rendering previous technologies obsolete. Persons working within the framework of earlier technologies become either obsolete (dismissed from the organization) or must ‘retool’ themselves (acquire new skills) to continue to temporarily assure their well-being. However, “since this process has no other aim apart from its self-expansion and ‘progress,’ no individual can ever be secure in his achieved ‘expertise.’ The individual has no choice but to improve him/herself constantly. In principle, no final material security can be offered; the individual is always in danger” (Mickunas, p. 140).

We often hear talk about a smaller world—however the world is not ‘smaller,’ simply moving ‘faster’ due to connectivity (e.g., I can select and purchase a rug from a weaver in Guatemala without leaving home). While fast used to be understood in relation to slow (time), and big in relation to small (space)—what is fast (time) is now also small (space). Humans have lost their space. Connectivity is putting everybody and everything online and has led to ‘the death of distance,’ a shrinking of space (Cairncross, 1997).

Temporal anxiety is ubiquitous in cultures obsessed with instant gratification (focus on self/ego) which is expressed as an insatiable drive for convenience (speed). Gebser explained: “[F]or the most part the pathological of our present civilisation stems from the date of the introduction of the perspectivity . . . which executed the alignment of aspects to a predetermined point and thereby effected a distortion of reality” (Bauwens, 1999). Perceptual standpoint of self limits one’s understanding of experience.

Changes in organizational culture, foregrounded in the mental structure of consciousness, incorporate other dimensions of consciousness. Every dimension is present in each of the structures. The next section addresses how Gebser (1949/1985) viewed transformation of the structures of consciousness.

### **Structural Transformation**

In his work, Gebser focused on the creative transformation of consciousness structures toward integral awareness; he did not focus on ‘change’ which implies causation (a force seen as irrelevant in the integral structure). He associated changes in the structures of consciousness with stages of economic and technological evolution. He associated the magical structure with hunting and herding peoples, the mythic structure with agriculturalists, and the mental structure with skilled craftsmanship.

Gebser also identified a transition to the integral structure with the development of modern machinery (Kavolis, 1992). Once a structure of consciousness becomes deficient (reaches a point of fragmentation), other modes of perception reflect and support irruption of change. In considering how structures of consciousness fragment and regenerate, Gebser offered two possible theories.

First, an integration could emerge “that is both a mutation and a restructuration of other structures of consciousness” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, p. xxiii). Kavolis (1992) explained that “structures of consciousness change by a sudden leap when they no longer pose a challenge to the creative mind, when an ‘old’ structure no longer needs to be shaped” (p. 169). Change agents that inspire transformation include philosophers, artists, and in our current historical moment, scientists.

The second possibility Gebser noted is that change could emerge when a dimension of consciousness mutates toward another structure of which one is unaware. In the fragmentation, a prevalent structure is perceived to be missing. “The missing aspect dominates the fragmenting consciousness and . . . can be filled either by reverting to magic and its power to regenerate myths or by tracing out the constitution of an emerging awareness” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, p. xxiii). Kavolis (1992) noted that transitions to ‘later’ structures of consciousness open up new types of understanding and provide new bases of effectiveness in social action: “a people in a mature stage of an ‘earlier’ structure cannot defend themselves effectively against an attack by the carriers of a ‘later’ structure, as the Aztecs could not against the Spanish” (p. 170). He suggests that it

is not clear whether a similar increase in potency will be granted to those who, in the twentieth century, represent the integral consciousness. I would think the reverse—a decline in energetic efficacy—to be at least as likely, since the integral consciousness does not seem to allow for either decisive judgment or a commitment to anything in particular (or even for corrosive doubt). (p. 170)

‘Effectiveness’ of social action is revealed differently in various perceptual formations.

In discussing transformation, Gebser introduced the concept of “plus–mutation,” which is different from the conventional idea of a mutation. “‘Plus–mutation’ describes a process of enrichment rather than destruction. The ‘past state is not surpassed or abandoned, but instead, is added to” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, p. xvi). The ever–present structures of consciousness are configured differently, which accounts for cultural differences. These cultural differences “depend on the preeminence of one mode of awareness within whose context other modes of awareness are integrated” (Lozano & Mickunas, 1992, p. 180). Referring to organizational cultures, Schein noted, “cultures are built around and respond to the core

technologies that cause the organization to be created in the first place. One may expect organizational cultures to vary, therefore, according to the kind of core technology that is involved. Chemical, high-tech, heavy manufacturing, financial, and other service industries each will produce somewhat different ‘industry’ cultures that will influence organizational cultures” (Schein, 1994, pp. 129–130). Mutational changes in consciousness (which are not systematic or gradual but ‘leaps’ of awareness) are filled with anxiety if rational control is the guiding interest (Kramer, 1992).

Anxiety is woven into the myth of progress. “The fragmentation of modern reason results in an instrumental rationality that is ruled by a myth of progress. This myth has been denounced by thinkers such as Theodore Adorno, Jurgen Habermas . . . as a form of alienation, and a reduction of cultural plurality to a single standard of success and failure” (Lozano & Mickunas, 1992, p. 196, note 1). Eisenberg and Goodall (1997) recognize the role of technology in this process:

Changes in the world of work will inevitably affect the usefulness of the cultural approach to organizations. As the relationships between employers and employees change from long-term to short-term commitments, organizational cultures may become more homogeneous or less well defined. In addition, communication technology is likely to affect organizational cultures as interaction via computers continues to take the place of face-to-face communication. The smaller cultural networks created by electronic communication may eventually replace identification with a corporate culture. (p. 147)

As technology and economics become globalized, generic similarities between organizational workplaces will become even clearer.

Operating within a mental-rational orientation, business leaders are always trying to find the one idea that will give them the competitive edge—a compelling vision for the organization. “[A]midst all the chaos and conflicting pressures, the vision compels an organization to remember what’s really important and where it intends to go” (Nanus, 1998, p. 232). This search for ‘vision’ may provide incentive for integrality.

### ***Integral Awareness in Organizations***

Gebser sought an intuitive grasp of the whole, an integrative totality of culture. He grounded culture “within a multilayered conception of the communication process (thereby relating it to the transformation of modes of awareness)” (Kavolis, 1992, p. 168). Gebser defined integration to mean full, complete, and realized wholeness. “The concretion of everything that has unfolded in time and coalesced in a spatial array is the integral attempt to reconstitute the ‘magnitude’ of man [woman] from his [her] constituent aspects, so that he [she] can consciously integrate himself [herself] into the whole” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 99). The integral is “a space-and-time free perspectival world where the free (or freed) consciousness has at its



disposal all latent as well as actual forms of space and time, without having either to deny them or to be fully subject to them” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 117). Integration is an intensification of consciousness, irreducible to any qualitative valuation or quantitative devaluation. The two basic features of integral awareness are transparency and atemporality.

First, “transparency (diaphaneity) is the form of manifestation (epiphany) of the spiritual. Our concern is to render transparent everything latent ‘behind’ and ‘before’ the world—to render transparent our own origin, our entire human past, as well as the present, which already contains the future” (Gebser, 1949/1985, pp. 6–7). Transparency does not mean that a person sees through things, as in the conventional meaning. Transparency indicates the mutual relationships and dependent differences within a culture. The integral dimension subsumes all other modes of awareness “which continue to operate in their own ways as specialties within a more encompassing design or as levels of communication within it” (Kavolis, 1992, p. 168).

The second feature of integral awareness is atemporality. Atemporality “signifies concrete awareness of time as integral, prior to its abstract and linear division into past, present, and future” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, p. xxv). Atemporality enables aperspectivity—a way of seeing something from all perspectives at once in ‘space–time freedom’. “Aperspectivity and atemporality are essential to integrating differentials that allow for openness and yet transparent comprehension” (Kramer & Mickunas, 1992, p. xxvi).

Three trends within the life of contemporary organizations offer potential for integral awareness: organizational dialogue, spirituality in business, and organizational learning. While the development of each area is clearly sedimented within the mental–rational dimension of consciousness, the possibility exists for opening horizons in each area.

First, the area of dialogue is receiving increased attention within organizations. Kramer (1992) noted

‘[C]ooperation,’ or more appropriately, ‘community,’ with no linear goal or accompanying anxiety and which is nondirectional–nonspatial, is the behavioral expression of integrality. . . . The modern ‘problem of intersubjectivity’ (which is the birthplace of objectivity as intersubjective agreement) is dissolved or reinterpreted systatically as the genesis of meaning, which is always communal, intersubjective, and transcendental. (p. 46)

In dialogue, each person cooperatively reveals his/her world view. Dialogue (differentiated from social scientific approaches to interpersonal communication) is a process that allows for awareness/meaning to exist. We are able to know (understand) by seeing through differences in worldviews. Organizations have a linear goal (economic function) with numerous

structures in place that block dialogue. However, some people are pursuing this area of inquiry. For example, there is an active on–line listserve dedicated to organizational dialogue ([www.odnet.org](http://www.odnet.org)) and books have emerged that address the implications of this topic (Bohm & Nichol, 1996; Dixon, 1998; Simmons, 1999).

The second area deals with the recent movement toward spirituality in business. Gebser recognized that transference is a manifestation of the spiritual. He conceived of the evolution of culture as an ‘unfolding’ of spirit. Within the past few years there has been an increased movement toward spirituality in business (Barrett, 1998; Guillory, 1997; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Moxley, 1999). Leaders view spirituality as holding the potential for revitalizing a dispirited workforce toward a more creative, humanized workplace.

Books in this area often provide models for ways spirituality is/can be practiced in the workplace—advocating that ‘adding’ spirituality could “make your company pull together—at the right speed and in the same direction” (Cox, Liesse, & Cox, 1996). Unfortunately, some managers confuse their managerial authority with spiritual authority. We must remember that religion and spirituality can be used to oppress others or can be used as a motivator for liberation, recalling the lives of Malcolm X (Muslim), Martin Luther King (Christian), Ghandi (Hindu), and Thich Nhat Nanh (Buddhist). In addition, business leaders striving to give the impression that corporations have a ‘soul’ can be attempting to manipulate consumers as well as the competition (Marchand, 1998).

A third area of interest is organizational learning. Organizations see learning as a way to remain economically competitive. A learning organization (more creative, open) is seen as able to transform itself. Some organizations are considered ‘change ready’: this means the organization is a ‘learning’ organization, willing to accept new ‘mental models.’

Organizational learning has been discussed in the managerial literature for over 25 years (Argyris, 1977). However, Slater and Narver (1999) note that scholars have not reached a consensus on its definition because organizational learning is a complex, multidimensional construct that occurs on different cognitive levels—adaptive and generative (Argyris, 1977; 1991; Senge, 1990)—and encompasses multiple subprocesses (Garvin, 1993; Sinkula, 1994). In its most basic (rational) definition, organizational learning is the development of new knowledge or insights that have the potential to influence behavior.

Adaptive learning takes place within a set of recognized and unrecognized constraints that reflect the organization’s assumptions about its environment and about itself. Generative learning occurs “when the organization is willing to question long–held beliefs about mission, customers, capabilities, or strategy. It requires the development of a new

way of looking at the world based on an understanding of the systems and relationships that link key issues” (Slater & Narver, 1999, p. 240).

Generative learning is important for retaining a business’s competitive advantage. Slater and Narver (1999) explain that generative learning “is most likely to occur irregularly and unexpectedly. . . . [R]evolutionary periods of generative learning may provide a window of competitive advantage that may be kept open only through continuous improvement. Eventually, that window will begin to close as the knowledge about the innovation diffuses to competitors” (pp. 241–242).

These three areas, although clearly addressed from the mental–rational structure of consciousness, provide multiple sites for possible shifts of integral awareness. Dialogue can open community. Spirituality can prompt cultural unfolding. Generative learning can call into existence new ways of looking at the world.

Business leaders functioning within a global economy use change management strategies to move their organizations ahead and remain competitive in the marketplace. This paper considered how the process of change management within organizational culture relies on the energy of Gebser’s dimensions of consciousness and identified dialogue, spirituality, and generative learning as areas for unfolding integral awareness in organizations.

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## Inner and Outer Realities

### Jean Gebser in a Cultural/Historical Perspective

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Through the long course of history the Western mind seems to have pursued two recognizably different paths in the pursuit of knowledge about world and about human nature itself. One emphasized the outward appearance of things, while the other searched for hidden organizing principles within. The first has tended toward *materialism* as its preferred worldview, while the second toward *idealism*. By this I mean followers of the first path have tended to seek truth in the realities of the visible material world, while those who have pursued the second have stressed the importance relationships and abstractions—aspects of the world that cannot be observed directly. The first group has relied on immediate experience, while the second has rested its case on logic, mathematics, and intuition. The former are known as *empiricists* and the latter as *rationalists*. Such a picture, of course, is an oversimplification of the history of Western thought, but gives us a working context in which to discuss Jean Gebser's contribution to modern thought, and the reconciliation that integral consciousness brings as a gift to the today's world.

Before turning to Gebser, however, it will be useful to review some of the highpoints of the two major themes mentioned above. Among the earliest and most thoroughgoing of the materialists we find the Greek philosophers Leucippus (c. 460–? BC) and Democritus (c. 460–370 BC). Both argued that everything in existence is composed of atoms. In Greek, the word *atom* is an adjective for the word *indivisible*, so in a literal sense what we see when we look around is the complete story; there are no inner hidden parts to reality, and there are not hidden causes either. Not surprisingly, these two philosophers believed in an absolute material causality as well. A more liberal approach to understanding the physical world was promoted by Aristotle (384–322 BC), who was arguably the first scientist in history. Though his work on logic places him in the tradition of rationalism as well, he also was an empiricist, for instance observing and categorizing plants by their appearance. He valued the physicality of the world we live in, and did not withdraw from it into realms of pure speculation. He believed, for example, that the rational soul, which he thought unique to human beings, is so completely fused with the physical body that we see the uniqueness of each individual in the way they walk, talk, and generally comport themselves. He did not subscribe to the notion, espoused by his teacher Plato, that the material world is a mere reflection of a more essential realm of pure forms.

Near the beginning of the modern era the British philosopher John Locke (1632–1704) promoted a thoroughgoing empiricism, with the notion that infants are born with no innate knowledge or understanding whatsoever, but learn everything from sensory experience.

Let us suppose the mind to be, as we say, a blank slate (*tabula rasa*) of white paper, void of all characteristics, without any ideas; how comes it to be furnished? ...To this I answer on one word, from experience: in that all our knowledge is founded and from what it ultimately derives itself.<sup>1</sup>

This extreme form of empiricism set the pattern for the development of modern science right through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and has played a major role in 20<sup>th</sup> century science as well. Though science has made good use of mathematics and logic, both tools of rationalism, over and above everything else it has tended to stress the observable material world—though it has done so in terms of measurement and quantification rather than in terms of descriptive qualities. Indeed, perhaps the most important of influence of Copernicus and Galileo was their reduction of the notion of *observation* to numbers alone.

Interestingly, though some of these architects of modern science were deeply religious individuals, the tendency to attend to the surface qualities of phenomena could not but in time lead to the dismissal of the whole notion of God and invisible causes in general. So it was that in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the great French mathematician Pierre Simon Laplace was asked by Napoleon why he had not dedicated his most recent treatise to God, as was the usual practice, the latter replied, “I have no need of that hypothesis.” By the time we arrive in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the Vienna Circle and the Logical Positivists, headed by Professor Moritz Schlick, philosophy was dealing mainly with language and common sense, which for all practical purposes amounted to a reduction of scientific discourse to what can be immediately observed. These influences led to a capping-off of discussion about many of the most fascinating aspects of modern physics, for instance, until well into the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all because such discussion would have dealt with invisible aspects of reality.

The other path to knowledge, the one that seeks hidden organizing principles, can be traced back at least to Pythagoras of Samos (c. 569–475 BC), who explored music and harmony as represented in mathematics—for example in the relationship of the length of a vibrating string to the pitch of the tone it produces when plucked or struck. His choice of mathematics, which in his time meant geometry and ratios, placed him at the beginning of the Western scientific tradition, where formal relationships represented in numbers are a fundamental organizing feature of reality. Plato (c. 428–347 BC) similarly believed in the preeminence of abstract relationships, posing

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<sup>1</sup> Lock, J., *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. A.C. Fraser, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894). Bk. II, Chap. 1, Sec.2.

the existence of a perfect realm of ideals, or *archetypes*, more real than the material world, and lending shape to it. In his writings we discover a fully conceived realm beyond the visible world that influences and lends shape to day-to-day reality. There were two aspects to this non-material reality that bear on our discussion of Jean Gebser. Each has its own history, but both seem to be struggling toward a mutual reconciliation in the modern world.

One aspect of Plato's thought emphasized the Pythagorean notion that the foundational aspects of the cosmos are best understood in terms of mathematics, i.e., geometry. This idea later caught fire in the work of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, setting the stage for an entire worldview based on the notion that mathematics—which thanks to Rene Descartes' invention of "analytic geometry" now combined both geometry and numerical manipulations—was the very language of the creation itself, and surely the means by which God had put it all together. Mathematics has not only continued to define virtually all legitimate endeavors in astronomy, but has become the core method of physics as well, with advanced university mathematics courses cross-listed in departments of physics and astronomy as well. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this trend has gone much further. For instance, mathematically based hybrid sciences involving physics, chemistry, and biology have led to the mapping of the human genetic code at the molecular level, and are presently poised to transform the very biology of humans and other organisms. Debates over the ethics and practicalities of such changes will occupy the opening decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and perhaps many more decades to come.

Some of the most intriguing scientific advances of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were made in the realms of quantum mechanics and chaos theory, both of which rely heavily on sophisticated mathematics. The former opened up an expanse of microworld complexity lying just behind the macroworld of ordinary experience. Cutting below the atoms of Leucippus and Democritus, quantum mechanics points to a fluid unity at the deepest levels of reality, levels entirely invisible to the common sense of Logical Positivism. Chaos theory, at the same time, has shown that many types of complex real world events, ones that emerge through the interaction of multiple underlying causes, cannot be predicted with precision, though, ironically, mathematics can be used to obtain *qualitative* descriptions of them. The latter is in part due to the emergence of new properties of whole systems that simply do not exist at lower scales of complexity. A common example is the weather, which is an emergent product of a large number of constantly changing geothermal and atmospheric factors. Human moods, and perhaps other aspects of human experience, are also the emergent outcomes of myriad undergirding conditions. Thus, while complex emergent phenomena do not arise out of an invisible realm, they do emerge, as it were, out of nowhere.



### **Invisible Realities.**

Let us now return to a less often discussed aspect of Plato's thought, having to do with the idea of an invisible reality that lies behind the world of appearances. The famous *allegory of the cave*, found in the book VII of the *Republic*,<sup>2</sup> remains even today one of the most intellectually compelling parables of the notion that the world of appearances is an illusion that hides a truer and more perfect reality behind it. In this story, human beings are pictured as chained to each other in a cave, where they can see only the shadows of real objects on the cave walls. Far away, outside of the cave, is the true reality, where the sun is so bright that if one of these unfortunate individuals were dragged directly into its brilliance, he would instantly be blinded by the light, and only in time adjust to its intensity. And, if he were allowed to return to his previous companions, we are told, they would not believe the story he would tell them about his experience.

This wonderfully rich metaphor appears in the midst of an otherwise rational discourse on politics. Here, it would seem, it is used by Plato to allow the mental structure of consciousness to sense a reality best represented by mythic consciousness. But before pursuing this line of thought further, let me first speak to the rational aspect of this allegory, the idea there the world of appearance is not the true world, and that a more fundamental reality is to be found elsewhere, a reality that undergirds the everyday world of appearances. For the rational consciousness this idea is expressed through metaphysics, and appears again and again in the history of Western thought. Perhaps the greatest example is found in Immanuel Kant's (1724–1804) division of the cosmos into a phenomenal world of appearances and a more essential world underlying it, to which we do not have direct access. We must approach it through a perceptual coordinate system of space and time, which gives rise to the particular categories of experience that characterize human knowledge. In this, Kant was attempting to answer Hume's arguments in favor of an empiricism that denied just about any kind of (rational) knowledge that did not come through the senses. Kant's arguments were, however, so convincing that most thoughtful readers were convinced, as had Plato been many centuries before, that reality is not what we see when we casually look out at the world.

Nineteenth and twentieth century science has validated this view in many ways. In the study of the senses it is obvious, for example, that the world comes to human experience transmitted into the brain in a vast flow of neural impulses from the eye, the ear, the tongue, skin, and so on. Thus, in some very real sense we *must* construct our worlds of experience from information provided by the senses. When these malfunction our experience of reality can be profoundly altered. Physics, especially quantum physics, in

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<sup>2</sup> Plato. *The Republic*. B. Jowett, trans.; NY: Modern Library, 1982.

its own way has shown us exactly what Kant intended, namely that the world as we know it, the world that presents itself to us in colors, forms, and textures, and more fundamentally in terms of space and time—in other words in a world of appearances—is not as basic as the quantum world where even space and time do not hold absolute sway. Once we get comfortable with the notion that space and time, to say nothing of color, form, and texture, are aspects of appearance and not fundamental of reality, we begin to reconsider many aspects of the physical, organic, and psychological worlds in which we live as well. For instance, biological molecules are subject to quantum level effects, so it becomes possible, even necessary, to reconsider the nature our own bodies in light of the new possibilities of quantum physics. Is it probable, for instance, that quantum level phenomena such as *non-locality* (action at a distance), or the “entanglement” of events separated by time, might play a role in the quantum neurodynamics of the brain, and thus in the human mind and consciousness itself? Such ideas are important in considering Gebser’s own thinking, since he was very much aware of recent developments in physics, and considered them directly relevant to discussions of an invisible reality. It is in such ideas that aspects of the magic, mythic, and mental structures of consciousness seem to approach each other and contribute to a larger integral vision.

Now let us return one more time to Plato and note that he was, in fact, no stranger to the mythic and perhaps even magical consciousness. Like virtually all Greeks of his time, he was aware of the mystery schools common in those days, and which in one form or another continued through most of antiquity until they were finally all but eradicated by the early Christian church. In Greek culture these schools dated back at least to the time of Parmenides (c. 515 BC), and even earlier in the Middle East, as suggested by certain fragments of the story of Gilgamesh which indicate that he and Inkidu traveled into the underworld guided by esoteric knowledge.<sup>3</sup> Virtually all mystery schools spoke in one form or another of a reality behind or below the ordinary world of appearances, a reality from which important truths about life in this material world of could be sought and sometimes found. Parmenides seems to have traveled in sleep into the underworld, past “the gates of the pathways of Night and Day,” in search of wisdom.

The mares that carry me as far as longing can reach  
 Rode on, once they had come and fetched me onto the legendary  
 Road of the divinity that carries the man who knows  
 Through the vast and dark unknown. And on I was carried

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<sup>3</sup> Thompson, W. I., *The time falling bodies take to light: Mythology, sexuality, and the origins of culture*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981.

As the mares, aware just where to go, kept carrying me

Straining at the chariot; and young women led the way...<sup>4</sup>

The mythic Orpheus is said to have traveled into the underworld as well, in hopes of retrieving his beloved Eurydice, and became the central figure of the Orphic Mysteries in which Socrates himself may have participated. These mystery schools appear to owe a great deal to the even older tradition of shamanism, in which the shaman, in an altered state of consciousness that is essentially magical, actively moves into the world below or world above, there going about his healing, or leading a soul into the afterlife, or whatever his business is. In such traditions it is not so much that these alternative realms of reality are more real than the world of appearances, as is the case in Plato's allegory of the cave, but that they are of at least equal importance, and often are the location where mythical or magical realities reside which directly influence the world of day to day life.

Plato was well aware of these, and similar ideas about different realities. Sometimes he embedded these ideas in mythical texts. Near the end of the *Republic*, for instance, is found the myth of Er, in which we are told that prior to birth each soul receives its fate (*Moirai*), and is given a daimon, or soul-companion, to guide it through life. When the soul enters the material world at birth it passes through a realm of forgetfulness, however, and arrives without memory, so that it is the job of the daimon to guide it in its assigned fate. The Romans had a similar idea in the notion of a personal *genius* that "knew everything about a person's future and controlled his fate." This *genius* was "an agent of personal luck and fortune".<sup>5</sup> In both instances we have the idea that there is a pre-destined pattern assigned to each individual's life that constitutes their fate. And even though the individual may initially, or even permanently, be ignorant of this fate, it sets the proper pattern for his life.

An important variation on this theme was found in Neo-Platonism, where it was said that the individual chooses his own life situation prior to birth, but that his subsequent life then fits into a larger pattern. Plotinus, the foremost spokesman for this philosophy wrote,

Coming into this particular body, and being born of these particular parents, and in such a place, and in general what we call external circumstances. That all happenings form a unity and are spun together is signified by the Fates [*Moirai*].

—Plotinus, II.3.15<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Kingsley, P., *In the Dark Places of Wisdom*. Inverness, CA: Golden Sufi Center, 1999; p.53.

<sup>5</sup> Hillman, J., *The Soul's Code : In Search of Character and Calling*. Warner Books, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Plotinus, *The Enneads*. Stephen MacKenna, trans.; Burdett, NY: Larson Publications, 1992.

Now, Neo-Platonism was one of the great underground influences in the development of Western civilization. Though it is not commonly discussed, and has not generally been in the best favor of the Church Fathers (to put it mildly) Neo-Platonism has nevertheless moved like an underground stream, surfacing at key moments throughout history to influence thinkers and artists. It was, for instance, influential in the work of many painters of the Renaissance and afterward. It was also influential in the thinking and writing of the remarkable 15<sup>th</sup> century theologian, Nicholas of Cusa (1404–1464), who is of special interest to us here because he appears to have been an important influence on Gebser himself. Nicholas of Cusa was inspired by Plotinus' concepts of *nous*, the higher realm of archetypes and true knowledge, comparable to Plato's realm of ideals, and of the *One*, the deep well of Being from which, in its abundance, all existence flows. Nicholas believed in a higher source of wisdom than the rational intellect, stressing the importance of knowing the limits of the ordinary mind. He referred to conventional knowledge as learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*). Also in line with Neoplatonism, he proposed the doctrine that all potential exists within God, who alone is infinite. Because God is the absolute maximum, he contains all things "enfolded" (*complicatio*), and is also their source or "unfolding" (*explicatio*).

The latter notions anticipate the ideas of quantum physicist David Bohm, who argues that the material world is supported by a vastly deeper and larger process which he terms the *implicate order*.<sup>7</sup> This hidden order can be thought of as a holographic process of cosmic dimensions, similar to a deep ocean on which the universe, the *explicate order*, rides like waves. Strictly speaking, little that is truly new or creative comes from the explicate order itself, as it is only a surface phenomenon. The implicate order is the well-spring of creativity, expressing itself not only in the physical world, but through human intelligence and even life itself. These are precisely the processes that Nicholas of Cusa, using different language, attributed to God; namely that novel aspects of reality come into existence by unfolding outward from their divine source. Let that divine source be Gebser's origin, and let projection be the mechanism for the unfolding, and we have Gebser's concept precisely.

We may note that with Jean Gebser we have come full circle in terms of Western concepts of the nature of consciousness. The first profound Western system concerned with consciousness was that of Plotinus, and in Gebser we return again to Neo-Platonic ideas, now transformed into modern concepts.

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<sup>7</sup> Bohm, D., *Wholeness and the implicate order*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.

## The Inner and the Outer

Bringing all the above discussion together, we now see that Jean Gebser was a true Neo–Platonist in the tradition of Nicholas of Cusa. Expressing the latter’s ideas in modern terms we obtain the vision of a universe with a deep structure that, in Kantian fashion, is ordinarily known to us only as it unfolds into our day to day experience. This deep structure is not formless, however, but is the very embodiment of universal forms, or truths, as expressed in the Neo–Platonic idea of the *nous*. As we have seen, however, according to the older traditions this deep invisible reality contains more than the abstract geometry of stars, flowers, and crystals, but also the very patterns of our own lives—our destinies that we must find live out if we are to find the central meaning of our own individual existence. This notion is also seen in the psychology of Carl Jung, with whom Gebser was personally very familiar.

In the final analysis, we count for something only because of the essential we embody, and if we do not embody that, life is wasted.<sup>8</sup>

Jung, who considered himself to be a modern representative of the ancient Gnostic tradition, was not have been ignorant of these Neo–Platonic ideas. More than any other modern thinker he made extensive use of the notion of archetypes, which for him were of a more psychological nature, and reside behind visible reality in the *collective unconscious*. The latter exists between the outer world of appearances and the deep *unus mundus*, or “one world” in which all reality, both physical and psychological, is rooted. So it is that both Jung and Gebser emphasized the importance of finding and fulfilling life’s purpose, a purpose already written, as it were, in the book of destiny, behind the space–time world of appearances. In this they placed themselves in the tradition of seeking the form and meaning of a thing in the deep pattern that marks its individuality, rather than in its surface traits. It is interesting that this approach marks a distinct and separate approach to even the scientific method, one that was favored by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), who found Newton’s experimental methods distasteful, and who proposed a more contemplative approach to understanding nature and the objects in it. This tradition continued through the writings of Schiller, Schelling, Hegel, Coleridge, and Emerson, and continuing in Rudolf Steiner and Carl Jung, and continued right down to Brian Goodwin,<sup>9</sup> one of today’s foremost biologists and systems theorists. For these thinkers the human mind was not separate from the natural world, as it was for Descartes, but a participating part of it. In the words of cultural historian Richard Tarnas,

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Hillman.

<sup>9</sup> Goodwin, B. *How the leopard got its spots: The evolution of complexity*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994.

It is only when the human mind actively brings forth from within itself the full powers of a disciplined imagination and saturates its empirical observation with archetypal insight that the deeper reality of the world emerges.<sup>10</sup>

This certainly was Gebser's approach as well.

In such matters Gebser was also clearly influenced by the great Indian yogi and philosopher Sri Aurobindo, for whom "the divine" seeks to express itself in the world of human experience, even to the point of transforming the human body into a divine vehicle. Sri Aurobindo saw this as an evolutionary process, though certainly not of the Darwinian variety. The basic idea, which is completely compatible with Plotinus, Nicholas of Cusa, and perhaps even David Bohm's quantum physics, is that the form already exists in the divine, struggling, or perhaps I should say *waiting* for the appropriate vehicle to move into physical expressing. Sri Aurobindo and his partner, The Mother, hoped to make themselves such a vehicle. However, in time they both died, passing from physical existence, and so presumably they did not complete this great effort. They did, however, consider themselves to be pioneers, laying a course for others to follow in the future. In Sri Aurobindo's own words,

Seeking to embrace all life in itself [puts one] in the position not of a pilgrim following the highroad to the destination, but, ...of a pathfinder hewing a way through a virgin forest.

*The Essential Aurobindo*<sup>11</sup>

And so in their own view Sri Aurobindo and The Mother were evolutionary pathfinders, making way for a divine process already complete in the timeless and spaceless invisible, and struggling to emerge into the visible world of appearances.

Sri Aurobindo also shared another most important vision with Gebser, that of an integral consciousness. Though Sri Aurobindo did not actually speak of "integral consciousness" as such, he came very close to it:

To be wholly and integrally conscious of oneself and of one's being is what is implied by the perfect emergence of the individual consciousness, and it is that towards which evolution tends. All being is one, and to be fully conscious means to be integrated with the consciousness of all, with the universal self and force and action.

—The Future Evolution of the Divine Life on Earth; Pondicherry, 1963<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, what Sri Aurobindo called the *Supermental* is clearly very much like the idea of integral consciousness.

To what extent did Sri Aurobindo influence Gebser's thinking on the nature of integral consciousness? This is a difficult question to answer. Both men

<sup>10</sup> Tarnas, R. *The passion of the Western mind*. New York: Harmony Books, 1991; p. 434.

<sup>11</sup> McDermott, R. *The Essential Aurobindo*. NY: Schoken Books, 1973; P.144–145.

<sup>12</sup> Sri Aurobindo. *The life divine*. Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1970.

were writing at roughly the same time. And we know that Gebser took a keen interest in Indian spirituality, including the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi and the writings of Sri Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Of the latter he commented, “Like Sri Aurobindo, he is the living proof of that new (integral) consciousness in the dawn of which mankind is now living”.<sup>13</sup> Gebser also corresponded with the prominent Buddhist scholar D. T. Suzuki. It was the latter who verified Gebser’s report of a powerful episode of integral consciousness as an authentic experience of nirvana. Indeed, the whole affair of Eastern influences in Gebser’s thought would be an excellent topic for an investigation.

### **Gebser and Modern Science**

Having pursued these oriental and historical themes in Gebser’s thought, let us now turn our attention to the modern scientific world, asking what relationship the latter might have on his ideas. In doing so let us seek an integral perspective, emphasizing how Gebser brought together traditional Eastern and contemporary Western thought.

To begin with, let us note the obvious fact that Gebser was very well informed about the facts of modern technology as of as late as the early 1970s. In fact, most major paradigm-changing developments had occurred much earlier in the century, and by the early 70s their implications in terms of consciousness and reality were being widely discussed. It was already apparent that quantum physics had undermined the clockwork worldview of materialism that supported the Age of Enlightenment from the time of Descartes and Newton, and in more subtle ways had made possible barren modern philosophies such as Logical Positivism, which attended only to the most literal surface aspects of phenomena. In fact, the deep implications of quantum physics were well known to Gebser. For example, that space and time are not absolute features of the cosmos, but rather simply the way we experience it in the day-to-day reality of the marketplace (to use Hume’s well-worn reference). Also he knew that events can be connected outside of the traditional space-time fabric, so that the magical notion of *synchronicity*, which refers to non-causal (or *acausal*) but nevertheless meaningful coincidences, becomes part of the new physics, though it was prohibited in Newton’s universe. To be more explicit, subatomic particles that were once bound together like Siamese Twins, in what is termed the *singlet* state, continue to share their destinies afterwards, though they appear to the observer to be separate and independent particles. Observations made on either one of them simultaneously effects the possibilities that can be displayed by the other, despite the fact that they may be vastly distant from each other and have no possible means of communication according to ordinary classical physics. Modern physicists

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<sup>13</sup> Saher, P.J. *Eastern Wisdom and Western Science: The Psycho-Cybernetics of Contemplative Ideas in Religion and Philosophy*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1969, p.11.

have pointed out that since all particles were once bound together in a grand singlet state at the moment of the big bang, all matter in the universe is connected in this way. Thus, in some ultimate but real sense we are all part of a vast single event unfolding at a deeper level than the space–time display that our senses display to us as reality!

One version of this idea, which Gebser was either aware of or anticipated, was Bohm’s previously mentioned concept of the implicate order, according to which the entire cosmos as we experience it “unfolds” out of a deeper sea of reality that exists beyond space and time. The latter are the means of its exfoliation into the world of human experience. This deeper reality, which Bohm represented in the mathematics of holography, must be thought of as pure process. The explicate order, or reality as we ordinarily experience it from day to day, on the other hand, is the simply the surface of the implicate order, like the surface of the sea, which appears real but is only a reflection of the deeper event that is not constrained or defined by space and time.

Now, Bohm’s theory of the implicate order is just one theory by just one physicist, and at that a theory which is not widely accepted by all or even most physicists. Nevertheless, the basic notion that the world we experience is undergirded by a much different order of reality, one where space and time do not have their ordinary meanings, and where distance and causality are not what they appear to ordinary experience, is just about universal in today’s physics of the microworld. Notions of *super-strings* and *quantum foam* are conceptually closer to traditional Buddhist ideas of the Creative Void than to the empty vacuum that filled Newton and Descartes’ spaces between atoms. Out of these fundamental levels of reality arise everything we experience, and even the ways in which we experience it. In Bohm’s implicate order, but also in many other of today’s representations of the most fundamental levels of reality we find echoes not only of Kant’s metaphysics, but also of Plato’s realm of ideals, Plotinus’ *nous*, and Nicholas of Cusa’s God beyond rational knowing from which all of creation unfolds into the world we experience from day to day. Here we might notice that Plato and the whole Neo–Platonic tradition emphasize the idea the hidden orders of reality are a source of patterns, or *archetypes*, which lend form to objects and events in the world of objective experience. Similar ideas are being discussed today by theorists such as Rupert Sheldrake and especially Ervin Laszlo, who has written several books which develop the idea that *quantum vacuum* fields may represent a kind of cosmic memory in which not only physical patterns, such as the spiral form of galaxies and sunflower seeds, but patterns of human thought and behavior, can be stored for later expressed.<sup>14</sup>

Nearly all of these ideas were anticipated in one form or another in Gebser’s integrative mind. He was one of the first to recognize the basic similarity

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<sup>14</sup> Laszlo, E. *The Whispering Pond*. Rockport, MA: Element, 1997.



between the Creative Void of Buddhism and the seething caldron of creation found at the most fundamental levels of the reality of quantum physics. Perhaps even more important, he recognized and repeated again and again in his writings the fact that the reality reported to us by modern physics is an integral reality, comprised of magic events such as synchronicity, as well as mythic concepts such as David Bohm's holographic metaphor for reality, and the fusion of these with the mathematics of the mental structure of consciousness, all together giving birth to an integral understanding of the cosmos that unite all structures of consciousness in a single integral vision. Beyond even this, Gebser had the remarkable foresight to anticipate the basic insight of the modern sciences of complexity, namely that most real world events, especially those involving human behavior, constantly derive from a rich and extremely intricate *network* of interactions, which cannot be simplified and reduced to the linear causal sequences that characterized the Newtonian cosmos. In the Foreword to P. J. Saher's *Eastern Wisdom and Western Thought*, published in 1969, he not only anticipated the view of the modern sciences of complexity, which today include chaos theory, but suggested the influence of the invisible as well.

What does this network–image mean? It is an acknowledgement that so-called reality is not a mere space–time sequence but a complex process. A network is no system (which as such always fixes limits) but an expression of a texture of relations (and of the abundant possibilities suited to the network). In other words, historical realities are not, as thought hitherto, events succeeding each other consequently but are constellated by the interplay of many factors, the invisible among them.<sup>15</sup>

Today, complexity theorists study the networks of interactions that influence just about all real world events, and also speak of the *web* and even *fine mesh* of interacting influences that characterize the activity of all such complex organizations, including biological systems from the level of single celled organisms up to the behavior of human beings, societies, economies, and governments.

All of this anticipates an idea which I feel is very important to understanding today's world. This is the notion of *complex wholeness*,<sup>16</sup> or in other words the understanding that real world events participate in enormous complexity, but are not lost into it. Rather, complex structures such as cells, ecologies, brains, and societies, exhibit an emergent property of wholeness, which gives them an identity and style that we can recognize. Individuals, for example, have unique personalities, nations have national styles, and so on. These complex emergent properties must be understood in

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<sup>15</sup> p.14

<sup>16</sup> Morin, E. *Homeland Earth: A Manifesto for the New Millennium (Advances in Systems Theory, Complexity and the Human Sciences)*. S. Kelly and A.B. Kern, trans.; Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1998.

terms of the dynamics of complexity, but reflect underlying unities in the dynamics that create and support them.

Evolution is one such emergent property of complex dynamics—the evolution of the individual and the evolution of a species. Science today is not yet ready to deal with the influence of the invisible behind such evolution, but Gebser felt strongly that it plays a significant role; a role that goes beyond ordinary determinism, and points in the direction of a governing fate, or daimon, to return all the way to Plato. If Jean Gebser and Sri Aurobindo were alive today we might guess that they would see in the wondrous emergent properties of complex adaptive systems, systems with properties that can be influenced by the smallest possible of forces, an opening for the invisible. And perhaps the science of the future will validate such thinking, finding in the influences enfolded in the implicate order or the quantum vacuum field the infinitesimally tiny whispers that pivot us toward our personal and collective fates.

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And thanks to Theo Röttgers' recent translation of Gebser's *The Invisible Origin: Evolution as a Supplementary Execution*.

< <http://www.ctl.unca.edu/combs/IntegralAge/InvisibleOrigin.htm> >

## Lake Erie and My Search for World Beauty

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(Editors Note: This poetic presentation was originally accompanied by slides of the author's work.)

What is in one culture religion, in another may be art, and yet they may share a common mythical awareness.

As a professional artist and first-time conference participant, I am, in a synchronicity with the conference itself, "returning" to my native Ohio. I am grateful to contribute to the conference theme of "symbolic designs as variants of the basic compositions of Gebserian awareness, from archaic through integral." In this context, I will present my art as "vertically" connecting my earliest archaic, magical, and mythical experiences of Lake Erie, my lifelong search for world beauty, toward mental and integral awareness. My work gives evidence of Gebser's observations that the arts of the world can bring forth new possibilities of exploring "common modes of awareness." The central element of my presentation consists of my paintings as "symbolic designs" integrating "multiple cultures" within me and among us.

In my earliest life experiences, drawing from the sources of light available, I took up my art in the experience of Lake Erie as it was in that time. The light of Lake Erie was for me a place of becoming, coming to see how light fell, and throughout my life, using my eyes and my hands I have worked through stages and intricate transfigurative processes, imagining awareness after awareness. Through the course of a lifetime as an artist, I have developed my skills through the passion of wanting to see the colors of my heart, to see the heart of a line of color, heartbeats made manifest and held in suspension for soul to view herself.

Growing up, I searched anywhere and everywhere for inspirations, for beauty. Surely I knew the beast, the beast of pristine imagination's desire, making palatable what was death, wanting persisting, needing to believe more than anything, In beauty. Perhaps that's what a given child can do—insisting home sweet home is wonderful. I didn't know any better, so I found my art and love at the Cuyahoga River's edge, blazing those colors off my palette, a painter in the flats of Cleveland, under the bridges, under the now closed Steel mills. Under the face of the International salt mines where I always wanted to go, overhearing if the A-bomb came that would be a safe place to crouch and cower. And we had our Conelrad Alert system preparing us under our desks for war's flames.

The river already knew about war, no recourse from the silent sulfurous golden yellow pollution. Dreaming with her voice, seeing her struggle, with

ochre watercolor pallet cleansing, I worked to give her another story a different sighting. The swans white majesty still cruise my memories. White Swan floating ponds shimmer beneath the museums marble steps. Such longing . . . the architects made statements, that ever linger, in spite of the locals evil.

Seeing through, seeing through the Lake Erie I have been born from. The lake, the hills, the stars, incorporate depths of despair the lake and I have endured. This story of my own is from the actual reality of the raw sewage, a lake gone mad, drowning into its own death, dying not like a swan but dying like a disease, dying as a broken heart unseen. Perhaps the industrialists vacationed on the Rivera, not their own Lake

To be actual then the lake is the attractor where I went to find the depth and disease of Me. This shadow lake called to me when I saw her great aloneness and despair at what was being put into her. This was my despair that I could also see in what was put into me, what acts, and ideas, unsupportable untruths, lies, pollutions, a body of water.

Drawing from the light of Lake Erie, my experience resembles the cave drawings of the prehistoric artists. I feel direct kinship with them in their quest of shaping artistic signals: I am here. I am here seeing. In my work I feel the ever-present origin in kinship with artists who rendered the cave paintings on the basis of their original, archaic, and magical authority. With this direct authority, I am potent to imagine life distinctively and directly in my own experience. Art in-itself is the messenger of being in and through the light, in the signals of what is and in the signal-less connectivity of all consciousness as a self-organizing process creating itself in the light. Art flows from a well-spring of endless resources, expansive as the cosmos, ever-present in each pulsation of experience. Mysteriously, art provides a “vertical” linking for soul to imagine life’s way.

In the creation of art, meaning is coming through, brought forth in the imaginal language—darshan—that emerges personally yet immediately translatable into the manifest language of the newly born and the almost born. The artist dreams the birth of light in the wetness of human imagination, bearing the afterbirth of light that remains from the origin, the ripening of light in water and in ever-erotic flaming light.

Every being with awareness has material to see through. The artist’s calling is to gather light and through the skills and inspiration peculiarly available to offer beauty. Up the narrow road, hanging green trees grew despite the cruel sulfuric air that etched our windows. The leaves grabbing light with a ferocious hunger to live. As did I.

Then who am I in the River Ohio? So who am I describing—a woman, an artist, a river, a lake, a range of choices and decisions or how to live. And at this point in the journey, I know what my failures are and see so clearly what might have been, and I am learning to contain what cannot be

explained. The complexity of a line, every breath before a piece of paper, a stroke of color, trusting the movement of a hand. What is the line of the heart, the soul, the cosmic breaths of love and devotion that are the art on the foreign soil of wealth and the wars of the haves and the have nots. The hours and days and years of my devotion are not much consensually valued. BUT OH THIS PASSION. The tools, a pencil, a piece of paper, a trusted movement of a line. For richer and for poorer, in sickness and in health, I found beauty outside of the rules.

How we come to choosing with awareness to live the archetypes and fulfill their needs and quest for life, cannot be diminished or ignored. All of life has meaning in depth. Integration is the awaring of the sacred meaning as we begin the long journey with fears and magic, with the gods and goddesses, all the thoughts that lead into our original mission—to be actual and alive

The walls will tumble down, presenting images that can be painful to work through and manifest. Like neutrinos moving through the soul of the Earth, unseen and unrecorded. Yet we are feeling always the affect of what is moving through our subtle bodies all the time. My feelings are projections as real as a wall, as real as a snake. Coming into relatedness with our own projective fields can be the cruelest work of all. Fearing that I will never be good enough. This field is constantly tilled and planted with toxic seeds of doubt. Here, among the fields of Monterey, I would never discount the life of the worker in the field. Some may say, well, catch up with the genomics. While villages in India lose their crafts. Catch up to life seems to be the message to so many people. Our planet is told to take the tests of just how much she can stand. Catch up you dumb Earth, we are in charge of you now, masters of Gaia and Universe. Just get it and catch up. How could we change the world? I cannot speak for a field hand, the nearness and growing of life, the dirt of hands such as Vincent displayed. Perhaps the cave paintings are telling us more than we wish to correspond to. Behold the authority to paint with aggressive confidence, masterful knowing, cunning, beholding the archaic and magical numinous, timeless expressions. What is the child with crayolas expressing?

The child's eyes, trained to be unbrilliant by the judgments of the untrue authorities, cannot externalize the conflict on paper, the meaning of a moment of uniqueness. What is the meaning of authoritative painting, direct, ferocious directness? A line across a page. Who are the judges to say how and what art can and should live? What is the field of energy ever-present when the artist finds energy and meaning more profound than what sells or what moves our economy? What is the value of numinous streaks of color?

All of us have the real authority of our souls revealed, revelations we apprehend through our individuating desires to dwell with each other on

the frontiers of reality, to experience our essences obtainable and inflammable thru the arts.

A childhood place of green grassland becomes a silver fleshed peony spied in a clump of beauty. Balances are forever shifted in mirroring the reality of our dear friendship with the earth spinning so eloquently in her own balanced miracles. With all its vileness of decay and torment, what is a miracle of balance and deliverance to redeem this gravity? In art, we may bequeath to each other our corruptions, our sins, our tenderness, and the bravery to consider all that is worth. Well, brave new world, how art thou? By the flames of our own creation, we know the tinder. We are the fire starters, for our bodies want for what is want.

My recent work and image-making is the mixture of deconstruction and death wrapped into color, hearing and sighting the resistances that inform deepening red, deepening cobalt. This doubt is the illusive matter made manifest as toxins to cover and uncover. I have the authority to comprehend magnitudes of darkness, and I have worked from this place so assuredly longing relationship with spirit, and the length and breadth of souls code in the colors and images, soliloquies. My art becomes my harp, my robe, the garments of my heart. Butterflies hold space, keeping the door ajar for soul to explore herself and understand other dimensions. Every secret that should not be shown is disguised as a color for soul to explore. Wondering, pondering, seeing what she's up to.

Gebser supports this reality of our doubt as he viewed this coming through. When I question my work, sighting the fright and fear, I sometimes feel the transfigurations we are experiencing and that soul so intimately is constantly viewing, encompassing ranges of openness. Snake pits of freedom. Impulses of emotions so forbidden and unexplored as we visually imagine a new way of being with ourselves as we have originated and as we are original. Somehow this encounter shatters our safety and illusions of home. We find the terrain of what is our only frontier, so inquisitively unknowable. Imagination's link, this miracle from the divine, gives and gives to those who choose to drink the waters of life freely. This life beyond the norm and all things thingly.

Perhaps it was Saint Thomas Aquinas the alchemist who said:

Blessed is the man that findeth wisdom, and is rich in prudence. The purchasing thereof is better than the merchandise of silver; and her fruit than the chiefest and purest gold. She is more precious than all riches; and all the things that are desired are not to be compared with her. Length of days is in her right hand: and in her left hand riches and glory. Her ways are beautiful and all her paths are peaceable. She is a tree of life to thee that lay hold on her; and he that shall retain her is blessed for the treasure of God never perisheth nor faileth. He who findeth out this science, it shall be his lawful and everlasting food. He who hath the stone from which the Elixir is made, is as rich as a man who hath fire and can give fire to whom he will and when he will and as much as he will without loss or danger to himself.

Working as I do, alone with images pacing my heart, images waiting to be born, many of the images will never find their actuality in my given lifetime. The artist is a fire-starter. A winged angel arches over our bodies when we so eloquently become and are becoming ever-present. The art herself gives our faith a color purple, a curve of grapewood, a deliberate action of defiance in creating something uncontainable and never disclosed before.

Art repeats herself. So we insist and preserve both what is made manifest, and what is yet to come, emergent and coming into being in and through and with the living of our lives.

Pearls of the invisible are sown by the in the Earth torn open by the plough. They are the living crop coming from the realm light and spirit. Bread is made up of many grains. The body of Love is many gathered together. In the otherworldliness of an inner event, Love experiences oneness free of space and time.

What is hinted in the parable of the treasure-house of wisdom is the two-in-oneness of lover and beloved. The ego no longer exists as a separate figure but as one of the poor children of the divine lovers. It might very well be an abnormal psychic state, but the individuation process is a preparation for death as the natural end of a process whose goal is the fullest possible development of all the potentialities inherent in the personality.

The process of individuation is what the artist gives as a rarefied orchid for all who would look or notice. A sighting of what is original.

These images partake of me, and I of them. Each instant of every day I die into the images and each breath of life is also the birth of the next image. Eating and partaking particles of light, breathing within and through and through.

This presentation has been a place to put my Erie feelings of gloom and doom. What the woman knows that the girl doesn't. I can feel doubt so cold, holding this stillness, so alone and quiet in this place of profound knowing with the forces of life mixing and whirling freely. My life falls through me in my ever-present searching, a grotesque coquette. The flamboyant horrors, secret patterns, hidden truths about beauty. And in the turning of events, beauty turns defiant, something that can't be known or explained. Recently my subjective goal to turn to beauty and forms of the nature of beauty has turned the life of this powerful force toward and against my own image of soul. For we are playing with the forces of creation when we imagine originality of expression and propose alongside and with the divine to create. Beauty says to us then, we who are the livening presences, here, YOU!, take on the hurricane, hear the whirlwind voice. And that's how truly it is.

It is a mercy to be seen and heard ever-present, so brief the span of one's time, timeless time, and this Beauty's commanding presence lingering

stillness. I want everything there is to want and all the richness is my desire, and yet be told also I want nothing ever after all, and wanting only then, I want my desire. For this seems the gift, the given, to desire the Unknowable and reach, reaching into nothing for original inspirations favor, this flavor, cooking like a master chef, cooking like a fool, cooking like a primitive, feasting like a queen and a pauper, dead then born again. This fire eats the roof and the walls and my bed clothes and my death. This is the fire of deliverance to the core.

I find myself standing next to awe, this sensing of a divine dreaming, the originality of scheming and desire in the furious fire of painting and with my words today, granted what is present. Not reduced or explained, but just today and returning to Ohio, for your especial eyes, and so saying foremost hello and offering you my life as lived and examined.

Knowing who I came into being, finding the blue egg with the cream anglaze interior, filled with clear liquid surrounding a unborn broken necked fetus, this unborn flying creature like me, sturdy spindle legs, eager for life and school. And I will think, well maybe the next generation will do better as my heart beats like a drum through my bones. I would sit my eyes underneath a French lavender plant. And soothe this groaning with beauty underneath a fruit tree. The canvas of childhood, the color chart, box of colors. Why does it seem so so few comprehend the hands or ache of a child's eyes?

And now this woman has turned from lies unto everything of beauty, everything of defilement, disillusionment, decomposition, clearing my foreground now. This ever-present original self is taking notes, writing her way on the wailing wall, wearing my heart on sleeves of glimmering red consequence, wearing emerald leaves to quench imagination's thirst.

With the warm blood  
of this body beating heart  
entering Ohio memories  
softened with time  
and in this quiet  
innocence  
of entrance  
I enter my passion  
one could say  
I have chosen  
so often badly  
in this moonlight  
in and through the poor choices



pure red crystals reframe  
a stillness  
as assorted lovers leave  
no guarantees for love's  
lingering presence  
like a breeze  
honeysuckle  
love sipping throat  
red-fingered angel wings  
bring me down  
to examinations  
of the black swan  
swollen earth  
through my window  
a sudden wind  
floats a girl-boy  
resurrections divine  
liquid visions  
prevail

A child's eye can determine what and where the shape of life may take. A physicist might ponder what the massive explosive possibilities of his own uncontainable pulse coming in his dreams coming through visions mathematical, formed alongside the gods and goddesses, with the burdens of the ancestors. Somehow, with this birthing into the action of gravity, we later adapt and develop coping mechanisms. Still the news slumps under the weary, wearing faces of the forgotten child—the unwanted child in multitudes.

When as an artist I lived for 25 years in the mountains of Big Sur, that adventure was the only time I really felt a matching for my own nature. In the explosion of the mountain ranges plunging into the furious beauty of Pacific Ocean, illuminating and shadowing life and death. So much drama, this opera for my soul, this land mass. Now I dwell in a small studio in the woods in Carmel, partaking of visions of splendor and disintegration as my heart beats in tune.

In the Big Sur Mountains, life could be seen in the simple act of planting a fruit tree. Back along Lake Erie, I would race my child body to the lake front to watch while holding a tree so that it would hold me. A house could not be trusted, not even the root cellar of youth. Gebser speaks of Picasso and the storm in his childhood eyes. A village of Spain, an earthquake, his

mother giving birth. His mental structure frames, the vista, the numinous, energy field most intimate, the de–construction of life. My trees, later planted in the elements of Big Sur, flaunted their buds and flowers, raptured harvests of plumbs and cherries.

As alchemical artist, I learned there what strength it would take to bloom my life, a woman in bloom I was becoming, blooming like a rose, a snake, a disease, flowering forth images that knew not their place in the pace of life or after death. Thus my own roots were wet, with the long plantings of my ancestors. Miraculous wild grotesque. So again I refer back to the image of the small fruit tree and the budding flower, psyches captured molecules before the dawn of time. The proteiniac hunger for our own life, starving to live, eager for the birth out of dead matter.

soul elegantly  
eloquences herself  
in moon maiden  
flamboyant bouquet  
flowering fierceness  
drapes of fire  
with and without despair  
wild proclivities  
delivering Earth still  
and heaven too  
holy smoke and fire  
and Jesus who may be listening

One wonders the exquisite nature of our wondrous hands. On the walls of certain Paleolithic caves and shelters positive imprints of human hands appear. The negative imprints are produced by stenciling dabbing color onto the wall around the hand with a sponge or brush. The hand first appears more than 25,000 years ago. They raise an unsolved problem probably connected with religion and the rites practiced by tribes not only in prehistoric Europe but also Africa Australia and South America. In the blackish–brown ochre hands or whole fingers are missing. A number of theories include ritual mutilation or frostbite caused by the severity of the climate. The mutilations are found only in some caves. Some hands were applied to the cave wall with their backs against rock with fingers deliberately bent with a number of recognizably recurring combinations, a sort of sign language related to hunting and referring to animals.

Often the hands are of women or adolescents—the imprinted hands of children aged about two or three, who must have been carried into the sanctuary and hoisted up to reach the height for the stenciling. What can they mean, these mysterious hands, which look like our own? **THEY HAVE**

A SYMBOLIC POWER AND MUST CONTAIN SOME STRIKING MESSAGE. Are they signatures, affirmations of self or personality, marks of initiates?

All we can do is consider the few known facts study the incomplete remains, and these will never reveal the essentials of the religion. Paleolithic myths must have survived the ice age and merged into religions of the first metal civilizations, continuing in mysterious ways to the religions of today.

Hunters undertook extraordinary underground expeditions to decorate deep sanctuaries. We do not know their motivations. They did not use the sanctuaries like catacombs: the dead were not placed inside then they were ritually buried with their weapons, ornaments and garments, outside the caves. The art approaches a naturalistic perfection a mastery of form. They did not leave images of their faces or bodies in their prehistoric Sistine chapel.

The mentality is so distant that it seems to belong to inhabitants of an unknown planet. Clearly the core system rests upon the alternation, complementarity, or antagonism between male and female values, whether as divine couples or principles such as yang and yin. Paleolithic peoples were familiar with the division of animal and human into opposing halves. Did they conceive of their union the way we do?

Primary sexual characteristics are seldom depicted on the animals. Primary sexual characteristics are frequently presented in the images of man and woman. Coupling was at the center of the mythology. In accordance with a sort of protocol, a dialogue appears to be taking place between two species. The noble animals are also central. Opposition is the powerful figure in a peripheral or marginal position, second place to fearsome bears, rhinoceroses, and felines.

As an artist in the year 2001, my name being Mary Lee. I have revealed the sacred cave paintings of a selfhood, as all art repeats itself, reiterating the secrets of the forever-missing information, the unknowable. With this attitude my hands are given a way through, with soul's responsibility, led by Spirit, accountable to be present and to speak something of how we are, who we are, where we suffer, how we grow.

The arrogance and confidence of the cave painters in their holy shrines attests the confidence art's ongoing mission, to paint the language of opposites, to integrate these polarities of soul with wonder and persistence, with the numinosities of timeless time, moving like spring water. Here I locate and unlocate my sensing sense, cunning like an eagle, cunning like a fox, listening to the rites of hunting and being hunted from far distant past. I am not speaking merely of a confrontation of adversaries: behind the animal, the hunter sees a host of supernatural forces ready to intervene against this irruption into their domain. Man the puny, seems to be attacking a strong opponent from a position of inferiority, faced with a

warrior whose resources are no less than his own, who is under the protection of supernatural power and must consent to his own death. Left to his own powers alone, man would attempt nothing, for man does not exist alone. He does not underestimate the importance of technique; he will not neglect to practice handling his weapons or to develop his strength and skill. He will study the behavior of animals, the places they frequent and the dates of migration. He will recognize the slightest track; will know exactly where to position an ambush. Yet he will not rely on his physical abilities alone. Technique is a dead letter unless backed by the appropriate rites. Technique and magic are indissolubly linked in guiding the arm, the thrust of weapon that penetrates the body. The hunter must be in a state of grace, like a priest who is to carry out sacrifice. This state of grace can only be attained through a number of observances, offerings, prayers, purifications. The hunt itself is the final stage. Of equal importance are the rites after the murder, which reestablish the order of nature that has been disturbed.

This is how the artist works for the culture, as a shaman of vision, shaping through hands the polarities of soul according to the demanding presence of what must alchemically be in balance when working with and through these profound, presenting forces of nature.

I told myself I was a pod  
elusive green  
greedy  
pod  
waiting to open  
to reveal reddened seeds  
drips of color  
upholding the body  
I told myself I was broken  
unable to go on  
not educable  
clawing foregrounds  
trying to explain  
stories of yesterday  
touching one story  
alone  
lifting a windows shade  
to greening leaves  
mixing hues  
nothing what it seemed

and finding a place  
here on Earth  
so temporarily  
wearing rubies  
the DeLong rubies  
glisten and gleam  
in shadows of doubt  
ancestral claims  
among the rubble  
and ruin of  
my body heap  
there is no pond  
this also must be endured  
winged Botticelli painting  
swirling tornados  
individuate  
art born  
bracing my back  
the gods  
so moved  
blood streaming  
through interior night  
unto this secret quiet  
sacred art  
coming now  
ever-present birth  
or our eyes  
and world beauty be praised

Now is the time to cease the resistance, carry the shadow, restore our lives with complete meaning, examined lives well worth living. We hunt and gather. We have hunted and gathered the reality of our instincts, the signs of language. Let us make as we know how to make true, true to our nature, unto the peace of the world. Let us see the faces and be the faces we have wanted, and played into shape, or we wouldn't have been given our sacred hands to create. Sisters and brothers, each of us unique, able to ascend the denial and dishonesty and doubt to build life out of heartbeats. Let us

integrate. The ancient of days flows through the salvation of all, the free imaginings of the new.

From the Samyutta Nikaya:

Ananda, the beloved disciple of the Buddha, said to the Master,

Half of the holy life, O Lord, is friendship with the beautiful, association with the beautiful, communion with the beautiful.

“It is not so, Ananda, it is not so,” said the Master. “It is not half of the holy life, it is the whole of the holy life.”

Thank you for letting me show my symbolic designs in the hopes of bringing forth new possibilities of exploring common modes of awareness. Thank you for letting me speak of my studies, my stories, my dreams. Thank you for hearing me here in Ohio.

## Spirituality And Human Worth An Exploratory Perspective

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I beg you... to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without ever noticing it, live your way into the answer.

Rainer Maria Rilke

This quotation, I believe, reaches to the essence of spirituality today: to heed the questions that arise from the depths of our human experience, rather than merely accept answers that have been handed down. One of the developments in the contemporary era is the differentiation of spirituality from religion, coupled with efforts to draw upon a variety of resources to fashion such a spirituality. A contemporary philosopher of spirituality, Sam Keen, suggests that religion is about answers, whereas spirituality is about questions, and found that his own personal journey led him, not to take the answers found in mythologies old and new, but to discern their questions and to use them to interrogate his own life experience. (1991, 76–78) An attendant factor is the search for a grounding of spirituality in some nonreligious basis, even though one may at the same time draw upon insights and images from religious and other sources. One possible foundation may lie in the conviction of the worth, value, or sacredness of the human person, and, indeed, of all life and being, such as set forth in the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and related documents. The thrust of this spirituality, especially in its fidelity to the questions arising from the depth of human experience, its focus on meaning, and its impetus towards universality, is an intimation of and pointer in the direction of the integral structure of consciousness masterfully portrayed by Jean Gebser. (1991)

In this paper, I shall present a few reflections on the notion of spirituality itself, its possible grounding in human worth and the human quest for meaning (as suggested by the human rights tradition) along with some examples of such spiritualities, and an illustrative image (the garden). Some recent sociological surveys (Bibby, 1993, Roof, 1993, Cimino and Lattin, 1998, Keen, 1994) have stressed that a large number of people today are engaged in a search for meaning that neither organized religion nor the secularized mythology of economic growth seems to address satisfactorily. Certainly, some authors do suggest that the recent decline in participation in formal religion in North America has apparently levelled off (Bibby, 2002,

Starke and Finke, 2000), and that the resurgence of fundamentalism may itself be not only a retreat to a seemingly simpler and more certain worldview in a time of anxiety, but also a form of protest against the incursions of secular society into the minds and hearts of people. (Armstrong, 2000), This is the interpretation of Karen Armstrong who sees religion as the attempt to find meaning and value in life despite the prevalence of suffering, yet also laments the all too frequent deterioration of religion into a dogmatic cruelty devoid of the compassion that is its authentic core (Armstrong, 1994)

There does seem to be agreement that the human quest for meaning remains constant in the contemporary world, that it assumes today a variety of forms, traditional and novel, superficial and profound. While it is more eclectic and less fully linked than in the past to formal or established religions, current expressions of spirituality do draw upon many religious beliefs and practices, such as the conviction of some form of transcendence that is not encompassed by the world accessible to our senses (yet expressed in metaphors of presence and depth rather than separation and distance), as well as the engagement in many forms of meditative discipline.

In this paper, we shall use the term spirituality to designate this human quest for meaning in the myriad forms in which it is manifest today. In this sense, which encompasses but is wider than religion, a person's spirituality may be understood as the basic guiding vision of his or her life. It comprises the vision, values, and support system to which a person turns to discover or create meaning in his or her life, and to respond to the inevitable sorrows inherent in existence. The quest for meaning designates essentially the quest for identity and worth, for belonging and purpose. As noted, a large number of people today are engaged in a search for meaning that neither organized religion nor the secularized mythology of economic growth seems to address for them satisfactorily.

Diarmuid O'Murchu (1999) insists on the distinction between religion and spirituality, and maintains that religion in the sense of formally institutionalized, structures, rituals, and beliefs, has existed only for 4500 years. For him, traces of spirituality lie some 70,000 years in the past and, indeed, spirituality is as old as humanity itself and concerns the primal and perennial search for meaning and purpose in life (vii), the hunger for transcendent values, such as truth, integrity, love, peace, and liberation (172). In attempting to speak of spirituality as a dimension of every human life, Jean-Claude Breton (1988) speaks of a person's spirituality as the way that person seeks a fuller human life and integrates his or her life in response to the questions and concerns that arise from the human condition: issues of human identity and purpose, truth, relationship, and transcendence; issues that emerge from and find expression both in the key moments and the daily activities of life. Sandra Schneiders (2000) concurs that all human beings have a spirituality insofar as they gradually give a



shape and direction to their lives which reflect how they understand life and what they hold to be of most value. She also stresses that spirituality has to do with the integration of life by reference to some ultimate value beyond the individual person, which gives integrity and meaning to that life in its totality. Anne Carr (1996) observes that one's spirituality, which is culturally shaped and individually patterned, is one's personal myth or story in response to the great questions of life. It encompasses the whole of one's beliefs, convictions, and patterns of thought, one's emotions and behaviour, and all one's relationships to all of creation—to the self and to others, to society and nature, to work and leisure—in respect to what is ultimate, or to God.

Perhaps no figure is as prominent in defining the human search for meaning in recent decades as is Viktor Frankl, whose classic work, *Man's Search for Meaning*, gives an account and interpretation of his concentration camp experiences during World War II. By meaning, Frankl understands a sense of worth and purpose, a "why" to one's life, that is discovered and shaped in response to the demands and challenges of life, even the most painful. It is forged moment by moment, but extends to a sense of the meaning of one's life as a whole. Karl Rahner, a Christian theologian, whose formative years were also coloured by the war experience, though much less drastically spent in exile rather than prison, concurs similarly that one's fundamental life stance comes down, essentially, to hope or despair, to a basic trust in the lasting meaningfulness of life or a despairing cynicism over its ultimate futility.

In sum, those writing academically on the issue of spirituality today, seem to agree essentially that spirituality denotes the human hunger to make sense of one's life, to see that life as having at once a lasting value in itself and an enduring purpose that takes the individual outside of and beyond himself or herself. It may perhaps be describe as the gradual gathering of one's self into one's hands as something of value and the gift of that self to something worthwhile beyond the self, with an underlying sense of hope in the significance of the brief trajectory that is a human life.

In this kind of perspective, a spirituality that maintains some modicum of hope, is one that does affirm some meaning, some worth and purpose to existence. Western religions have rooted that meaning, in various ways, in the notion of the human being as image of God (John XXIII). Joseph Campbell (1973) has noted, however, the grudging reluctance of peoples to extend the notion of human being itself beyond their own group, yet has observed an impetus to push these boundaries back and to tend towards a more universal and inclusive understanding. In a pluralistic and multicultural world, that is nonetheless still obviously marked by narrow loyalties, oppressive nationalisms, and internecine conflicts, there is perhaps a need and challenge to attempt to ground a life-affirming spirituality in some more universalist basis, as intimated by authors such

as Ninian Smart (1999). Smart mentions the development in mutual understanding between religions, the mutual coexisting of many religions across the globe today, and the growing numbers everywhere who are looking for spiritual meaning outside of established religions. In terms of the faith of a new global citizen today, he thinks that people will draw on different resources, depending upon their priorities or values, such as a stress on a more contemplative or mystical form of spirituality or one that is more focused on service and justice. A current challenge, then, is to search for a grounding of spirituality in some non-religious basis, which may at the same time draw upon insights and images from religious and other sources.

One possible foundation—integral to the experience of meaning—may lie in the conviction of the worth, value, or sacredness of the human person, and, indeed, of all life and being. This notion of an inherent dignity, as it is sometimes designated, implies that there is an intrinsic value that is to be acknowledged, honoured, and respected in every human being. This perspective is one that can be shared in theory by people of diverse backgrounds and convictions, including those who adhere to a religious tradition. The United Nations *Declaration on Human Rights* (1948), as well as the subsequent UN *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (1969) and UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) all begin with an affirmation of the inherent dignity of all human beings.

In its preamble, while acknowledging the stark reality of atrocious violations of human rights, the United Nations *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, proclaims that recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all persons is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace, in the world. It goes on to present this Declaration as “a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations,” and affirms its application “without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status.” In other words, this worth, and its implications for attitude, decision, and behaviour, is viewed as inseparable from being human, and applicable to every and all human beings.

As an aside, it is quite striking that in racism, as well as in demonizing propaganda against those deemed to be enemies, it is the fundamental humanness of the other that is denied, and that this denial is used as a pretext for the exploitation, abuse, injury, or killing that is inflicted upon them. This tactic would seem to imply a recognition, contained within the very denial itself, that what is acknowledged as human is to be treated with reverence and fairness. On the basis of this perspective, the Declaration goes on to spell out, at least in general terms, the rights and freedoms which flow from this inherent dignity. While we shall not enter here into further discussion on the matter, the sanctity of life principle, though itself subject to a nuanced understanding and diverse interpretations of its application,

provides a similar foundation for ethical thought, decision, policy, and behaviour (Callahan).

This Human Rights perspective is developed more philosophically by such authors as Charles Taylor and Michael Ignatieff, is given an explicitly religious foundation in *Pacem in Terris* by John XXIII, and is also exemplified in the Multiculturalism Act and Policy of Canada.

Charles Taylor defines identity as “a person’s understanding of who they are, of their fundamental defining characteristics as a human being.” He states that, in the late 18th century, there arose a new understanding of individual identity, along with an ideal of authenticity, of being true to oneself and to one’s own particular way of being. This idea arose in conjunction with the idea that we are beings of inner depth, and that we must be in touch with these depths, and not just follow an external source. This approach also introduces the principle of originality; that “each of our voices has something unique to say.” This new ideal of authenticity follows in part as well from the decline of hierarchical society, where “what we now call identity was largely fixed by one’s social position.” (30–31)

At the same time, says Taylor, this approach may obscure the fundamentally dialogical character of human life. “We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression, ... including the ‘languages’ of art, of gesture, of love, and the like. But we learn these modes of expression through exchanges with others.”(32) “Thus my discovering my own identity doesn’t mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others.”(34)

What has emerged is the politics of equal recognition, which he says has come to have two different, at times, conflicting meanings: (1) a politics of universalism, emphasizing the equal dignity of all citizens, and the requirement that we treat all in a difference-blind fashion; and (2) a politics of difference, in which we are asked to recognize and foster particularity, the distinctness and unique identity of each individual or group. (37–38) He calls for a ‘fusion of horizons’ “in which different cultures come to be seen within a larger angle of vision or frame of reference, and complement one other with quite different kinds of contribution.”

In a recent book, *The Rights Revolution*, based upon the CBC Massey lectures, Michael Ignatieff adds a few further considerations to the perspective developed by Taylor. He states that the articulation of human rights gives legal meaning to deeply held values, such as dignity, equality, and respect, that they are foundational to people’s ability to fashion their lives freely, and that they have a special task in protecting the freedom of the vulnerable. Like Taylor, he stresses that this rights revolution is concerned with both enhancing our right to be equal and protecting our

right to be different; it is about enhancing equality while safeguarding difference. (1–2) Ignatieff goes on to say that there are basic human rights that belong to us as human beings, “that derive from the simple fact of being human.” “They derive their force in our conscience from this sense that we belong to one species, and that we recognize ourselves in every single human being we meet.” (39–40)

In addition, Ignatieff brings out that there is a progressive development that needs to occur, reminiscent of Campbell’s depiction of the struggle towards universalism, and reflective of the biblical thrust to extending the notion of the neighbour in progressively wider circles to include the stranger and even the enemy. An intense sense of our own worth is a precondition for recognizing the worth of others, and “believing fiercely in the value of those we love is the very condition of believing in the value of those farthest away.” As we come to recognize our own worth and that of those closest to us, we are able to “move outwards to embrace the needs of strangers.” (41)

Yet he underlines again his conviction that respect for human equality and human rights does not mean reducing everyone to a level of sameness, but honouring the expression of that humanness in its variety and difference: in “human beings clothed, arrayed, ... not human beings stripped and bare.”(41) “The function of human rights, then, is not to protect the abstract human identity of nakedness” but “to protect real men and women in all their history, language, and culture, in all their incorrigible and irreducible difference ...to protect, defend, and restore the agency of the defenceless so that they can defend themselves” (43)

The elaboration of human worth found in such authors as Taylor and Ignatieff, then, relies upon the historical development of human rights, and the underlying values contained therein, and focuses upon the richness, depth, and diversity of human beings in their shared humanity and concrete uniqueness. Ignatieff in particular underlines the process of coming to recognize one’s own worth, to develop and extend that recognition in friendship and family bonds, and gradually and painstakingly coming to extend it to strangers, and with a particular concern for those who are most vulnerable. This latter idea is of course also reflected in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which notes in its preamble that children need special care and protection because of their vulnerability, especially those living in exceptionally difficult conditions.

An example of a spirituality of human worth, which underlines strongly the above characteristics, is found in the post-war writings of Viktor Frankl, who concluded from his concentration camp experience that the dominant human drive is the quest for meaning, which may be discovered even in the face of inescapable suffering. More recently, authors such as Wayne Muller and Sam Keen draw upon a variety of philosophical, psychological, and

religious sources in order to fashion a spirituality that gives identity and purpose to human existence.

Viktor Frankl found that in spite of the terrible physical and mental conditions of life in a concentration camp, it was still possible for spiritual life to deepen. He describes the concentration camp as a world which did not recognize the value of human life and human dignity. It robbed human beings of their will and made them objects to be used to the last ounce of their physical resources and then eliminated. If a person did not struggle to save his or her self-respect in the face of this loss of values, they lost the feeling of being an individual, a being with a mind, with inner freedom and personal value. Yet sensitive people who had developed a life of inner riches and spiritual freedom were able to turn to and draw upon this life, and to preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, despite the horror of the surroundings and the physical and mental pain. They often survived better than those who were physically more robust. "Everything can be taken from a human, he says, "but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

In Frankl's perspective, meaning may be found in a life of creative work or in the experience of beauty, art, or nature, including the experience of a loving relationship with another person. Yet even when these paths are blocked (as happened in his own situation marked by the loss of a manuscript and of his wife), a person may still find a deeper meaning in life through facing a cruel fate and all the suffering it entails with inner strength. "If there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering. Suffering is an ineradicable part of life, even as fate and death."

Frankl came to see that having a "why" to live for, having a sense, aim, or purpose for one's life, can enable one to bear with almost any "how." What was really needed was a fundamental change in attitude toward life: coming to see life in terms not of expectations from life, but of response to its tasks. This was a process of learning to think of oneself as questioned by life, daily and hourly; and to answer not of words but in right action. "Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfil the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual." Life does not mean something vague, but something very real and concrete, just as life's tasks are also very real and concrete. These form a person's destiny which is different and unique for each individual. When a person's destiny is to suffer, even here they are unique and alone in the universe. This is their unique irreplaceable burden and their unique irreplaceable task. When the impossibility of replacing a unique person is realized (whether in creative work, human love, or inevitable suffering), the great responsibility that each person has for his or her existence becomes eminently clear. "A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears towards a human being

who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He knows the why of his existence, and will be able to bear almost any how.” “In other words, life's meaning is an unconditional one, for it even includes the meaning of suffering.”

The human rights tradition holds that each and every human being, in his or her shared humanity and unique personhood, has an inherent depth and dignity, evoking the possibility and challenge to discover and unfold their identity freely from within in dialogue with others and the larger society. This is the basis for affirming the fundamental rights of human beings which are to be universally respected. Frankl takes this perspective one step further, by maintaining that even when violated in terrible unjust conditions, this dignity remains and can be affirmed by the suffering person. In this view, the discovery and experience of meaning, of a sense of worth and purpose, which calls for acknowledgment and respect, is present even when that response is lacking. Human worth remains deeper than and in spite of all violation, though it is immensely difficult to maintain that sense of dignity in horrific circumstances, and this conviction is possible only if people have already developed a sense of inner depth and richness.

Wayne Muller follows a perspective similar to that of Frankl, insofar as he holds that an inner identity, a profound wisdom, strength, and courage remain and can be drawn upon, despite the circumstances of one's life. People cannot be defined by the wounds of a painful childhood or the hurtful past actions inflicted by others, or even by the weaknesses or difficulties discovered within themselves. From his background in religious studies and counselling, his clinical experience with persons who have endured painful childhoods, and his participation in the struggle of indigenous peoples, Wayne Muller works out his own distinctive variation of a spirituality of human worth. When people are hurt as children, he observes, they all too readily learn to see themselves as broken, handicapped, or defective in some essential way. Yet as adults they also “exhibit a peculiar strength, a profound inner wisdom, and a remarkable creativity and insight. Deep within them—just beneath the wound—lies a profound spiritual vitality, a quiet knowing, a way of perceiving what is beautiful, right, and true.” (1993, xiii)

Unfortunately, however, people often define themselves by their brokenness, and see themselves as something damaged that must be repaired or fixed. Instead, Muller holds, we must come to see our essential identity as deeper than and not diminished by any such injuries, and possessed of an inner wisdom and strength and intrinsic wholeness. He goes on to apply this perspective to a number of polarities of human life and experience such as pain and forgiveness, performance and belonging, fear and faith, isolation and intimacy. In a subsequent reflection, Muller (1996) explores four basic questions related to the meaning of life, encompassing issues of our identity, love, gifts, and death. Here, too, he says that in our

quest for our essence, our true nature, we must be careful of how we name ourselves and avoid naming ourselves from our problems and imperfections, or from the sorrows or ills that have been inflicted upon us. He brings out how the practical and existential arrival at a conviction of one's basic worth is foundational to a creative and fulfilling human life. [Anecdotally, a friend who is a social worker in a hospital psychiatric unit, has informed me of the rehabilitative impact of this book on many patients.] Like Frankl, Muller insists that the worth of the person is not only a value calling for respect from self and others, but remains despite any negation of that worth in practice, enables a person to find meaning even in the face of such violations, and provides the ground for healing and renewal that can transcend the burdens of the past.

Sam Keen draws upon the notion of script or story to evoke a similar perspective. In a brief aphorism, he asserts that the task of a lifetime is to change an unconscious myth for a conscious autobiography. He says that our lives have been shaped by the scripts handed down from our families, cultures, religions, and other sources of identity, as well as by the stories that we tell about ourselves. We inherit a certain way of looking at life, a myth, that has both strengths and weaknesses, and that may or may not correspond to our own deepest aspirations. As we embark on a process of self-discovery, we may gradually sift through the scripts that we have followed and begin to weave them into a new pattern that is more authentic for ourselves. Here too he cautions, however, that the unfolding of the self occurs only in dialogue with others and the larger society, and that the way of compassion, not self-absorption, is also a good indication that one's life is moving in a creative direction.

This process, for Keen, involves asking the basic human questions that well up from our depths, from our longing for meaning: Who am I? What can I live for? What is really truthful? What is of value? With whom do I belong? What is death? The yearning is for something sacred, for a depth that goes beyond a life spent on acquiring things. "The spiritual craving of our time," Keen suggests, "is triggered by the perennial human need to connect with something that transcends the fragile self, to surrender to something larger and more lasting than our brief moment in history. (1994, xviii–xix). This search, he adds, "can only be a passionate existential journey to discover the deepest meaning of being a person;" and it is a challenge "to explore and define the self, to find a vision and set of values that give meaning to daily life." (1994, xxi) He goes on to suggest ways of exploring these fundamental life questions and discovering a new sense of self and spirit, and of then reintegrating this new awareness into one's relationships, work, environment, and communities. He calls too for a recognition that this quest leads us into the mystery of life, the darkness that does not admit of neat answers, but where we have to decide whether to trust the darkness, to

move beyond the violence of dogmatism, and to respond to suffering with compassion.

In sum, for these authors, the foundation of an authentic spirituality is the intrinsic worth of the human person, possessed by every human person yet in a unique and irreplaceable way in each human person. This inherent value calls for recognition and respect in attitude and action, is the basis of human rights and responsibilities, yet remains despite all violations, and calls them to account. The challenge for each person, in dialogue with others and the world around them, in the demands of work, the intimacy of friendship, and the wrestling with the sorrows of life, is to discover and live according to their own inherent worth and that of others. At the same time, it is not a question of a narrow, self-preoccupied spirituality, but calls for a response to the tasks of one's concrete life-situation, to a compassionate concern for the most vulnerable members of society, to the struggle towards a more just society, and to a courageous response to the sufferings of life. A dimension not treated here, but of vital importance today is the extension of this intrinsic value, in theory and practice, to the natural realm. (Berry). Again, these appear to be the questions that arise out of the experience of life. Spirituality may be regarded as the honest asking of these questions, and, following Rilke's example, gradually living into their answers. Perhaps the simple but sufficient conclusion is this: it is better for all of us if each one of us regards and treats every one of us as a being of intrinsic worth.

By way of conclusion, or rather a postscript, one possible image to illustrate this theme concretely is that of the garden. Echoing the image of Eden, the garden with its fruits and flowers gives vivid expression to the necessities and the beauty of life, to its survival and its meaning, and offers an imaginative context within which to raise questions of meaning, even in the face of suffering, betrayal, and death. In terms of the quest for meaning, one might phrase the issue as follows: is a garden existence still humanly possible, or, does the awareness of suffering and death forever exclude us from the garden. Is there a meaning to life despite the suffering, betrayal, and death that are part of the human condition?

In earlier centuries, there was a very positive association with the garden, tree, and serpent and their alignment with the mother earth or earth mother. The tree expressed the whole reaches of space and the complete cycle of time: with its roots in the earth, its trunk resting upon the earth and its branches reaching to the heaven, as well as its coming into leaf, blossom, and fruit each season, and then returning to the earth and beneath, only to reemerge in the spring. The serpent was also at home to all these dimensions, since it could crawl on the ground, burrow underneath or climb trees, and since it shed its skin each year. Early figures show a woman standing like a tree with arms outstretched and holding a serpent in each hand. The garden too was an image of the life cycle, bearing vegetables



and fruits and flowers, the food to sustain life and the beauty to give it meaning. (Harris and Platzner)

Both in Greek and Semitic regions, the sky god imagery came to prevail over that of the earth goddess. In the book of Genesis, the sky god seems to take over the garden of the earth goddess. Put facetiously, one result seems to be a shift in preoccupation from vital to legal concerns, from focus on cultivating gardens to an emphasis on deciding who is in and who is out of the garden. In particular, at this time, there emerges a kind of individualism that finds vivid expression in a preoccupation with death, found as early as the Gilgamesh myth, where it is linked with the experience of friendship and its loss. Death is a paramount theme in Greek mythology. The gods and goddesses are repeatedly designated as deathless, and the heroic figure in some fashion always wrestles with death, often in the form of the serpent now turned into a dragon. The exclusion from the Garden of Eden and with it the inflicting of death seem to go together. The dawning individualism that sets a person in some way over against the group, makes one more acutely aware of one's own death. So, too, does the knowledge of good and evil, perhaps to be understood as "cosmic awareness," the awareness not simply of that which is immediately before us, but the awareness of one's life in its totality, in its beginning at birth and its end at death. An initial reaction is possibly to feel that the reality of death excludes one from the garden, from the realm of meaning; that death appears to call into question and threaten the meaning of life.

Then in the New Testament, there is the marvellous story of Mary of Magdala who mistakes Jesus for the gardener, a gentle irony which suggests that this is not really a mistake. This story follows accounts of the agony, betrayal, and entombment of Jesus in the garden. It is perhaps a way of saying that suffering and death and evil do not exclude one from the garden, that they do not take away the meaning of life, and that it is Mary who first makes this discovery. At one level of interpretation, this story is possibly an invitation for human beings to acknowledge the reality of finiteness and limitations, to cherish the life that they have received, and instead of railing against those limits and creating wastelands for themselves and for many others, to learn again to create gardens, places of sustenance and beauty, survival and meaning, extending in wider and wider circles, eventually to embrace the whole of creation.

Perhaps, too, the Gilgamesh story gives a clue to the new direction. As humans have emerged from mother earth to stand on their own two feet under father sky, we may become more aware that while we are each distinct, we are also part of the larger cosmos, that aloneness and all-oneness are not mutually exclusive. Possibly the challenge now is to achieve, beyond separateness, a kind of belonging that preserves or encompasses uniqueness. To belong as unique—that is a possible definition of friendship. The paradigm of a new relationship to self, others, the earth,

and the universe, may be, not the absorbing tribe or the rugged individual, but the unique friend.

In light of all the authors cited in this reflection, the challenge appears to be to arrive at a rich interior personal depth, the mutually sustaining intimacy of friendship, and a gradual stretching of the sense of respect—instilling worth in wider and wider circles to embrace eventually the entire human community, the earth itself, and the universe which is its dwelling place. Perhaps after a more communal age followed by an individualist era that has now run its course, it is time for the human being who has emerged as an individual to reconnect with others, to rediscover a conscious, free community that extends to include all living and non-living beings, to see the universe, not as a collection of objects to dominate, but as a community of beings to reverence. And perhaps it is time to rediscover panentheistic divinity as universal presence or energy, inclusive of but beyond images of earth and sky.

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## Characterisation: Threshold and Fluidity

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Creation unfolds and is made flesh in vital liminal space. As the Universe is dynamic and, therefore, in the continuous process of creating and sustaining life within itself, the actor, in fashioning the image he lifts from the page, breathes life into the matter of the character and, thus, becomes creator and creation. Actor and character meet on a plane whereupon they perform the dance of Dionysos under the directive gaze of Apollo. Life on this plane sprouts from ever-flowing movement and this is only possible in a state of consciousness that is forever integrating where all is possible and space or time serve as coördinates where the dramatic action, at once, reposes and whence it springs forth to provide continuity and poetic logic. What the audience recognizes as reality on stage is the ever-creating dynamism that takes place in the liminal space that is delimited by and at the same time intimates and includes the actor and the character. This is a secret space and, while the spectator is a creative element (the implied actor)<sup>1</sup>, only the creation and not the creating must be made visible to the audience. The dynamics that take place in the threshold between actor and character, the actual motion of stepping-into-character must be veiled in secrecy lest the character remain imprisoned in its design<sup>2</sup>. The threshold is a concept or a technique of acting described by Michael Chekhov, as the space the actor must enter where he meets the character he is creating. Chekhov deems Dramaturgy as independent of the other arts; the theatre, he says, starts when the actors and the director take the script into their hands. Their Creative Individualities are what make the theatre. The actor begins to explore the play, and as he does so, he must explore himself. All the lines, all the situations in the play are silent for the actor until he finds himself behind them, not as a reader with good artistic taste, but as an actor whose responsible task is to translate the author's language into the actor's. The written word must become the spoken one<sup>3</sup>.

The trajectory the written word undertakes to become spoken is a voyage traced by the actor using his body as the soil whereupon will sprout the spoken word as only one sign of the character's awareness and existence. Awareness is expressed using the body as a sensory mechanism and as a perception mechanism. It is, of course,

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<sup>1</sup>In his masterful tome, *La crise du personnage dans le théâtre moderne*. (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), offers the insight that the character's existence is determined by the audience who contemplates him.

<sup>2</sup>When the character is not permitted to exist independently of the actor, the modus of the performance becomes visible thus obliterating the character itself.

<sup>3</sup>Chekhov, Michael. *On the Technique of Acting*. Ed. by Mel Gordon. Harper and Row. New York: 1991. p.77.

through perception that the body senses and through the senses that it perceives. And this coming-into-awareness replete with all its accomplices in the form of techniques comes about in the threshold, the *space* where actor and character presentiate each other, mirror each other, complement and enjoin with each other. We shall attempt to define the threshold as the creative space between the actor, as the creator of the character, and the character, as the creation of the actor, which is not limited by these two bodies-as-lines but rather intimates them and includes them necessarily. In his quest to embody the character, the actor must do so with fluidity, not rigidity; he must enmesh multiple perspectives in order to free himself from the rigid stance of the dualism, a danger, inherent in the actor-character relationship.<sup>4</sup> Cézanne reminds us that, "Il faut que le corps ait de la vigueur pour obéir à l'âme"<sup>5</sup> The actor must show perspicacity in his knowledge of the character and this is achieved only through intimate knowing of the perspectives of the character as the actor-agent of the action. Interestingly, Robert Abirached writes that the character is, at the start, more a distinguishable trait than an integral entity and that it is presented to the audience as "une somme de signifiants, dont le signifié est à construire par le spectateur". (31) The signifiers that make up the construct the audience sees as character are the essential properties that make the character seem "natural" or "real"; a personage to whom the audience can easily relate<sup>6</sup>. The credible character embodies likenesses or models of humanity that while they need not be readily visible they must be immediately discernible. As the laws of Physics specify that nothing in the Universe takes place outside the laws of nature, so on the stage, realism can only be achieved within the laws of feasibility; even artifice must appear in a plausible context. It is not imperative that the forms interacting on stage evoke specific models after which they were fashioned. Communion with the stage demands that

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<sup>4</sup>Both Pirandello and Stanislavski caution the actor against "losing himself on stage" and agree that the actor must find in the character points of identification in order to not betray truth on the stage. This process of "method acting" bears an inherent danger. It suggests a directional motion from actor to character, a path by which the actor invests the character with his own memories during the process of building the character who, then, becomes stylised by the actor's own experience. Another caveat is that the actor, through playing characters that "are best suited for him", will fall into the inevitable stock performances.

<sup>5</sup>Cézanne's stipulation that the body must possess the energy to obey the soul is a most appropriate lesson to the actor whose field of awareness is precisely his body.

<sup>6</sup>It is, of course, not possible to measure the audience's emotional involvement accurately, although, this has been a principal concern since Aristotle. The integrated character will succeed in affecting the audience's sense of identity by involving the spectator in a "molting" which de-vests him (the spectator) of the identity he brought to the event and re-vests him with an new purview of reality.

these forms make visible the brush strokes of nature, which illuminate their existence.

A brilliant pronouncement on the reconciliation of the artificial and the natural on stage is made by Hamlet when he advises the players

...let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of time his form and pressure<sup>7</sup>

This passage resounds in Cézanne's advice to return to the forms of nature in painting. Plato cautions us to be mindful of the "mirroring" nature of this exercise. The Greek philosopher explains: "The quickest [way] perhaps would be to take a mirror and turn it round in all directions. In a very short time you could produce sun and stars and earth and yourself and all the other animals and plants and lifeless objects...Yes, in appearance, but not the actual things." (Republic, 327) Let us borrow yet another line from Plato, albeit not in his same vein; the character represents the "reality that exists in the nature of things". The guiding principle here is nature, of course<sup>8</sup>.

The very business of playmaking, if it is to move the conscience of the audience, is to eschew lines and other constraints that delimit the very playing. It is tricky business, as the audience must witness the result of the machinations that take place in the threshold without ever being made aware of its existence. Every actor's goal to *act natural* must result from his ability to *act naturally*. The artist is naturally illuminated by his instinct. The trick of the trade is not to reveal the trick of the trade!

The character is the character and shall always remain such. The actor is the actor and shall always remain as such. The identity of the character is born and resides within the text. No number or manner of varying perspectives or stances adopted in the portrayal of the character will alter the essence that engendered it. The actor facilitates for us, the spectators, the character as someone we "know about" to someone we "know" because we can "see" the character "in action". The character's actions which speak as eloquently as the character's words (or silence)

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<sup>7</sup>Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. (III, II).

<sup>8</sup>In other words, on stage, the character, perceived by the audience, is a reality born of the carefully crafted union between creation and mimesis which exists only in the duration of the dramatic action. And, in the same fashion that the dramatic action is a representation of a plausible reality, so the character is a construct of an agent of that reality. Upon deliverance of his last lines the character, as embodiment, ceases to exist until the next time his drama is played out on stage. However, what remains in the imagination or memory of the audience is the awareness of the archetype embodied by the character, thus creating the illusion of recognisable characters as Macbeth or Medea or Willy Loman.

enhance the reality of his existence. This “coming–into–being” of the character is signified through the perpetual enjoining of character–text–actor–spectator: all indispensable living parts of a whole. It naturally follows that the experience of the spectator is the determining factor in his manner of knowing. The perspective or stance the spectator adopts colours the reality the character achieves. This platitude often is the crux that determines the audience’s taste or preference for certain characters and not others. Of course, this is predicated upon the spectator’s readiness to be enlightened by the vastly diverse experience the myriad of theatrical characters can bestow upon the observer. In truth, a successful character is at the mercy of all its creative elements’ willingness to play along.

The theatrical experience is one that occurs in liminal space. Theatre does not represent life, it does not imitate life, it does not mirror life. Theatre is not a “pseudo–duplicata” (Abirached) of quotidian reality. A play is a construct that is *made* to represent life; it is purposefully *composed* in the *image* of life. The aesthetic nature of a play is, as any work of art, to evoke emotion in the spectator, universally. Universality can only be achieved if the work evokes what is common to all; and nature is the most common phenomenon. The most salient quality of nature is that it is in permanent flux and this flux is the lifeblood of creation and creativity.

Creativity stifles in stillness. Creating is an act that presumes movement and attracts change. No creator sees his creation as the final product. Even the painter who puts down her paint brush at the completion of a piece does not view that work as an end unto itself, it is part of a continuum; of a movement towards an end that is an integral part of the movement. So does the actor perceive the creation of his character and its performance on stage? Because the theatrical experience occurs in liminal space, the actor and the character must be in constant embroiling, they must be in constant creating and in constant becoming. The character who is *achieved* is dead. Picasso provides an analogy in painting: “A painting is not thought out and fixed beforehand; while one is painting it, it follows the mobility of one’s thoughts”<sup>9</sup>. Jean Gebser illuminates the subconscious process that is creativity when he writes:

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<sup>9</sup>Picasso, Pablo. *Picasso on Art. A Selection of Views*. Ed. by Dore Ashton. Da Capo. New York: 1972. p. 19.

In creativity, origin is present. Creativity is not bound to space and time, and its truest effect can be found in mutation, the course of which is not continuous time but rather spontaneous, a causal and discontinuous. Creativity is a visibly emerging impulse of origin which “is” in turn timeless, or more accurately, before or “above” time and timelessness. And creativity is something that “happens” to us...creativity reveals the limitations of understanding...Creativity appears to be an irrational process, although it is actually arational...Since creativity is a potency or energy it cannot be grasped systematically and can at best be *perceived* systematically.<sup>10</sup>

As Gebser suggests, the vocabulary of creativity: “intuition, imagination, emotion or revelation” does not exhaust all the qualities of the creative person. While these are vital tools the actor must possess in order to create the character, there is a final and most insistent quality the actor cannot be bereft of: the ability to create beauty, to move the spectator poetically, to allow the spectator to visit those places within himself that have been obfuscated by daily existence, to teach the spectator to discover and converse with his own intimacy. Beauty visits the stage when there is movement and movement on the theatrical stage, as on the ballet and operatic stage, is born of poetry. If the performer lacks the awareness of poetry, the ability to evoke it, there will be no movement, there will be no beauty, there will be no life.

Life cannot spring forth on stage if the actor sees the character as an entity to embody as a final goal. This linear perspective on creation cannot but result in stillbirth. An actor moving in straight lines comes to a point, a stop where she becomes imprisoned. What is essential to the creative process on stage is that it be in permanent flux, that the process itself become the purpose (Halpern). Points, whether in time or space, bind and distract creativity by forcing the artist into an intellectual, hence perspectival, stance; unable to flow with the images his artistic perception brings to him. Federico Fellini explains:

I hate logical plans. I have horror of set phrases that instead of explaining reality tame it in order to use it in a way that claims to be for the general good but in fact is of no use to anyone. I don't approve of definitions or labels. Labels should go on suitcases, nowhere else. Myself, I should find it false and dangerous to start from some clear, well-defined, complete idea and then put it into practice. I must be ignorant of what I shall be doing and I can find the resources I need only when I am plunged into obscurity and ignorance. The child is in darkness at the moment he is formed in his mother's womb<sup>11</sup>.

This is nowhere more appropriately illustrated than in Chekhov's lessons on characterisation. As the actor prepares, he must be aware to represent the character in his time and space and at the same time render him timeless. The actor must not be bound by time perspective but use it as a tool in achieving

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<sup>10</sup>Gebser, Jean. *The Ever-Present Origin*. Trans. Noel Barstad with Algis Mickunas. Ohio UP. Athens: 1984. p. 313.

<sup>11</sup>*Creators on Creating*. Ed. Frank Barron, Alfonso Montuori, Anthea Barron. Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam. New York: 1997. p. 31.



aperspectivity, lodging himself within integral space where all players are one while retaining their individual identity.

In the same fashion, as the actor delves into the character's memory, he must not allow himself to be temporalised but must include this time in achieving a timeless character. This awareness of floating, unfixed process is rendered through a kind of split consciousness that is present during the performance of a character. There is a continuous, mutual reflecting between the actor and the character <sup>12</sup>, a kind of being aware of each other as they engage in the creative dance that is performance. Perhaps an example of this is flamenco dancing where the two dancers who embody the dance are seen as one but never touch, never merely locate each other as points of reference rather as floating images forever being created with the dance.

The threshold, that Chekhov considers the third space, the neutral space, the space of highest energy where it all happens is the locus of the dance, not only as the physical representation the word intimates, but dance as we have alluded above, as the necessarily perpetual motion between the artist and her creation. But, how does the threshold come about? Does the artist create the threshold? Is it self-generating? If so, does the artist enter into it? Are preparations required? What is the process of being in the threshold, of awareness of the threshold...When asked about his methods of composition, Tchaikovsky said:

Generally speaking, the germ of a future composition comes suddenly and unexpectedly. *If the soil is ready*, that is to say<sup>13</sup>.

How is the soil readied? Chekhov suggests three very important tools in the process of characterisation:

1. Psychological gesture: everyday gestures idiomatic to the character
2. Imaginary body: invisible body the actor envisions within his own real, visible body
3. Imaginary centre: the Ideal is the centre of the chest, this imaginary centre can spring forth from anywhere on the body to lend realism to the character's circumstance. It is the space on his body the character speaks from.

The plane upon which the artist uses these tools is his body. As Michael Chekhov teaches "the actor imagines with his body". One can say that the actor's body delimits and expands the creative space, the threshold. This is not an imaginary space, not somewhere the actor goes to find the character; it is where the actor toils with all the elements available to him to perform his creation. The actor's

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<sup>12</sup>The character Alonso Quijano/Don Quijote comes to mind here.

<sup>13</sup>*Creators on Creating*. p. 180. (Italics mine)

body is the prime performer of the text. Stanislavski teaches to “feel the role, to live it.”

In the Prologue to *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, Pirandello says that he has a servant and that her name is Fantasy. Fantasy is the most vital note, the recurring musical theme, the melody that accompanies the actor in her dance with her character. There is only one time to this music and it is now. To the beat of this universal music the actor initiates the composition of the character. Evgeni Vakhtangov postulates that as the locus of the creative process resides in the subconscious it is, therefore, not possible to teach it as teaching itself is a conscious process. He concludes that consciousness does not create what the subconscious does.

Instead of seeing creativity as a subconscious process, we prefer to view it as a gathering of awareness that spurts from the floating in and around each other of all structures of consciousness. Art, as Montréal director Gilles Maheu explains, results more often from the accidental and the random than from rational applications. And, that it is vital to distinguish between theories of play and techniques of play. Theories of play are reflections offered by those who practise the play as the actor or director. These theories are not a how-to compendium in characterisation, they offer insight gained through experience and invite in a sharing gesture instead of rational, direction instructional, posturing. While both reflection and discourse are essential to the process of playmaking, discourse will curtail action and this results in stagnation and eventual death. We agree with Vakhtangov that the creative process cannot be learned but it can be perceived by delving into common areas of awareness. In other words, the creation is the teacher.

The actor’s fantasy, or imagination<sup>14</sup>, is his primary tool in developing and organising images and precepts germane to the character in order to bring the character into awareness. A character springs forth integrally and appears “real” when this process has eschewed rational dichotomies as mind/body or emotion/cognition. A character created from a dichotomous stance will appear as an imitation of itself and as Michael Chekhov would say, *not believable*. It is important here to note that in the performance of this task the actor must remain in the imaginary and not engage in ritual, although the imaginary can imply ritual. Characterisation is made of a series of instants, it floats, alighting nowhere. The actor’s goal must never be that of possessing the character for as Dante warns, “Possession is one with loss”. This awareness becomes inscribed onto the flesh of the actor who, through an act of belief in his creation, successfully inhabits that creation. Thus the character has become, as Merleau-Ponty points out,

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<sup>14</sup>Stanislavski defines imagination as a combination of diverse elements into a whole which does not correspond to reality. Imagination he goes on, consists in associating known objects, uniting, separating, modifying and recombining them.

“authentically artificial”. In other words, the audience is prepared to believe that the character on stage is a *real* representation of a construct.

There occurs an intertwining of the consciousness of the actor with that of the character; an intertwining not of strings that bind the two consciousnesses together but of flowing filaments that dance around and with each other while embracing and making visible the dramatic action. Per force, this dance includes the subject–object perspective between actor and character but in a relationship of polarity whereby one end includes and intimates the other; where the distance between the poles is the creative area, the liminal space where one, the other and both are in continual flux with the space itself. Each end lends its own consciousness to the limen in order to create it and, in turn is included and determined by it, *the limen*. As the actor then steps into her character, there occurs no dominant consciousness, but rather, a splitting of consciousness, in a fashion. This means that there is never a complete overtaking of the actor by the character. The actor does not surrender her consciousness to the character. The actor never *becomes* the character, in other words. What does take place is a sublimation of consciousness in the sense that the actor willingly allows the awareness of the character to supercede her own while she, the actor, remains always present in the process—a manner of submerging the ego. This delicate and perilous relationship can spring forth from the integral structure of consciousness. The balance is crucial to the character’s integrity and to that of the actor. The dominance of any other structure at this point will result in catastrophe for the character and, especially for the actor who will not be able to “get out of character, or shake the character off”.

In an exercise we performed during a Chekhov Workshop called the Memory Palace where each actor entered in character, we were to virtually shake off the character, upon exiting the imaginary structure. After successfully shaking off the character the actor’s body or flesh is returned, as it were, to itself. My personal experience with this exercise is that while the character I embodied had now been shaken off, my body restored intact, it (my body) was not *de-vested* completely of the character. I have attempted to explain this in the following way: Because my body is the playing field or the limen where all occurs, and I as actor allow the character to unfold upon my flesh and because this cannot occur in a fashion that is neither determined nor localisable either in time or space, my body is part of the playing field where it shares flesh with the character, the awareness of the character becomes inscribed in my flesh as a familiar component of my awareness as being my body. Furthermore, as characterisation does not intimate the body only as a concrete entity, but rather, as an element of awareness vital and never stagnant, therefore, it would appear that whatever becomes enmeshed in my body as element of awareness will affect it to the full extent that its concretion and survival demands. This means that the elements of the character will remain even

when the character has been shaken off as long as the character remains within the field of awareness of the actor. This is true even when the actor does not perform the actions and gestures of the character. Each time the character re-emerges, the actor recalls this awareness, not in a rational manner, but rather as though the actor was calling forth a part of himself. This *recalling* is a creative process in itself and usually sprouts forth even the slightest variation in the articulation of the character that does not alter or affect its integrality, only enhances its vitality. The Chekhovian actor will recall the character's universal gesture, that is the gesture the actor attributes to the character as archetype; then the actor will repeat the psychological gesture, which Chekhov describes as "a combination of thoughts (or Images), Feelings and, Will-impulses. We can say that a human being or a character in a play 'thinks,' feels', or 'wishes', something because his Thoughts, Feelings, or Will-impulses are the prevailing ones at that particular time. But all three functions are present and active in each psychological moment...We shall apply this term to visible (actual) gestures as well as to invisible (potential) gestures." (60)

Then the actor will recall the Atmosphere of a particular scene. And, to this Atmosphere the character reacts with his personal Feelings. Atmosphere and Feelings are not separate entities but co-exist and interact in the same space. Atmosphere is not delimited through scenes. It can envelop several scenes or parts thereof and is carefully planned and rehearsed.

On the stage nothing is left to chance. Does this deny spontaneous eruptions of creative insights? No, but these creative insights which may arise do so *within a context*, as integral parts of the dramatic action within which resides the character. All the tools an actor employs in the process of characterisation must have rhyme and reason. They must coalesce and integrate. As Gebser maintains, "...integrating is the process of making as well as letting, events happen." (228)

A most useful technique in performance is Eurythmy. Eurythmy, as practised in performance is the melding of Gestures with different vowels and consonants. Its originator, Rudolf Steiner, maintained that "Speech Formation must, for the speaker, of necessity be Art reaching to the point of sound, just as music must be Art reaching to the point of tone." (Chekhov, 75). Eurythmy connects human sounds and shows their interrelation. And while it is true that we cannot invent new sounds for those vowels and consonants we use everyday, we can create a new coloratura for them to suit our needs on the stage. These sounds and their variation in unison with the Psychological Gesture provide an essential characteristic to creating truth on stage and that is Harmony. From Harmony comes Beauty and Beauty is, at once, the vital force at the initiation and the integrating power of the performance in its entirety. Beauty is an end unto itself and the life force of any all creation. Art needs no reason, Beauty is its reason. The creation of Beauty is the principal task of the artist. This must be undertaken within a perspective of truth and genuine feeling lest Beauty become a caricature

of itself. The actor who portrays a character truthfully will be open and flexible and engage the other actors playing characters in a give-and-receive interaction that promotes movement and fluidity on stage. Characters who exist in rigidity do not invite fluidity in the others who inhabit the same atmosphere and thereby engender stillness and impenetrable silence around them. There is no Beauty in dead ends.

If we consider Beauty in purely aesthetic terms, then we must agree with Gebser who explains that what is beautiful is “only one—the more luminous—manifestation of the psyche.” And, further on he notes “Mere contemplation or aesthetic satisfaction are psychically confined and restricted, at best approaching, but never fully realizing, integrality.” In performance, as in all art, Beauty is essentially integral as it must per force not be deficient from any perspective. It incorporates all its elements and *Itself* in order to be the revealer of truths. On the stage, Beauty is manifested when the stage becomes a common place, a space inhabitable by all and even in the event of Theatre of Cruelty as with Artaud or the Theatre of Alienation as with Brecht, there must exist a common ground, a believable quality to the work or Beauty suffers. The bodies on the stage who recite the text, embody the characters, incarnate the action and become the dance they perform with themselves and each other *substantivate* truth and thence Beauty.

As Federico García Lorca wrote “theatre is the word that rises from the page and becomes poetry.” Beauty is poetry in motion. The poetic defines art as art and therefore beautiful. Motion and poetry are essential cohabitants of the creative space delineated by and inclusive of the boundaries represented by the actor and the character. It is only the fluid interaction among the actor, the character and the space they create and inhabit that motion is perpetuated engendering poetry and thus beauty and thus truth on the stage.

The satisfaction of the curiosity and justification of meaning that characterise the human condition is not the domain of the actor as we see in the following:

And so taking up those poems of theirs which seemed to me to have been crafted with special care, I asked them what the poems meant, so that I might at the same time learn something from them too. I'm ashamed, gentlemen, to tell you the truth, but say it I must. Just about everybody standing around could have explained better what their poems were about than the very ones who had composed them! And so I knew in brief compass this too about the poets, that they do not compose what they compose through skill, but by some instinct, that is, being inspired with the god just like those endowed with the gift of prophecy and soothsayers. For although they say many fine things, they don't have a clue what it is they're talking about. (Socrates. *Apology* 22b2.c8)

The inherent wisdom in Socrates' quote is striking in its relevance to all artistic endeavours. While it is true that instinct is a primordial force in the engendering of the artistic expression, it is indispensable to accord equal importance to

inspiration. Mention must be made of the experience, which serves the exigencies of the discipline in question. The latter, as artists will witness, lies in the mundane realm of the acquisition and refinement of the physical *modus operandi* of the technique of the art.

The substitution of the word technique for skill is intentional as the development of technique implies the awareness of innate skill or as is preferable, ability or talent. The recognition of natural ability, talent or skill represents the concretion of an awareness born, not of the will of the ability itself, but rather, responds to a demand of expression sprouting from the instinct vitalised by inspiration. Vitez speaks of a “disponibilité au jeu” a question already posed by Stanislavski regarding the appropriation of the actor to the role.

“Le théâtre, Robert Abirached maintiens, est d’abord le lieu de la représentation: il livre au spectateur des doubles du personnage, qui ne sont pas lui et ne sont pas eux-mêmes. Si quelqu’un y interprète, c’est l’acteur, à travers une alchimie mentale et physique dont il soumet le résultat au public”<sup>15</sup> (8) Theatrical performance, as any art form, intimates a coming-into-being of the piece, which requires the coming-into-being of those who will lend breath and body to the characters. Goethe’s Prometheus exclaims: I believe you...why? This query serves as the first and ultimate concern of the actor. Simply stated: credibility is the *sine qua non* in the accomplishment of the thespian’s labour. A believable, hence successful, character is one who does not reside at the point of focus of the actor’s perspective. A character constructed with words on paper acquires and retains credibility through the life that is consistently breathed into him by the actor’s inspiration and preparation. There is no *point in time* when a character is fully achieved. Strict linear progression, i.e. actor to character, results in a stop position at the end of the process. Stepping into character when the character is cemented on the stage boards is a most felicitous form of character assassination.<sup>16</sup>

How, then, does the actor enter into a fruitful relationship with the character? Is it even possible to engage a personage who is nothing more than a virtual reality, as Josette Féral describes as “la rencontre de la réalité du comédien sur scène et la de l’illusion qu’il projette.”<sup>17</sup> Does the actor figure merely as a body who is fashioned to the character’s demands? Or, as Jean-Pierre Ronfard suggests, does the character dwell at the nexus of the relations qui existent entre cet être-là et les autres<sup>18</sup>? Or as Jacques Lassalle wonders, does the actor fashion the character out of the text as the sculptor models the figure out of marble? We agree

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<sup>15</sup>Abirached. p. 8.

<sup>16</sup>Luigi Pirandello’s *Henry IV* and Michel Tremblay’s *Hosanna* are only two plays that illustrate this point.

<sup>17</sup>Josette Féral. *Mise en scène et Jeu de l’acteur. Tome 1.* p. 61.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid. p. 63.

with those theatrical artists who caution against the perils of psychologism that threaten the actor who sees the character as an existing entity removed from himself; an identity to be gained, to be achieved. This does not intend, however, that the character must, necessarily, reside within the actor: that the actor must, *ab initio*, possess traits or qualities, specific to the character. These thoughts intimate a pre-existing directional relationship between actor and character that risks fixedness, an almost positivistic stance, stumbling blocks that obfuscate the path to the heart, the spirit, the soul: awareness itself. Rather it is a common energy that the actor perceives in the character, an energy that is, at once, not only qualifiable but also quantifiable. Such energy identifies and enmeshes the actor's and character's sensibilities, physicality and awareness. The successful performance, then, might result from the following equation where all parts are equal:

actor's sensibilities + efficacy of the text + audience awareness = truth on stage.

In other words, the actor, the text—in the encompassing sense—and the willingness of the audience to lend its participation: all in perpetual flux are the *materia prima* of the creation of life on the stage.

Flux is, as the ancients teach, the only constant in the Universe. None of the components of the theatrical event may appear as a relenting force. In lieu of being a prepondering, opaque presence, the body of the actor/character must exude energy and, thus, motion, adopting the pliability of the Dionysian dancer who, at all times, enjoins the concrete and the ethereal, light and dark with all degrees of the luminosity of the Impressionists; a continuous originating of energy among character, the actor and the audience. The joining of this three-pointed structure encloses the sacred space of the theatrical event.

The stage, which is the flesh upon which becomes inscribed this theatrical event, is the only locus where the character, the representation in the flesh of the text, gains and retains form and function. While the character becomes an entity sufficient unto itself, in a space relative to itself, in a time that is at least arbitrary, he acquires credibility only through the vital dynamism of the ever-occurring creative process, which is destroying and reconstructing reality with every pulsation of the flesh of the stage. The forces of life and death dialogue through the body of the actor. The seduction and interpenetration of all the expressions of flesh, the text, the actor, the character and the audience, resound in the creation of a universe whose precarious nature is, at once, its lifeblood and executioner.

Art is not created in a vacuum. The living being created on the stage that engenders the living being in the audience ignites the spark that ignites the primordial fire that is the experience of the theatrical event. The catalyst is the actor/character. But, caution, all does not reside in this entity. The actor/character

is the élan vital that provides the energy/force that encompasses action/reaction; in other words, the intertwining fabric of reality on stage. Attitude, instinct, rationality: all that is creation, the greatest riches to be had and the greatest hunger to be satisfied, demand flux.

The character does not succeed the actor but is simultaneously characterised by the actor and the character as constructed by the dramaturge so that, both the actor and the character are simultaneously present and in constant flux within and with the single body that is the personage on stage. Actor and character share a harmonious co-presence, although they may appear to be on opposite ends of the spectrum, in the process of characterisation. That is each represents one pole whose presence intimates the existence of the other and which determines the other's interconnectedness to itself. As Freeman illustrates: They do not understand how that which differs with itself in is agreement: harmony consists of opposing tension, like that of the bow and the lyre. It is precisely this apparent tension that contributes to the character's longevity on stage.

Characters belong to that certain category of things that require uninterrupted movement and change in order to be. The character is *in situ* in flux, she *reposes* in flux. This does not intimate that the playwright's formulation of the character falls prey to the perspective of the actor nor that the essential characteristics or nature of the personage are open to discussion.<sup>19</sup>

Theatre, as all art, is a lie that illuminates truths. Theatre is a lie that appears as truth and requires the complicity of all those who know it's a lie to pretend to believe it is true. The actor and the spectator depart from a point common to both: Reality. And since Reality is perhaps the most subjective of states, the work of the actor is to illuminate within herself elements common to the audience and, the audience, in its turn, is called to accept the signs as the locus of interpenetration of the actor's awareness as character and the audience's awareness as performer of the vital act of faith. The result is the appearance of Reality coloured by the individual quality of the entente between performer and spectator. It is essential for the creator, the creation and the audience to achieve synchronicity and remain in permanent flux to serve the creation of the theatrical event.

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<sup>19</sup>It will occur to no one to play Blanche Dubois as a wishy-washy busybody who interferes with her sister's marriage. Nor does it seem plausible to interpret Lady Macbeth as a retiring wife who serves her husband's position. Pirandello's characters enter the stage as characters determined to tell their story and are not relegated to the wings by the "actors" who are rehearsing a play.



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## Cacophony and Symphony in Postmodernity

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The 20<sup>th</sup> century with its deep variations in lights and shadows saw the transition of modern democracies to postmodern, confusing, and often-chaotic structures. Meanwhile, the rest of the world was left behind, unable to evolve to the rational democratic forms, remaining under predominant magic and mythic patterns of behavior and belief. The century ended with a variety of signs giving advanced notice of another transition: from the divisive and dissonant post modernity to potentially more integrated and harmonizing socioeconomic structures. Symphonic and cacophonous musical styles can be used as pleasant metaphors to describe this transition from modernity to post modernity.

Symphonies are products of the synergy of multiple instruments. They bring together the snapping of fingers and the voicing of sounds of the archaic structures, the magic of gypsy violins and tribal drums, and the mythical callings of Pan's flute. Symphonic pieces are constructs of a consciousness operating under efficient forms of rational manifestation. The idea of composing the first symphony might have emerged from an intuition, but, afterwards, it had to be constructed through directive, discursive thought.

In cacophonies, instruments are simultaneously played, but there is incongruity rather than harmony. If there is a conductor, he or she leads the expression of individual disagreements rather than making the different instruments converge in performing a given theme. It is the rational consciousness operating under its deficient, divisive form.

Modern democracy was an attempt, under the guidance of an efficient rationality, to move away from authoritarian pied pipers. For centuries, the latter induced the masses to follow them by playing with the myth of having received the power for ruling their societies by divine right. Modern democracies were efforts by societies to compose symphonies with multiple political players rather than blindly follow the rules of single pied pipers. From within the ensemble of players would emerge temporary conductors to make all the performers coincide in a vision of society and world, a vision that will constantly adapt to progress in knowledge about nature and ourselves.

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<sup>1</sup> The author is an educator, engineer, and scientist by training, is a former Science and Technology Specialist with the World Bank. His book — *The Invisible Player: Consciousness as the Soul of Economic, Social, and Political Life* (Inner Traditions, 1999) — is an effort to integrate his previous academic, business, and economic development experiences with his more recent scholarly studies of Jean Gebser's work.

While shifting to postmodern forms, many manifestations of efficient rational structures were replaced by deficient, divisive forms of rationality. To some extent, these deficient forms also anticipate the deficient form of emerging integrative, harmonizing structures: the void that leads to an atomizing dissolution.<sup>2</sup> Postmodern democracies are essentially cacophonous. Their cacophony makes them easy targets of postmodern pied pipers who add to the power of their old magical and mythical luring songs the skillful use of modern science and technology. Postmodern pied pipers are experts in using the old destructive, deficient forms of magic and myth under new forms of witchcraft and spoken myths. They are equally skilled in using the extreme expressions of a deficient rationality. They know how to divide and make unwarranted distinctions.

Rather than attempting to repress magic and myth, the new integrative, harmonizing structures may mobilize their efficient forms of spell-casting and envisioned primal myth. Integrating these with an efficient rationality, the new structures can create an open, aperspectival, and spiritual vision of what it means to be human. With this vision, humanity may start building societies that are more humane where human beings and nature are integrated at greater levels of consciousness than at the origin. Spell-casting is tuning to the powers of nature to make them partners in the development of the human society. The envisioned primal myth is used for the reconnection with the neglected origin, which rationality often attempts to repress and even suppress. In all aspects of life, the transparency required by the integrative, harmonizing consciousness could overcome shadowy areas of economic and social systems, introducing concerns for humans and ecosystems in the financial and technical rationality required by efficient democratic economies.

The new structures are forming in a few privileged minds; the masses are well behind, many not having yet gained access to even the rational structures, whether in its efficient or deficient forms. It can be perceived from Gebser's work that he doubted that we will allow ourselves time to reach the level that he called integral. Let us hope that the acceleration that we are observing in the speed of transformation of all social processes will bring us to the new evolutionary stage before we destroy our environment and ourselves, beyond repair.

If the mutation to the new structures is ever to reach global proportions, democracy will advance beyond its modern and postmodern expressions, becoming a concerted representation of all opinions, all world visions, all life

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<sup>2</sup> The characterization of the efficient and deficient forms of manifestation of the different structures of consciousness is taken from Gebser, p. 142. I depart from the master in the name giving to some of the structures themselves. I prefer to call rational the structures that Gebser call mental, and use the words integrative and harmonizing to define the emerging structures that for Gebser are integral, aperspectival and arational. The reasons behind these changes in nomenclature can be seen in Kamenetzky, 1999, p. 25–30.

styles, all religious beliefs. To that end, leadership should move away from politicians who value themselves and others for the money, power, and glory they have been able to accumulate. Leadership should fall in the hands of people who value themselves and others for the extent to which they have developed as fully alive human beings.

The evolution of democracy beyond its modern and postmodern forms should be in essence a shift from cultures based on *amour propre* to cultures that cultivate *amour de soi*.<sup>3</sup> Otherwise, the new structures may also assume deficient forms of manifestation and speed up the atomizing dissolution to which the world seems to be prone. Gebser points out that in all previous structures, except the archaic, there were efficient and deficient forms of manifestation. It is my suggestion that in all cases the efficient forms of manifestation are products of enculturation processes based on *amour de soi*, while in the deficient forms *amour propre* is the predominant value recorded in the subconscious mind of leaders and populations alike. To speed up and globalize the much-needed mutation in the structures of our consciousness, it is becoming urgent to transform from top to bottom the enculturation process and to that end our educational systems. Only a transformed education can encourage the new structures in the minds of the young and make it easier for them to follow the loving inner advice of *amour de soi* rather than the harsh, external commands of *amour propre*.<sup>4</sup>

We should not expect the movement toward the new forms to be linear. The path followed in the movement from the authoritarian pied pipers to democracy was not linear. Repeatedly, pied pipers reemerged within the democracies and lured the masses back to the oppressive monotone of primitive, authoritarian forms. They replaced the scherzos, minuets, and allegros with military marches. Outside these episodes of tragic regression, past democratic experiences had “allegro” times in which societies seemed to have no other objective than to enjoy life, “lento” periods of slow economic

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<sup>3</sup> About the meaning of *amour de soi* and *amour propre* in the process of structuring human consciousness, see Kamenetzky, 1999, chapter 2, pp 33–42.

<sup>4</sup> While reviewing the initial version of this paper, Maestro David Sprung made the following comment:

“A perfect case study of *amour propre* and *amour de soi* is to examine conductors. By definition, all conductors are “authoritarian pied pipers” as it would be impossible to create a unified vision of a composition without one view prevailing. Too often, however, some people become conductors just as an ego trip rather than using their position to search for the piece’s true meaning by integrating and harmonizing the various elements of the musical composition in a positive way. Such ego-trip conductors are often very abusive to their players. In the case of chamber music where there is no conductor, a consensus must be reached somehow among the players and there is give and take. However, it is obvious that, even in that context, one or two players usually come to dominate the interaction and in fact become the “conductors.” Even in conductorless orchestras such as the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the concertmaster plays a key role in shaping the interpretation. The only question is whether these various pied pipers are benevolent and integrative or are malignant dictators and whether they are interested in making use of the talents of members of the group in creating the vision or isolating themselves in the service of their own egos.”

growth and perpetuation of the social status quo, “molto vivace” tempos of high creativity and socioeconomic progress, “tremolo” moments of confusion and despair. If the efforts to restructure global mentality are started soon and with energy, the new forms of democracy may gradually attenuate the dissonances and discordances of postmodern cacophonous democracies, bringing back the old symphonies with sad and happy movements, crowning them with new odes to joy, freedom, and love.<sup>5</sup>

Through efficient, global economic and social institutions, we may avoid regressions to military marches, but if the efforts come too late or fail, the cacophony of postmodern democracies may end in mournful lamentations and funeral marches.

## Annex

### Examples of Present Cacophonous Patterns and of Potential Integrative, Harmonizing Patterns

#### ***The Increased Cacophony of War, and Symphonic Efforts to Reach Peace***

In September 1939, Adolph Hitler changed the nature of war. Up until then, war was a horror game played in the trenches and the fields by the young, while their elders were waltzing and making love in the salons of the big cities. Hitler took war to the heart of the cities; every household felt it. In September 2001, terrorists have changed again the nature of war. They have taken the war from a fight between enemies that have a name, a location, and financial and physical support structures behind them, to a fight within our consciousness.

It is a struggle between those who want to continue terrorizing the new generations as an easy way to make them submissive to their designs, sustaining their patriarchal privileges, and those who see that “laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind.” It is a struggle between the pessimistic view that humans have been and will always be wolves to humans, and the optimistic view that by making our social laws and institutions more respectful and responsive to human nature we will develop its most positive and spiritual inclinations towards

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<sup>5</sup> While writing this, I have in mind the concert for flute and orchestra, *Wie Risse Im Schatten*, op. 7, that Mathias Steinauer composed inspired by Gebser’s work. In introducing his work, the author says:

“The soloist represents the human individual who lives through the different levels of consciousness. Proceeding from the archaic ‘non consciousness’ via the magic consciousness of the environment to the mystical recognition of the soul and to the mentally and prospectively adapted thinking of the today’s human being, the flautist acts and reacts in communication with his interior and exterior (orchestra).”

In addition to the four movements – an ‘introduzione’ for the archaic, an ‘adagio’ for the magic, a ‘fantasia’ for the mythical, and a ‘quasi–una–sonata’ for the mental – Steinauer wrote two codas, one for Gebser’s vision of the integral consciousness, and the other for Steinauer’s view of a realistic perspective of the future.

life and love. It is a struggle between religions that stick to the letter of texts written thousands of years ago, and religions that see those writings “not as commandments for our walking on the path of life, but as descriptions of the path, as sad facts described in sadness, and meant to be overcome, not celebrated.”<sup>6</sup> It is a struggle that affects every individual, every home, and every country. Any individual, any home, any country can be an aggressor, a victim, or both. Any place can suddenly become an unexpected battlefield.

Dissonant voices emerge from these struggles. For instance, the destruction of the twin towers of New York with the death of thousands of people is a tragedy for most of the inhabitants of western democracies, and an act of heroism rewarded by God with the pleasures of paradise for many in the Islamic countries.

There is a cacophony of clashes under the mantle of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. There is a personal hatred between Sharon and Arafat. The oil interests of the West, especially USA, and of the ruling casts in the Arab region, clash with the designs of Muslim fundamentalists. Amour de soi, and an incipient, intuitive, integrative, harmonizing consciousness is telling Israeli and Palestinian masses that they should work together to make the best from the scarce resources of the region they must share. Instead, leaders still clinging to a deficient rationality are telling them to separate land, culture, initiatives, and resources. Extremist leaders, still dominated by deficient magic and mythic structures, are trying to lure Israelis and Palestinians into fighting until one part conquers and submits the other, paying no attention to the crazy and unsustainable destruction of lives, land, and resources. To increase the cacophony, a still fresh memory of the Holocaust leads most in the postmodern democracies to support, intellectually and emotionally, the Jewish cause while on the other side the Holocaust is seen as a scam of the Jews and their western supporters, with denials of the physical evidence found by the allied troops, and the testimony of survivors and witnesses.

It is because of the delay of their educational systems in catching up with the evolutionary process that Israelis and Palestinians are still throwing stones and bombs to each other instead of putting stones together to build common enterprises. When their school systems will change, Israelis and Palestinians will learn that it is more productive and enjoyable to unite spaces rather than divide them. They will learn to share food, music, art, knowledge, and traditions rather than use them as ammunitions to prove the superiority of one culture over the other. Then, the Wailing Wall may support a unique temple where Yahweh, Christ, and Allah will be worshipped together. People will come to it to enjoy the myths created around these three representations of the Creator rather than to wail past

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<sup>6</sup> Rabbi Arthur Waskow, *Godwrestling* (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), pp. 50–51.

tragedies, which unfolded from rational manipulations of those myths. Jews and Palestinians will then enjoy eating together appetizing 'latkes'<sup>7</sup> while listening stories from the Sufi tradition. They will dance together contagious 'horas' and sing together Arabic litanies. When let free from heavy and oppressive enculturation patterns, Palestinians and Israelis become aware that Palestinian and Jewish bodies and minds rather than following blindly divisive rules of conscious ideologies, feel often attracted to one another by unconscious spiritual chemistries.

### ***Cacophony and New Symphonies in the Globalization Process***

The process of globalization expands declaiming to adhere to the liberal principles of democratic, free-market systems. However, the governments of the countries that are the main actors in that process keep conservatively constraining critical thinking, the progressive change of laws and institutions, the freedom of private life from social and political control, the social and economic transparency, — all basic tenets of liberal, democratic, free-market societies.

Globalization is a rational design. When it follows efficient forms of manifestation, it bolsters the mutation to a new, integrative, harmonizing consciousness. Globalization may prevent war and change the ways of dealing with conflict by increasing contact among peoples and intertwining different private and national interests. Unfortunately, most of its present manifestations are inspired by a deficient, divisive rationality. It seeks further increases in the power and wealth of the global enterprises that participate in the process, with little or no concern for either the people that provide labor in the different places where those organizations work, or the natural environment that supports the local undertakings. Instead of increasing transparency in the dealings between countries and enterprises, global organizations often create shadowy alliances with regressive and oppressive local elites.

With the mutation to new structures of consciousness, the peoples of the world may end overcoming the counterproductive and regressive measures along which governments and global corporations are setting up the globalization process. At that point, new global compositions may arise. The human species will come together, translating its essence and genius in the voices of many diverse instruments, and the dancing vibrations of bodies from all around the world. Then human beings will not try to impose creeds on fellow beings. They will celebrate all the rituals, knowing that the dialogue with the spirit can take place through multiple channels. Then, societies will delete from social codes and religious beliefs all that impede or forbid being fully human and fully alive. Then, we shall not only know

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<sup>7</sup> Pancakes made of grated potatoes that Jews cook traditionally for Hanukah.

better what it means to be human, but also acquire power to make a better humanity.

When this dream will start becoming reality, new symphonies will bring together rhythms from different cultures. Jewish cantillations and horas will mix with Arabic litanies, nawbah and waslah music.<sup>8</sup> The moaning of accordions playing tangos will join the weeping of reed flutes from the South American high plateaus. The powerful sound of tambours making the bodies undulate under the spell of African rhythms will merge with the provocative pirouettes of jazz and rock played by saxophones and trumpets. Sensual gypsy violins awakening romance with waltzes, and making people whirl with mazurkas, polkas, and tarantellas will follow feet stamping and castanets clicking at the rhythm of zarzuelas. We should remember that most of the world rhythms are already integrative products of multicultural influences. For instance, the Spanish flamenco recognizes effects of Arabic, Berber, African, Sephardic Jewish, and European melodies.

### ***Cacophony and Symphony in Medicine***

Postmodern medicine is essentially cacophonous. It is a coexistence of different schools of thought and practice that hardly talk to each other. Modern, technologically based, allopathic medicine is the dominant instrument. Others that are making increasingly louder sounds are the traditional Chinese and ayurvedic medicines, the folk medicines of different countries, homeopathy, postmodern herbalism that uses standardized extracts and supports double-blind studies, and a quantum medicine, still incipient, that accepts non locality, action-at-distance, chance, and a constant interplay between body and individual as well as cosmic consciousness.

Progressive patterns of belief and behavior in the relation between doctor and patient are being now assaulted by prejudices and fears from the most negative forms of manifestation of rationality. Instead of considering the body as a beautiful and still perfectible component of the cosmic creation and its evolution, rationality is regressing to the times when the body was seen as the seat of dirty and destructive instinctive forces. The body is not regarded anymore as a symphony where the different organs play harmonically and synergistically in trying to maintain a healthy and beautiful nest for the development of the mind, under the guidance of the spirit. The body has been reduced to a productive factory. When a piece of machinery wears out, it is replaced. When the materials under process shift

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<sup>8</sup> Nawbah and Waslah are vocal and instrumental melodies that reflect distinctive local practices while maintaining the general principles of traditional Arab music. Nawbah is mainly practiced in North African countries and its origins are traced to the Andalusian caliphates of the middle ages. Waslah musical forms were the standard of entertainment for small gatherings of elite Arab men in the Eastern Mediterranean countries. Popular Egyptian and Syrian performers kept these traditional forms alive in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



from pre-established values, other materials are introduced to correct the imbalances. In some aspects, most medical doctors are behaving as bad factory managers do. It is good industrial practice to carefully maintain the equipment to avoid or minimize costly replacements and repairs. Instead, medicine prefers intervention to maintenance. Medicine has undoubtedly increased the average life span, but has neglected to work with other social forces in improving the quality of life, especially for those who are in the last stretch of those enlarged spans. In addition, medicine has forgotten that we are not masters of nature but its partners. As such, we can benefit of the many resources she offers for the maintenance of our health, but in return, she requires loving care to continue supporting human life.

The onslaught of regressive ideologies and economic interests has deeply affected medicine. Doctors are supposed to learn from the bodies they are treating. From fear of sexual abuse lawsuits, they are instead avoiding examinations of those bodies fully naked. Hence, they miss signals encoded in the forms of those bodies, in the iris of the eyes, in the surface of the tongue, in the conditions of the genitals, the nails, the skin, in the change of size and consistency of different parts of the body. Doctors now rely on results giving by machines, which often can intelligently complement the direct physical observations, but are generally used under narrow, divisive perspectives that separate the part under analysis from the rest of the body, the mind, and the spirit of the person under study. Insurance companies and medical organizations do not allow doctors time to talk with the people who seek their help. Too often, doctors pay no attention to the world visions of the people under their care, neglect to find out about the intensity of their communications with the spiritual cosmic forces of our origin, and they ignore their fears and handicapped sentiments.

Society thinks of doctors as infallible robots. Chance and human mistakes are punished as malpractice. Governmental institutions and insurance companies believe that markets shall be free, even for deliberate financial malpractice. Yet, they heavily regulate the relationship between doctors and those seeking their services. For those institutions and companies, life and death, health and disease are all entities to be measured in money terms, with social, political and entrepreneurial costs and benefits becoming more important than costs and benefits to the individuals.

Quantum healing, the latest addition to postmodern medicine, brings together concepts of discontinuity, paradoxical behavior, action at distance, and chance. It acts and reacts with the hologram of each cell in the body and questions whether illness should be treated only as effects produced by a given cause, which, once identified, could be eliminated, hence eliminating also its effects. Aside needed mechanical repairs; medicaments, supplements and interventions have for quantum healing as their main objective to help the cells regain by themselves their normal holographic patterns, which the disease has altered. Rather than acting on the cause or

its effects, quantum medicine acts by activating the healing powers of the cells themselves.

Under the double guidance of scientific method and recorded experience, medicine may move forward toward integration and harmony. This movement may avoid the atomizing dissolution to which conflicting ideologies of different medical schools, and conflicting economic interests, are pushing the health care systems. The advance to a new consciousness in medicine may end composing a joyful symphony where sounds from each organ, made up from the vibrations of their cells, rejoin reverberations from the mind, and hummings from the spirit in an harmonious ode to life and love.

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However, I assume the burden of musical, conceptual, or grammar errors that may still remain.

## False Democratization Ignoring the Magic Voices of Women and Babies

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In the following document, the discussion will begin with breastfeeding and bottle-feeding as “choice.” However, I acknowledge that breastfeeding may not always exist as a viable option. Furthermore, this is not intended as a criticism of women who choose to bottle-feed for reasons that should become clear. Rather, it is intended as a critique of the deficient mental-rational perspective that attempts to deny the value of the natural-vital sphere in modern life.

### Introduction

When the cultural approach to breastfeeding focuses solely on breast-*feeding* [*sic*],\* that is, a means of introducing a nutritious substance into the infant, breastfeeding is reduced to a physical process. However, the quantifying reductionism that considers only the physical process ignores the “complex and unique relationship . . . [that] has evolved between mothers and infants” (Stuart-Macadam, 1995, p. 75) over the millions of years of hominid existence (Dettwyler, 1995, p. 42). Breastfeeding, as a connection inherent in the natural-vital sphere of human life (Gebser, 1949/1953/1985, p. 49), is a magic connection between mother and infant. This connection is established through the “complementary interchange of a life-sustaining event” (Gebser, p. 140) from which both baby and mother benefit in a number of ways, only some of which are physical or physiological. Certainly, a vast body of research documents the contribution of breastfeeding to the physical health of both mother and baby, both short-term and long-term, in a myriad of ways that artificial feeding cannot duplicate or often even approach (see Moore Larsen, 2001; Walker, 1993). The positive physical consequences of breastfeeding and the detrimental consequences of artificial feeding cannot be denied.

Beyond such visible and measurable elements, breastfeeding contributes to the developing relational bond between a mother and her infant by continuing and further enhancing the magic connection that began with pregnancy. This embodied relationship “can be imitated by bottle feeding but not duplicated” (Lawrence, 1989, p. 396). As part of the natural human heritage, breastfeeding is a vital connection between the mother and her infant that originates in the magic. Moreover, breastfeeding is essential to humans’ ability to live in wholeness

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\* As Marcuse observes, “words and concepts tend to coincide” (1964, p. 87). By standardizing its meaning to suit a particular usage founded in quantifying attitudes, the word “breast-feeding” reduces our attention to the act of feeding. Consequently, throughout this text, breastfeeding will be written as a whole, while “breast-feeding” will be followed by [*sic*] to heighten our awareness that breastfeeding, as an embodied relationship, is far more than mere “feeding.”

throughout life, not only because of its physical effects, but also because it represents the integration of every aspect of life.

Unfortunately, an extreme of rationalism has permeated the cultural framework and, hence, women's discourse, with the result that the initiation of breastfeeding at birth and its continuation postpartum are often disrupted to some degree (e.g., Cadwell, 1997; United Nations Children's Fund, 1993). Many women have been persuaded not to breastfeed at all (e.g., Cadwell, United Nations Children's Fund). The impediments to breastfeeding that exist in hospitals are primarily unacknowledged, as if the birth environment and activities imposed on both mother and infant have no connection with the bonding process (Kitzinger, 2000, p. 235). As a result of either the complete failure to breastfeed or the disruptions that interfere with the breastfeeding relationship, the mother is "alienated from her baby" (Kitzinger, p. 235); such alienation is a symptom of the damage to or termination of the magic connection between the mother and her infant.

This treatment is only the beginning of various kinds of interference in the development of the breastfeeding bond between mother and infant. Societal constraints continue to hinder breastfeeding after mother and infant return home. Reflected in externally imposed temporal considerations, mental-rational thinking demands that breastfeeding frequency and, hence, the mother's contacts with her infant, are limited by schedules, further disrupting the bonding process and breastfeeding relationship (e.g., Balsamo, De Mari, Maher, & Serini, 1992/1995, p. 74; Marshall, 1985, p. 25). Breastfeeding, as "a phenomenon of the magic sphere, [a] vital experience, cannot be merely coupled with a mental phenomenon, time, without rendering both phenomena and their respective spheres deficient" (Gebser, 1949/1953/1985, p. 179). The magic needs of the infant-mother dyad are buried under the demands of this radical rationalism.

The mental-rational approach to breastfeeding, by considering breastfeeding as only a physical process and problem to be solved by "experts," (e.g. Auerbach, 1994, 1995) fails to recognize the far more profound meaning of breastfeeding for the mother and her infant. While measurable and, notably, mostly unduplicatable components of human milk (Lawrence, 1989, p. 73; Walker, 1993) are essential physical elements for the infant's fullest cognitive development (Walker), the breastfeeding *relationship* may be equally important (e.g., Small, 1998; Walker; Wang & Wu, 1996). Clearly, this aspect of human life seems of little import in the current societal framework with its hyperobjectifying focus on product and actions (Gebser, 1949/1953/1985). However, the breastfeeding relationship is actually extremely important as a powerful force in life and society as a whole.

### **The Magic Reality of Breastfeeding**

Breastfeeding cannot be encountered in its totality through the visible, measurable elements apprehended by the medical gaze (Foucault, 1973) without regard to the importance of the magic connection between mother and infant.

When such a mental-rational examination invalidates the emotional elements of the breastfeeding relationship, the reality of breastfeeding for the breastfeeding

dyad is ignored. Society is presented with an imperfect and incomplete view of the relational event of breastfeeding through the mental–rational perspective, as it can be observed only “partially and one–sidedly” (Stewart & Mickunas, 1974/1990, p. 50). Gebser (1949/1953/1985) describes such limited rational thinking as “*arrogant calculation and presumption (Anmassung)* which ultimately lead to the destructive fragmentation of human nature itself” (p. 255). Hence, efforts to quantify breastfeeding and reduce it to the merely physical serve to falsify the reality of breastfeeding; certainly, the mother’s reality is denied and falsified, and likely, that of the infant is as well. The reductionism of the mental–rational approach fails to acknowledge the magic essence of breastfeeding.

While the breastfeeding experience varies among mothers, from one mother’s description of her experience (see Moore Larsen, 2001), breastfeeding provides a sense of connection with her infant more intense than merely holding her infant in her arms. From the moment she hears her infant’s cry, the breastfeeding mother’s experience goes beyond that of a bottle–feeding mother. Even before she picks up her infant, the infant’s cry stimulates a natural reaction in the mother’s breasts, and an intense prickling sensation ensues as her milk begins to let down. As any mother holding her infant is able to do, the mother touches the silken smoothness of the baby’s skin; she feels the warmth and solidity of her infant’s body. However, here again her experience differs from that of a nonbreastfeeding mother, as she cradles the infant’s head against her naked breast in order to allow the babe to suckle.

When the infant is first put to breast and the mother experiences the sensation of the baby’s lips closing around her nipple, there is an immediate sense of connection and wholeness. She watches the infant’s cheeks, observing the muscular action of the jaw muscles as the baby suckles at her breast. As the baby suckles, as the drawing sensation goes intensely through her breast, she experiences an awareness of the act of breastfeeding that is both physical and simultaneously deeply emotional. The early prickling becomes tingling warmth that permeates the mother’s entire breast and spreads through her abdomen. As the baby begins to swallow, the breastfeeding mother experiences feelings of awe and overwhelming joy: this is *my* milk, milk from *my* body that is nourishing my baby and giving my baby life.

This mother–baby relationship can be experienced only bodily; such an interchange between the mother and infant can be gained only through the embodied relationship constituted by breastfeeding. This is a magic connection through a magic fluid, a “pre–eminent vital force” (Gebser, 1949/1953/1985, p. 270) that constitutes the mother–infant relationship at its most natural and vital (Gebser, p. 49). Just as two people who are simply friends do not experience the same kind of relationship as two people who are lovers, the mother who chooses to bottle–feed *cannot* experience the same kind of relationship with her infant as the breastfeeding mother has. Unlike bottle–feeding, breastfeeding is not a process abstracted and distanced from nature; it is a fully embodied, essentially natural activity and relationship that has its foundation in the vital essence of the

seemingly latent magic structure. As an embodied communication between mother and infant, breastfeeding is imbued with layers of meaning that cannot be easily measured or rationally understood. Overall, then, as an unparalleled means of *being-in-relation-ship*, breastfeeding manifests a unique bond completely unlike the relationship between a bottle-feeding mother and her bottle-fed infant.

Thus, as the mother breastfeeds, she experiences breastfeeding as a mode of relationship present at a depth that cannot be recognized or understood by the mere objectifying observation of breastfeeding. Kahn (1989) observes that “pregnancy, birth, and lactation give us entrance into larger realities grounded in life rather than abstracted from it, as is the case with metaphysical notions” (p. 27). At her most conscious level, the mother often experiences breastfeeding her infant as an embodied means of providing nourishment through the magic fluid, her milk. Sometimes, however, the mother experiences breastfeeding as an embodied means of offering comfort to her infant; she is consciously aware of an added meaning for breastfeeding. Hence, to a breastfeeding mother, breastfeeding is “a unity manifesting itself through a multiplicity of changing perspectives” (Stewart & Mickunas, 1974/1990, p. 50). Indeed, there may be a number of conscious meanings assigned by the mother to her act of breastfeeding. Underlying the always conscious level, though, is a deeper meaning for breastfeeding. Previously, the infant was physically connected to the mother via the umbilicus and completely dependent upon her for life; now the infant is connected via breastfeeding and dependent upon her for the life-sustaining magic fluid. Each time the mother and infant breastfeed, the meanings of the mother’s experience of breastfeeding and of her relationship with her infant are intensified as the magic connection between them is strengthened. This is the essence of the vital connection created by breastfeeding: the unseeable, indescribable magic-rooted connection that can exist only between a breastfeeding mother and infant.

Breastfeeding is a means of manifesting a particular mother–infant relationship that has profound differences from other relationships, though also clear similarities. As a model of relationship that is solidly based in love and nurturing, breastfeeding will form the foundation for all other relationships the infant develops (Zaner, 1997). Because it reinforces the relationship between a mother and her infant, breastfeeding empowers both mother and infant in the development of their mutual relationship and self–relationships. If the breastfeeding relationship is not interrupted by societal stigmas regarding weaning age, the relationship between mother and infant continues to develop, providing a powerful model for being-in-relation-ship. Ultimately, without such a powerful relationship to a “nurturing m/other,” the baby will be limited in the capacity to “be and become” in relation to the external world and society.

Furthermore, latent possibilities exist within the infant, i.e., “phenomena of consciousness and integration” (Gebser, 1949/1953/1985, p. 6) that may be manifested as the infant matures and develops. The expression and sense of gratification of vital needs are part of the process of emergent consciousness in the infant; through increasing awareness of need, there is an awareness of “self”

developing, which allows for an emerging awareness of mother as other. That is, mother, previously experienced merely as an extension of the embodied infant, is becoming recognizable as Other. Hence, the relationship between mother and infant is essential to the baby's cognitive and social development; i.e., "the immediate nurturing other (parent/baby) is already within the self (baby/parent) as that whereby the baby is at all able to be and become" (Zaner, 1997, p. 450). For the most complete development and balance in life, the baby requires a strong relationship with mother. The bond established through the magic act, breastfeeding, ensures the connection is strong and supports the infant in becoming whole.

Breastfeeding promotes wholeness in the infant by allowing the infant, in whom vital instincts, drives, and emotions form the "basic attitude and agency of energy" (Gebser, 1949/1953/1985, p. 144), to live in comfort within the mental-rational world, in which cerebral activities, including abstraction, seeing, and measuring are paramount (Gebser, pp. 144, 146). By embodying the incorporation of the magic with the mental-rational world, breastfeeding enables the infant to live in balance within. As Pescador (1973) reminds us, "as soon as one is born one begins to live" (p. 144). Though still dependent, at birth, if not before, the infant becomes an "active receiver" (Pescador, p. 145) of everything the world has to offer; every moment of life, the infant must constitute meaning out of his or her experiences. As a magic relationship, breastfeeding is deeply connected to the infant's experiencing and full development of meaning as well as to the ability to become fully integrated. In this way, then, breastfeeding is not only a question of how to supply nourishment to an infant; it is a far more complex issue that influences the futures of both infant and society. As a relational model for the infant learning to be-in-relationship, as well as a model of integration for becoming a fully functioning human being, breastfeeding is profoundly influential.

### **The Rationalization of Breastfeeding**

Because the mental-rational culture in which we are embedded does not recognize the essential meaning of breastfeeding, it has endeavored to find ways to "free" women from this natural demand. In our struggle to be free of nature (Gebser, 1949/1953/1985, p. 50), artificial feeding has been culturally normalized as a choice equivalent to breastfeeding (Newman, 1992). Concomitantly, the number of women who choose to breastfeed their infants at birth has decreased significantly over the past 200 years (e.g., Cadwell, 1997; Small, 1998; United Nations Children's Fund, 1993). In addition, the number of women who continue to breastfeed their infants beyond the first couple of weeks after birth has also declined (e.g., Cadwell; United Nations Children's Fund). This decline in both breastfeeding initiation and duration has serious health implications for both the infant and the mother as well as significant effects on infant cognitive development (see Moore Larsen, 2001 for review; e.g., United Nations Children's Fund; Walker). Moreover, it impacts all of society, not only with regard to these

health and developmental issues, but also with regard to our ability to become integral beings.

The decline of breastfeeding and the normalization of bottle-feeding (Newman, 1992) can be connected to many extraneous factors, such as level of education, ethnicity, availability of artificial baby milk substitutes, and employment (e.g., Adair, Popkin, & Guilkey, 1993; Auerbach & Guss, 1984; Marmet, 1993; see Moore Larsen, 2001 for review). However, all of these factors are constructed in the fragmenting perspectival cultural framework that has imposed rationalized values of quantification (Gebser, 1949/1953/1985) and productivity on society in order to support industrial and technological progress (Gebser; Marcuse, 1964; Mumford, 1934/1962). Gebser observes that

as long as the moderating quality of mental consciousness was still effective, abstraction and quantification were only latently capable of negative effects. But when moderation was displaced by the immoderation of the *ratio* . . . abstraction began to transform itself into its extreme form of manifestation. (p. 95)

With the loss of moderation, quantification has become increasingly imposed on life events. Thus, most examinations of breastfeeding have focused on the *products* and *process* of breastfeeding, abstracting it from emotional considerations in order to make it measurable and valid (Gebser).

First, the milk, particularly its composition, has been closely investigated and correlated with infant health and growth (e.g., Dewey, Heinig, Nommsen, & Lonnerdal, 1991; Dewey, Heinig, Nommsen, Peerson, & Lonnerdal, 1992; Dewey, Heinig, & Nommsen-Rivers, 1995; Lawrence, 1989; see Moore Larsen, 2001 for review}. In conjunction with this product focus, other research has considered breast-feeding [*sic*], that is, the process itself (Auerbach, 1991). The emphasis of such investigations is on problems connected with the process, i.e., obvious factors that can be quantitatively correlated with the decline in breastfeeding, such as employment, ethnicity, or difficulties the mother appears to have producing milk in sufficient quantity for her infant. The focus on such visible aspects is representative of the “reduced validity of perspectival thinking” (Gebser, 1949/1953/1985, p. 258), which too often attempts to separate particular factors from the whole and investigate them as isolated events.

Ultimately, the quantitative focus is drawn to the final product of breastfeeding: the baby. As a product, the baby is measured by growth and development standards (Dewey, 1998; Dewey et al., 1992) that constrain the infant to the merely visible without regard to the magic. In this mechanistic perspective, the process of breastfeeding is merely a method of production; the baby is reduced to product. Such product-process measurements are a result of the “one-sided technological and dehumanizing ‘progressive’ developments” (Gebser, 1949/1953/1985, p. 96) which have their source in the rational phase of the mental structure.

When breastfeeding is considered merely a means of feeding an infant, then it is simply one among a number of possible and purportedly equivalent choices for



infant feeding. In our democratic society, the method of infant feeding, like birth control, is often loudly defended as an individual, private choice. Because breastfeeding is idealized as “best for baby,” bottle-feeding is considered adequate even when a woman is capable of breastfeeding, supporting the conviction that the choice is no one’s business but the mother’s. Yet, even considered merely as a choice for or against the means of supporting the best physical and mental growth possible for the healthiest future, infant feeding decisions impact all of society. Moreover, as a choice for or against the promotion of a “fully completed and realized wholeness” (Gebser, 1949/1953/1985, p. 99) in human beings, breastfeeding is fundamental to our future integration. Hence, though the choice can be individual, it can never be entirely private. Placing breastfeeding on the level of individual rationalized “choice” is an attempt to abstract breastfeeding from the context of its magic reality as the nurturing of a potential integral being.

### **False democratization of discourse**

The emergence of the mental-rational mode is associated with industrialization. The industrial system, in order to utilize women to achieve its goals, incorporated rationalistic values into employment settings and manipulated social discourse in order to present “choices” dictated by deficient mental-rational perspectives as ideals to be achieved by “modern” women (Marcuse, 1964). As a result, it was necessary to reconstruct the cultural discourse that had previously encouraged women to find fulfillment in their roles as mothers. As part of this process, Campbell (1984) notes that the capitalist focus on production and market has reduced traditional women’s work to insignificance because it “produces use value but no exchange value” (p. 557). This cultural transformation, by redefining “work” to exclude women’s home and reproductive activities (Campbell, p. 557; Martin, 1987/1992, p. 66), impelled women to seek choices outside the domestic sphere. The new discourse seemed to offer women a means of achieving both power and identity only through movement into nondomestic roles.

Just as women had previously internalized the discourse of femininity and good motherhood, they now internalized the new discourse describing women’s “right” to work outside the home. The previous discourse, predicated on difference, was devalued; concomitantly, those unique abilities due to biological differences and, hence, women themselves, have been devalued as well. Following the dictates of this discourse, in order to be valued as productive members of society, women have had to give up roles that result from their biological attributes. Campbell (1984) observes,

A human being does not give up a fundamental biological, social and psychological role such as lactation with such ease unless there has been a radical transformation in the mode of production and the social roles that grow out of it. (p. 557)

Such a transformation means, ultimately, “the achievements of advanced industrial civilization lead to the triumph of the one-dimensional reality over all contradiction” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 124). In this process, the one-dimensional reality

of the mental–rational world isolates and denies those elements of life that do not fit the superimposed reality.

Within these boundaries, women began to examine the ways they were being defined and assigned roles within the larger society. Masculinist language defines “women’s work,” i.e., mothering, and thus, women themselves, as less important than men’s work and men (Martin, 1987/1992, p. 66). As a result of their examination of such language, many feminists claimed “that what had previously been seen as purely biological processes are actually social in practically every detail” (Carter, 1995, p. 18). In rejection of what they perceived as entirely masculinist definitions of women and motherhood, many feminists fought the enculturized version of the “exalted . . . role of mother . . . through . . . [which] women were to find their identity and meaning in their lives” (Apple, 1987, p. 5). Feminist definitions at this end of the continuum emphasized sameness rather than difference in their endeavor to persuade society that women are capable and have the right to equal roles in what had previously been considered the male sphere of activity, i.e., nondomestic work.

To succeed in this effort, interchangeability, especially in infant feeding and child care–giving, appears to be necessary so that women can “choose” to take on other roles (Smith & Balka, 1988). Furthermore, some vocal feminists have redefined women’s needs to exclude natural biological functions (Butler, 1990/1999). In this perspective, only “exchange value, not truth value counts” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 57). As a result of this limiting rationalistic focus, some feminists began suggesting that motherhood lacks value as a career and that it is unable to fulfill women’s needs. While the extreme feminist perspective is not flagrantly “anti–breastfeeding,” such feminists sought to disengage themselves from associations with particular needs that do not fit their definition of the “appropriate” roles for women, including “the exclusive task of being a woman who is breastfeeding” {Brown, 1988; as cited in Carter, 1995}. Claiming to speak for all women, they demand “our share of honored and socially useful human toil” {Schreiner, 1911; as cited in Ehrenreich & English, 1978, p. 19}, and define that toil according to the technological–rationalist standard. By accepting this standard and thereby rejecting mothering as valuable labor, they honor the masculinist definition of labor.

Ehrenreich and English (1978) point out that when feminists demand women should be treated “on an equal footing with men” (p. 19), it is an equally masculinist “sexual rationalist position” (p. 19); certainly it reflects the predominance of rational–mental thinking. The authors describe sexual rationalism as a radical position that “mocks the patriarchal myths of female inferiority, denounces modern ‘sex roles’ as arbitrary social inventions, and dreams of a social order in which women and men will be not only equal, but, insofar as possible, functionally interchangeable” (p. 19). By adopting a position of sexual rationalism, feminists focus solely on the assimilation of women into the dominant masculinist, mental–rationalist society, as if men and women are sexless, interchangeable parts of a machine.

In this process, sexual rationalists accept and perpetrate the masculinist definition and societal devaluation of those biological roles consonant with being a woman, becoming “mechanisms through which consumer capitalism integrates individuals into its world of thought and behavior” (Marcuse, 1964, p. xii). Furthermore, by ignoring the value of inherent differences between men and women, this feminist approach actually supports “the patriarchal myths of female inferiority” (Ehrenreich & English, 1978, p. 19). This approach allows only substitution of externally–defined roles for the role allowed by women’s reproductive nature and hence, limits women’s choices for living life. In doing so, the radical feminist position actually reduces women’s ability to achieve their full potential. Those who claim to be devoted to a multi–discursive democratic ideal have themselves devalued motherhood and breastfeeding as contrary to women’s freedom and hence, imposed a false democracy on women.

In contrast, Carter (1995) suggests that

Breast–feeding [*sic*] in fact represents one of the central dilemmas of feminism: should women attempt to minimize gender differences as the path to liberation or should they embrace and enhance gender difference through fighting to remove the constraints placed on them by patriarchy and capitalism, thus becoming more ‘truly’ women? (p. 14)

By minimizing gender differences and by ignoring the importance of the magic–embedded act of breastfeeding, the mental–rational, supposedly democratic discourse devalues women not only as women, but also as fully contributing members of society. In the end, the attempt to minimize difference and to homogenize all women contributes to their subjugation.

As a result of women internalizing such devaluing discourse, women who choose to breastfeed and remain at home with their children have sometimes been ridiculed by other women. Even if the woman who values her biological and reproductive nature chooses to fulfill herself through her children is not thought of as a “freak” or “neurotic housewife” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 59), she may be considered a throwback to a primitive way of life, a time before the technological advances that are supposed to “save” women from having to endure such lives. She is often demeaned by other women, as well as by those men who have adopted the extreme feminist perspective, as atavistic and, further, as weakly accepting her dominance by men through her participation in an outdated way of life.

Feminists who have accepted the notion that women who are “merely” mothers are suppressed seem to believe that all women “will not only recognize the rightness of feminist claims made in their behalf, but that, together, they will discover a common identity” (Butler, 1990, p. 324). Such claims to “right” by some feminists reflect their consumption of the rationalizing cultural discourse. Marcuse (1964) explains, “increasingly . . . the management of women was achieved through forms of regulation which came less from external surveillance than from the internalized controls of discourses of femininity and respectability” (p. 117).

Particularly in the twentieth century, much feminist discourse has been based upon a belief that any capitulation to reproductive or biological differences

contributes to ways in which “masculinist power is eviscerating feminist gains” (Diamond & Quinby, 1988, p. ix). The feminist recognition that, in many societies and for many centuries, men have controlled women’s reproductive powers and lactation behavior is certainly valid. As Diamond and Quinby note, “a primary target of masculinist power has been the subjugation of women, most especially through their bodies” (p. xiv). Thus, some feminists have opposed any construction of cultural roles based on biological differences, with the result that even when not overtly demeaned, women who reject the “rightness” of these claims for themselves are pitied for making the choice to “waste” themselves by being “merely” mothers. Such limitations of considering motherhood from a solely mental–rational perspective are reflected in French’s (1985) contemptuous claim that “motherhood” is “merely” a socially–constructed role defined by men through printed materials in which women “were forced to gain their identity [*sic*] solely from their domestic roles” (as cited in Schulman, 1988, p. 101). French and like–minded feminists argue that womanhood and motherhood are defined not so much by biology as they are informed by masculinist definitions of women’s biology that have skewed the meaning of women and mother in order to provide men with greater control over women. Further, such feminists believe these biocultural roles were not only defined *for* and *about* women and imposed upon women by the social structure but also were eventually internalized by women and acclaimed as “natural” and “right.” While to some extent these beliefs contain some truth, they are not unassailable, as many feminists themselves err by going to a rationalist extreme. As a socially contextualized reaction to previous limitations, the “truths” espoused by some feminist movements have committed women to particular modes of being that are in themselves extreme.

Flax (1990) suggests feminist theory has been seeking absolute truth. Such a search, however, takes place in an inherently false framework. Any search for “absolute truth” presupposes that one universal discourse exists for all women; such a search must inevitably ignore the multiplicity of truths women hold. As Flax observes,

Any episteme requires the suppression of discourses that threaten to differ with or undermine the authority of the dominant one. Hence, within feminist theory a search for a defining theme of the whole or a feminist viewpoint may require the suppression of the important and discomfiting voices of persons with experiences unlike our own. The suppression of these voices seems to be a necessary condition for the (apparent) authority, coherence, and universality of our own. (pp. 48–49)

Feminists who believe they can speak for all women with demands for interchangeable equality are themselves establishing a particular truth claim as belonging to all women.

Moreover, this feminist discourse is a reflection of women’s internalization of the dominant rationalist discourse. Hence, through a process of deficient rationalist discourse that pretends to be democratic, women have participated in their own deception and denial of wholeness. Women have listened to “great words of freedom and fulfillment” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 57) and believed those messages are

germane to their lives. In actuality, such messages “obtain meaning only in the context of propaganda [and] business” (Marcuse, p. 57); i.e., these messages acquire meaning only through the falsely democratizing discourse propelled by the needs of the industrial machine/mental–rational mode.

In fact, though, this effort represents the “falsely universalizing perspective of the dominant group” (Flax, 1990, p. 49). True democracy recognizes the validity of multiple discourses. Marcuse concludes that “a comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevails in advanced industrial civilization, a token of technical progress” (p. 1); such constraining unfreedom represents the deficiencies of the overwhelming rational–mental construct. Most importantly, as women have attempted to explain a magical connection with a degenerate, overwhelmingly mental–rational perspective (Gebser, p. 288), they have lost understanding of themselves as vital beings and of the importance of connections arising from the magic structure. Ultimately, extreme feminists have joined other rationalistic institutions of society in denying the necessity of integrating latent structures by renouncing their biological differences. Hence, women, influenced by thought processes that have been structured into rigid conformity with scientific “reason,” rather than achieving greater power, have experienced ongoing loss as a result of being increasingly constricted by a limiting discourse.

In this discourse, women have been offered a mirage of freedom and fulfillment through supposedly greater choice of lifestyle; in fact, one choice has merely been substituted for another. Though the list seems to offer more than one choice, society, in its attempts to subdue nature, informs women which choices are preferred and which choices are not. Through this process, women have been transformed from “subjugated” within the home to willing accomplices in an even greater subjugation that actually denies nature and the importance of achieving a balance with magic needs. Thus, as women have internalized the rationalist discourse, they have accepted a one–dimensional reality by surrendering fundamental elements of being women, leading to increasing fragmentation of women *qua* women. Though supposedly diverse and numerous, the societally preferred choices are almost meaningless in the context of woman *qua* *woman* considered in relation to herself as a reproductive being rather than in relation to men.

In the denial and subsequent devaluation of biological differences that accompany attempts to bury deeper and even to deny the existence of latent magic structures and vital needs rooted in our reproductive natures, women participate in their own fragmentation and alienation of body and self (Martin, 1987/1992, p. 89). If women engage in the act of their own distortion by accepting the deficient rationalistic societal standards for being women and for being mothers, they actively participate in their own limitation and denial of their true nature. This becomes a mere duplication of the very behavior against which they believe themselves to be fighting; hence, it is one more path embedded within patriarchal controls. The “truths” defined by the extreme discourse of the women’s movement commit

women to another existence that is equally reductionistic and destructive by discounting the value of women qua women.

Despite the many barriers imposed by the structure of the rational–mental world, Martin (1987/1992) suggests that, because women live in an ongoing juxtaposition of biology and culture, they will discern the falseness of the cultural dichotomies imposed upon them (p. 200), whether by men or by women through a purportedly democratic discourse that reflects only extreme rationalism. In reaction against the extreme feminist claim, Butler (1990) observes, “a variety of women from various cultural positions have refused to recognize themselves as ‘women’ in the terms articulated by feminist theory” (p. 325). Women who recognize the fragmentation and alienation from body and self recognize that, as Martin (1987/1992) explains, “the dominant ideology is partial” (p. 200) for women.

Furthermore, the ideology of fragmentation is also partial for infants who are forced to live in a world that will never fully meet their needs as magic beings (Gebser, 1949/1953/1985, p. 153). Along with his or her mother, the infant is subjugated to the requirements and superimposed functions (Marcuse, 1964) of the unbalanced mental–rational structure. The demands of the mental–rational world continually clash with the needs of the pretechnological, prereflective infant in her or his dawning magic mentality, as the infant “can only react to the dictates of drive and instinct, that is, in emotional, non–committal, and chaotic or predominantly magic responses” (Gebser, p. 153). The infant’s cognitive transformations depend in large part upon relationships with others, especially the “primary caregiver.” In the early days after birth, the mother is usually the primary caregiver. The quality of this relationship is commuted when the bottle is substituted for breastfeeding, and the effects on the mother–infant relationship are likely to be exacerbated when another caregiver is substituted for mother as well.

Thus, through falsely universalizing discourse, breastfeeding, as an act, as a statement of difference, and in particular, as an inestimable magic relationship, has been ignored and devalued by purportedly democratic institutions and individuals fixed in the deficient mental–rational construct. Beyond the known detrimental physical effects of artificial baby milk substitutes (see Lawrence, 1989; Moore Larsen, 2001; Walker, 1993), no one knows with any certainty how not breastfeeding impacts the cognitive and relational development of the infant. Significant visible consequences are revealed to quantitative examinations via physiological, physical, immunological, and neurological differences in the infant, both short–term and long–term. However, as a result of the choice not to breastfeed and, hence, to sever the embodied magic connection between mother and baby, the relationship between a bottle–feeding mother and infant is manifested in a number of ways that diverge significantly from that of the breastfeeding dyad. The most vital differences, those that exist in the qualitative aspects of the relationship, cannot be investigated through hyperobjectifying examination.

Because the infant learns to *be-in-relationship* by *being-in-relationship* with the mother, when the breastfeeding relationship between mother and infant is altered, disrupted, or denied, the dynamics of the infant's future relationships with others and with society are, inevitably, also commuted. The entire effect of such alterations is unknown, as the long-term consequences of any disruption to the natural relationship between mother and infant are far from fully explored and may be unexplorable. However, I argue that the consequences of disrupting or denying the breastfeeding relationship are of serious significance not only to the infant and family, but also to society as a whole.

Our failure to facilitate the development of balance with the magic in our lives and in our infants' lives is an attempt to suppress the magic. Clearly, the life of the infant depends as much as does the mother's on a performance that fits within the established roles and functions demanded by society. Yet, as Gebser (1949/1953/1985) points out, society itself must make the transition to the integral structure by accepting the importance and need humans have for each of the structures in various aspects of life (p. 531). Ultimately, then, transformations in breastfeeding practices will impact other people and society as a whole, as well as each breastfeeding dyad, for better or for worse. Hence, infant feeding is not only a personal issue: it is also a cultural issue with great complexity.

In order for women to be valued in wholeness as women and for breastfeeding to be fully supported as a valuable activity, with the attendant far-reaching consequences for society as a whole, a fundamental transformation of the way society and the industrial environment are constructed is necessary. Some women recognize the need for a culture "in which our current rigid separations and oppositions are not present" (Martin, p. 200). It is time that women, rather than trying to be the same as men by denying the qualities unique to women, celebrate their differences and the unique abilities empowered by those differences. Rather than attempting to distance women from their inherent biological natures and thus denying the magic, it will be far more empowering to work towards integration of those roles in such a way that women can live whole and integral lives. To accomplish this, breastfeeding and other elements of women's inherent biological nature must be integrated into all dimensions of life rather than restricted to narrow sites. To end the servitude of women and to support women in the achievement of true equality, there must be truly democratic freedom to choose their ways of participation in society from all possible choices rather than only those defined by the popular and undemocratic discourse. Marcuse (1964) explains,

In the last analysis, the question of what are true and false needs must be answered by the individuals themselves, but only in the last analysis; that is, if and when they are [truly] free to give their own answer[s]. As long as they are kept incapable of being autonomous, as long as they are indoctrinated and manipulated (down to their very instincts), their answer[s] to this question cannot be taken as their own. (p. 6)

The false democratic discourse with which women, as well as men, have been indoctrinated prevents them from being able to see all the choices that could be

available as valuable. As a result, women are enculturated to “choose” what is considered worthwhile labor according to the rationalized dictates of society; the choices that are presented as most desirable deny their vital essence.

### Conclusion

Thus, the current fabric of society is informed by a mental–rational structure that is overemphasized and suppresses the latent, yet essential, structures within us through a rationalized process of false democratization. Gebser (1949/1953/1985) observes that we exist “as the integrality of [our] mutations” (p. 152). In each of us, the integration of the structures of consciousness exists in a balance; for each of us, the balance is different (Gebser, p. 152). However, most members of our society are forced to emphasize the mental–rational structure. Gebser asserts, “all structures must be lived commensurate with their constitutive values if we are to live a whole or integral life” (p. 155). That is, we need to achieve a more appropriate balance of the structures if we are not to become “psychic ruins” (Gebser, p. 255).

In the predominant rationalized cultural framework, neither women nor men are yet truly free to give their own answers: they are indoctrinated and manipulated to be conscious only of limited perspectives and to be blind to others. Gebser (1949/1953/1985) asserts that “the new consciousness . . . will not be fully valid so long as it is not lived in daily life” (p. 530). Thus, rather than demanding that women be incorporated into the existing rationalist society as merely additional, sexlessly interchangeable cogs in the system, both women and men need to work to conceive an alternative vision of the world. Women must embrace their differences, hold them up with pride, and empower themselves as women by working together to create a society in which both women and men can fulfill themselves in all ways without limitation. Moreover, in order to overcome the losses engendered by the deficiencies inherent in the mental–rational mode and the subjugation of magic needs situated in the natural–vital essence of life, humans must strive to create a balance that recognizes the importance and validity of magic elements of human life, such as the connection created by breastfeeding.

Gebser (1949/1953/1985) asserts, “only when the one–sided will to displace one part of humanity and the (magically accentuated) demand for equal rights are abandoned in favor of an integration will the *human* be able to emerge” (p. 262). Society’s ultimate goal should be to learn to value *all* the abilities and differences that both women and men have and hence, their full potential. We must transform the rationalist society within which women and men are embedded as mere cogs in the gears into a transcending humanist society in which differences pertaining to sex or gender are fully accepted and integrated instead of forming a basis for fragmentation and isolation. Only through such an effort will we be promoting the merger of the structures in all our lives such that we will be empowered to live as wholly integrated beings.



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## Shamanic Processing: Magical consciousness as worldly expression of the integral<sup>1</sup>

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### **Retreat to Nature: Upsurgence of the Integral**

There are major fragmenting stresses at large in the late modern world. Gebser and others have expressed our anxiety over time and space and nature. This drives people to want to retreat to nature, away from what we call civilization, to recoup some lost feeling of the healing womb of the natural world, the vital connection that has been lost. Or on the other extreme they strive to enhance the vital through skydiving, car racing, bungee jumping or mountain climbing. Such acts put them in touch with their body and the flesh of the world. Many people also desire a simple life and retreat to nature for succor. They perceive the magic of nature as a helping factor in reintegrating the world, and making whole the fragmentation of our age. They look for healing and a sense of wholeness in a world that continuously separates and divides, dichotomizes and sorts out the uniqueness that highlights the differences of each person. There are many today who go on quests of one form or another to get in touch with nature, to recapture the natural world, or more typically today to find themselves in the solitude of the woods.

One of the more interesting recent experiences *Running to the mountains: A midlife adventure* is written by Jon Katz (1999), a writer for the cutting edge technology magazine, *Wired*. Katz bought a small house in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York. Katz writes of his own very personal dialogue with himself. He also writes about the real Thomas Merton who he did his (often tortured and forced) retreats. Katz decides that what Merton was trying to do was unnecessary (159, 171, 185) and most likely drove Merton to the brink of insanity, at times. Katz decides he doesn't have to give up his family and his normal world to get away from the buzz of city life. Of course, he winds up taking along all the comforts of home on his trip into solitude: satellite TV, a VCR, a portable computer and his two dogs.

We might find all of this laughable, however, Katz says the question of technology was irrelevant because the real questions he was seeking to answer were: "who am I? What am I about? what do I want to be?" To answer these questions technology was not really an issue one way or the

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other. Maybe Katz is right and the questions of life and living today don't get confronted with or without technology. Maybe the nature of the late modern world has more to do with identity, and individual stories, and individual goals, with the quest. These however are not questions for one who lives the natural world, for one who is in unity with world. These questions don't arise for one who lives the shamanic life, who is living magically.

Everyday while out running with my dog, I see other runners with earphones from CD or tape players in their ears. Their trip like that of Katz isn't about connecting with nature either, although some would tell you differently. An academic colleague who is also a runner has listened his way through hundreds of hours of audiotapes on ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, western philosophy, and art, etc. His runs along the beautiful lake Michigan aren't about connecting with nature. He is learning about the whole world, what it was and is, but he is everyday missing the world he lives. We might think of this "concrete" runner, running in the midst of the natural world but experiencing about as much as an ostrich, as typical of the postmodern world we live.

One person who might understand this "concrete" runner is Fredrick Jameson.

It was Jamison who said:

Postmodernism is what you have when the modernization process is complete and nature is gone for good. It is a more fully human world than the older one, but one in which 'culture' has become a veritable 'second nature' (ix).

Or in another quote Jameson adds, "Nature is no longer visible to postmodern consciousness, which is 'textualising' the world, moving laterally through its representations rather than looking through them 'to nature itself'" (Jameson, *Postmodernism*).

Jameson is definitely wrong. There may not be a focus on nature for some postmodern souls, but it is not invisible, it is not gone. In fact if these souls aren't careful they may literally trip over the nature they think is gone. When all is said and done, as they say, there is no way the natural world could ever disappear, even in the best of times nature announces its presence. To be in the world is to be an integral part of the world especially the natural world. The natural world integrates us regardless of what we may think or say about "second nature."

I think some of what is going on in late modern times has to do with the mutation "away from" the mental-rational and the upsurge of the integral. But as Gebser says, in these transitional periods there is always disruption and fragmentation. As the mental-rational looses its hold there is a sense of loss, a sense of disorientation. The mental is oriented consciousness and when it "retreats" one is naturally left with *dis-*

orientation. So we need to investigate the fragmentation that occurs with the shift in consciousness. As Kramer suggests:

The fragmentation of a given consciousness structure opens two options: first, the intimation of an emergent integration that is both a mutation and a restructuring of other structures of consciousness; second, the reversion to a culturally available mode of consciousness that promises “salvation” from the ravages of the dissolving consciousness structure. These salvations, however, no longer offer an integration. In one sense, this is not a problem of fragmenting rationality but rather a lack of awareness of a mutation of consciousness toward another structure. While the latter may not yet have become prevalent, in the sense of being “lived,” it appears in the fragmentation of a prevalent structure and in what is sensed as missing. The missing aspect dominates the fragmenting consciousness and, as noted above, can be filled either by reverting to magic and its power to regenerate myths or by tracing out the constitution of an emerging awareness. The latter, according to Gebser, prevails only through a commitment. Yet the important methodological consideration focuses precisely on the missing aspect that offers access to the fragmenting and to the upsurging consciousness structure. Upsurgence has always been atemporal and aperspectival, although not explicitly manifest within the diverse “time” structures belonging to the various modes of awareness. Instead, each culturally specific cosmology emerges against an ever-present aperspectival ground. The aperspectival is implicated with every structuring or meaning-giving cosmology, including the “scientific,” the Buddhist, or any other universe that exists” (Kramer, 1992, p. xxiii).

According to Kramer, then, the fragmentation of the mental (or its deficient form, the mental-rational which is already fragmented) indicates the emergent integration of our present experience. Reading Gebser we find that he argues through description that we are in the throes of the emergent integral consciousness, and surely it is integrating the present experience; it is an integrating experience that surpasses what is currently the predominant mental-rational. However, at the same time I think his second option is also in full swing, there is a longing for the reversion to modes of consciousness that would also seem to integrate experience and provide “salvation.” In our time that recovered consciousness structure is the magical. The magical promises a reunion with the world, elimination of the divisions within the world, a healing of the rifts caused by fragmentation, and reconnection with others—the recreation of the tribal community.

Yet, as Kramer says these “salvations” don’t really provide an integration, but are an attempt to revert to the power of magic “to regenerate myths or by tracing out the constitution of an emerging awareness.” Indeed, I would suggest that both movements are really part of the same movement. What is perceived as a reversion to magic and the shamanic, is really the upsurgence of the integral, we cannot go home, there is no escaping our experience; escape is still enmeshment in our own experience. Kramer cites Gebser as saying that this “prevails only through a commitment,” and I would argue that the seeking of mental individuals is already a strong

commitment to mutation, though not necessarily fully understood by the individual who is seeking. In other words, Katz's high-tailing it to the mountains is to a large extent very self-conscious. He is very aware that he hasn't escaped much of anything, and yet he finds a partially bracketed space from which to reflect upon his own cultural experience. And finally, when Kramer says that: "The aperspectival is implicated with every structuring or meaning-giving cosmology, including the "scientific," the Buddhist, or any other universe that exists," he is pointing to the current integration which seems to retrieve the magical shamanic experience, only to find that it is implicated in the upsurge of the integral—it is a worldly expression of the integral.

So we trace out the run by a postmodern individual, away from the late modern technology laden world, a run into the woods, which is really no escape at all. And indeed we can generalize that escape is not possible. And in a similar argument we can say that modern movements that take up the ancient art of the shamanic, or which claim to follow the path of the shamanic are also caught in the upsurge of the integral. That is the nature of the shamanic experience is also transformed in the move of late modern peoples to find wholeness and integration. Shamanism, the magical power of nature is itself transformed in the processes of modern cultures. This is a matter of *how* the shamanic, an aspect of the magical consciousness, is articulated, and what hermeneutics are at work in the transformation of the magical in the contemporary world.

### **Tracing The Magical Experience**

We have, therefore, reached the conclusion that the magical is not some independent and fully achievable consciousness only to take it back so that we can trace the nature of the magical consciousness structure, the *experience* that is magical.

What is the shape of the primitive experience? Can we know the experience of the magical person? Could a magical person know the experience of the mental-rational, integral world? We will contend that such is not fully possible nor is it necessary. Considering this very possibility, however, Octavio Paz suggests some interesting considerations. Paz speculates about these questions in his book *Convergences*. Being a poet, I'm not sure we could ever get a straight answer from Paz, but he challenges us to think about the "problem." Can a primitive person understand, for example, satellite technology except in terms of the world he/she knows in direct connection with nature—he would think an airplane some sort of bird. Can we ever know the world of a tribal person?

Once again, a conclusion I am reluctant to accept suggests itself: neither moral and esthetic meanings nor scientific and magical ones are wholly translatable from one society to another. For the Papuans to understand modern science they must abandon their beliefs; for us really to understand the Papuan world, we too must change. In both cases this change ought not to imply the abandonment of our former personality and the culture into which we were born. The understanding of others is a contradictory ideal: it asks that we change without changing, that we be other without ceasing to be ourselves (Paz, 1987).

He suggests that to even begin we must expand who we are. We could not begin to understand the magical without adding to our relation with world and cosmos. And to be authentic we must become other without losing who we are.

However, we must also state that we cannot fully know the experience of tribal/magical people:

There are no truly tribal people, nor has there been for a long time (Feuerstein, 1987). We might note that magical peoples have been influenced by “invasions” from the mythic and modern worlds for eons.

At one time, once, there was magic consciousness. To ask the question about time or to state that magic consciousness existed as the predominant form or mode of consciousness at one time, misses the question, indeed misses the experience. Magic consciousness exists as an identity with the world, perhaps a local identity, since I’m not sure there could be any such thing as a universal identity unless what we mean is the unity of the archaic consciousness structure or origin. We might say that magic is an immediate and concrete connection.

I/we are not tribal people and although the ability is there (the openness to the magical) to experience it as it was once experienced (in ordinary context) is not possible and is also raises a temporal issue that is meaningless, the magical is pre-temporal.

And while we are discussing the *a priori* shape of magical experience we should also note that the *place* of magic is of no consequence since it is pre-spatial.

Anyway, the tribal or magical consciousness structure wouldn’t be concerned with the issue or problem of how the world is experienced. In fact to ask the question about individuals or persons experiencing the magical world is to ask the wrong question, since there is no per-sona with the magical.

This set of statements although dealing with the magical in the “historical” and current world order is also essentially Gebserian. And, we know that Gebser does describe the experience of the magical and that it is alive and active in our present consciousness despite the fact that there are no magical peoples alive today and despite the fact that we cannot ourselves be predominantly magical in consciousness. So how do we know the magical consciousness as it manifests today and what it is about?

We know from cultural/civilizational descriptions like Gebser, that the shape of experience is one of identification of experience with the experienced. Magical peoples are enmeshed within the world, there is no

spatial separation (the experience is pre-spatial) and there is no individuated ego. The self is only dimly conscious as a group ego, a tribal or clan consciousness. The identification plays out in that in the rain dance the dancer is the rain and the hunter becomes the hunted. Gebser has given such examples in his major works. There is nothing causal (mental) or relational (mythic), the people of tribal/magical worlds are the world and are not separate from it.

And yet in a strange turn of Mickunas' thirteenth hermeneutic, the loss of the magical is also its recovery.

Yet I suspect that some of the modifications of the thirteenth hermeneutic have also shown that most textual encounters do not destroy the other without residua, superfluity, and hence may acquire a power within or over the destructive texts (Mickunas, 2000).

We might say that nothing of meaning is ever fully lost. It is also the case that the cults of magic have been and were on the most wanted list of modern western culture, especially the Christian tradition, but as would be indicated by the thirteenth hermeneutic the suppressed comes back to haunt the suppressing culture. And so despite all attempts to suppress the heathen, the wicens, the savages, voodoo, and like cults of magic, they do have their way in the late modern world. The shamanic as originary of the magical consciousness is also alive and well today, though not exactly in its original "form." The shamanic may also be know in terms of what are considered its functions: medicine man/woman/healer, witch doctor, hunter/warrior, etc.

In order to investigate the magical *experience* we need to return to Gebserian methods, methods of phenomenological investigation of culture. Kramer and Mickunas' Introduction: Gebser's new understanding in the book *Consciousness and Culture* (Kramer), lays out the steps in Gebser's practice of cultural investigation:

Phenomenological suspension of metaphysical prejudice/reality

Comparison of invariants of experience

Coordination—how are the structures integrated, intertwined, how are "earlier" structures enriched (plus-mutation) and still latently at work?

This is basic phenomenology that begins with the *epoche*, or phenomenological reduction, which indeed brackets or puts out of play any presuppositions about the magical. Next we should seek a comparison of invariants of the magical or the shamanic as a magical "form." Finally we would seek to find how the magical is integrated with contemporary consciousness and how it is latently at work.

Phenomenology takes intentionality as a given of the "shape" of experience and we have said that the shape of experience of the magical is an identity, the experiencing is the world, and the "subject" is directly implicated in the world without reflection.



Husserl describes at length the intentional apriori of experience. Can we say that Husserl taps into the constitution of the world at the place where the magical lives? Is magical consciousness lived in the “eternal present”? Is magical consciousness living there where experience is constituted? What I would say is that the possibility of all structures of consciousness is present in experience and that the (subject)experiencing–experienced correlate is the shape of consciousness.

Consider the structure of experience for mental and magical consciousness: Husserl shows that experience is not given without its correlate “the experience of.” The shape of experience is the apriori correlation where the “things in themselves” are given first. Merleau–Ponty said, “The world is there before any possible analysis of mine” (1962, p. x). Husserl found that given with the things is the way of experiencing the things, and in reflection the “ego” doing the experiencing is thematized. Also, as Ihde states:

From this it can be seen why the "I" in the correlational scheme at the straightforward level was placed within parenthesis. The "I," particularly in its thematized form, comes late in the analysis, rather than being given as a first. This is to say, the "I" has a certain genesis or recognizable origin in the movements of experience. But let us now retrace the movement from straightforward experience to a reflection upon that experience. (Ihde P.48)

Husserl was working with experience, but also with *how* that experience is given and *how* it is understood, which can and does vary with the structure of consciousness. For mental consciousness there is a distance between the subject, who is the agent of directed “experience of” discovered in reflection. For the *mental–rational* the correlation is still as Husserl expresses it, but the culture, the civilization “interprets” or articulates this experience as a distinct opposition of subject over against object, of signification–>signifier–>signified. Or if one is in many circles of communication, or schools of psychology, they may posit that “meaning is in people” or that “I create my world.”

Husserl finds in his investigations of experience the intentional relationship. For him there is not a hard separation between subject and object, ego and thing, it is constitutive and a relational intentionality that is mythic in its polarity; the *experience of* is experienced in a certain way by an experiencer. He is taking the extremity of the mental–rational consciousness, the subject–object duality and finding a relational polarity instead where ego and experienced are given together.

Heidegger goes for “being–in” and indwelling—trying to fathom the magic inherence of being within Being. He finds the connectivity of being with tradition, with the “larger” Being. Then Merleau–Ponty (especially as presented by Lingis in *The Imperative*) opens experience to find (interrogation) the magical and even archaic world of “flesh of the flesh.”

For the magical consciousness structure the (experiencer) experiencing is given with the thing experienced, there is an identity, and the mythic

polarity or the mental “interpretation” of the correlation collapses to an identity—every event is vitally connected to every other event. The events are not only joined but flesh of the same flesh, nourished by the same blood to allude to Merleau–Ponty’s analogy.

In fact, as David Abram in *The Spell of the Sensuous* has suggested (pp. 44–59) that throughout the *Phenomenology of perception* Merleau–Ponty presents our attachment to the world as magical. He speaks of our intentional relation with the world as participatory, an active and “sympathetic relation with the perceived” (p. 54) and of perception in terms of an almost magical invocation enacted by the body, and the body’s subsequent ‘possession’ by the perceived” (p.55).

Later in Merleau–Ponty’s notes in *The visible and the invisible*, he writes about the polymorphy of perception, what we would discuss as the structures of consciousness, and that perception can become Euclidean if it allows itself. And then Merleau–Ponty asks, “How can one return from this perception [the dominant perception] fashioned by culture to the ‘brute’ or ‘wild’ perception? (p. 212).”

So there is an openness, a possibility to access, to be present to, and I would say, even to live—although I don’t know how we could not live—the magical consciousness as wild being, and in fact it is an ongoing experience, but also one shaped by culture/civilization and not necessarily obvious without investigation.

### **Shamanic Invariants**

Using Gebser’s methods (and of course his descriptions of the magical), the essential method of phenomenology, we should next consider the invariants of the phenomenon. Here I am considering the phenomenon of the shamanic as part and parcel of the magic structure of consciousness. How do I consider its invariants? How can we know what the originary magical shamanic was? One way is to consider all of the books about the shamanic. There are 5 or 6 shelves of currently published books directly about shamanism in the major “new age” bookstore in Chicago. There are also a number of books and studies from various academic disciplines, e.g., Eliade’s *Shamanism*. Another way would be to talk to shaman (I have know several contemporary individuals who I would consider shaman) or to tap directly into the shamanic experience—to live it. Considering these as variations, or ways to access the variations of the shamanic, two things come to the fore. First, there does seem to be an essential feature of the shamanic/magical that is invariant throughout most of the shamanic experience. Second, there are also articulations of the shamanic for each of the structures of consciousness. That is, some renditions have a mythic predominance, some a rational and some that we will discuss in the next section seem to trace the integral. Indeed, the magical itself is not one universal experience but seemed to mutate from “early” to “late,” expressed

in the loosening bond of the natural. We might also ask: can we still know the shamanic or has it already been hopelessly lost in the interpretive transformations of cultural contact and cross currents? I think the apriori we began with was the openness of experience, which can give access to some sense of the magical and hence the shamanic.

The shaman is a “relic” of a magical society where there were no specialists. The shaman took care of all of the mysteries of life, handled all the matters of the world that weren’t under ordinary control, all the things ordinary people thought they had no control over. The shaman was supposed to be able to work with nature (with spirits/animals, plants/herbs, and the very firmament and sky); with the allies of nature to make things happen in harmony with nature. This is one of the pictures we get from the literature.

David Abram in *The Spell of the Sensuous* has some insights into the shamanic experience among the natives of Bali, Nepal and other cultures. He is also a phenomenologist and shows how shamanism is essentially magical.

The traditional or tribal shaman, I came to discern, acts as an intermediary between the human community and the larger ecological field, ensuring that there is an appropriate flow of nourishment, not just from the landscape to the human inhabitants, but from the human community back to the local earth. By his constant rituals, trances, ecstasies, and “journeys,” he ensures that the relation between human society and the larger society of beings is balanced and reciprocal, and that the village never takes more from the living land than it returns to it—not just materially but with prayers, propitiations, and praise. . . .

The medicine person's primary allegiance, then, is not to the human community, but to the earthly web of relations in which that community is embedded—it is from this that his or her power to alleviate human illness derives—and this sets the local magician apart from other persons.

There so much “work” in sorting this out, in getting to the originary experience of the shamanic. I find over and over again how authors, even Abram, who seems a competent phenomenologist still don’t grasp what Gebser has presented. Abrams says the medicine man’s “primary allegiance” is “to the earthly web of relations in which the community is embedded.” This part is good, but he also before that emphasizes the role of the shaman as intermediary. If we follow Gebser and the structure of brute, wild experience, this is not a role as intermediary, but the very identification with world with the shaman as cheerleader. I like to express this identification as connection with all (connect—com—nectere L., to bind with, to join or fasten together, to be already and always already bound together, *Webster’s New International*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1935). I emphasize the already bound movement of connection. The shaman is vitally connected with the world. As Merleau-Ponty says we are connected to the world via an umbilical cord and for magical consciousness the cord has no spatial

extension. As with other shamanic studies there is also too much made of the shamanic as an individual role to be played.

It seems each of the presentations of the shamanic is intertwined with some features of the mythic or rational or even the integral. I observe that most of what we know now as shamanic is already strongly influenced by the mythic indicating a polarity, two worlds which the shamanic mediates, as with Abrams. Consider Ruiz's *The four agreements: A practical guide to personal freedom*, derived from Toltec wisdom. First, I believe the Toltec, at least in its extant form is already mythic, as are most of late Central American cultures. The primary clue is typical of many shamanic books and is embedded in the subtitle *A practical guide to personal freedom*. Most contemporary study of the shamanic is geared to the personal and particularly personal power or freedom—both meaningless in ordinary shamanic. A further element is when Ruiz speaks about the uniqueness of the shaman or what he calls the dreamer (p. xviii). Dream space is an element of the connected community of the magical, as referenced in Aboriginal experience, but the individual uniqueness is already mythic persona and most likely mutating into mental consciousness.

Eliade, mentioned above, approaches the shamanic from a historical, but also more than historical, religious position. He essentially adds a mental-rational "layer" or articulation to the phenomenon. His concern is for a "comprehensive view" that synthesizes all the studies (xiii). I knew there were serious shortcomings afoot when Eliade misrepresented phenomenology as rejecting "any work of comparison" (xv). He also privileges the rational in orienting his work around the ecstatic experience, and is concerned with its "techniques, its symbolism, its mythologies" (xix). He is essentially, as Abrams says of most westerners, seeking the sacred.

The primacy for the magician of nonhuman nature—the centrality of his relation to other species and to the earth—is not always evident to Western researchers. Countless anthropologists have managed to overlook the ecological dimension of the shaman's craft, while writing at great length of the shaman's rapport with "supernatural" entities. We can attribute much of this oversight to the modern, civilized assumption that the natural world is largely determinate and mechanical, and that that which is regarded as mysterious, powerful, and beyond human ken must therefore be of some other, nonphysical realm *above* nature, "supernatural." (p. 8)

It is no doubt another study, but the whole assumption that ecstasy is the essence of the shamanic or magical experience is biased toward individuality and the primacy of peak experiences, *à la* Maslow. It assumes the rational duality of physical and spiritual, sacred and profane, and of individual and other, and gives a special place to the experience of the individual, especially sacred experience. For the magical all experience is sacred.

And yet there is a question, and maybe a reason to understand a more ordinary magical where there was a total identity with nature and a “late” magical where the umbilical cord of world is stretched and the shamanic plays more of an intermediary role between sacred and ordinary life. This would also explain the role of drums/trance, “consciousness” altering substances, and journeys to connect with the sacred. It would describe a late magical consciousness where the identity with world has frayed and become loose. However, Eliade’s focus on ecstasy would as well assume a duality in the primal, brute world between ordinary experience and a special experience, again maybe a sign of a later mutation of magical consciousness, but also a prejudice toward one form of experience as special. Why isn’t all experience meaningful, worth revering in all of its polymorphous diversity? Aren’t pain or lust or sadness or love as central to human existence as the ecstatic?

### **Integration of the Magical**

Finally, how is the shamanic a worldly expression of the integral? The integral has already integrated the shamanic and the shamanic or any current version of it is already intertwined with the late/(post)modern world, right? Above we discovered that each version of the shamanic had naturally been articulated through mythic, mental and integral expression. And so Gebser might say that the “old ways” are integrated and articulated anew with each structure of consciousness, actually in an ongoing process of permanence and flux, and their permutations.

Actually, any contact between worlds changes both. There must be a hermeneutic for that. Dialogue is not only present but has “depth” reaching to reinterpret and integrate elements of each structure of consciousness, and to cross-pollinate what may seem mutually exclusive worlds. Even a seemingly innocuous practice such as reforestation changes the ecology of cultural/natural world where the new forests are planted. A rain dance or a tribal drumming as well reverberates throughout wild experience, disrespecting time and space.

Many books on the shamanic have a section at the end about shamanism in the modern world. What does it mean to be a shaman today? We have doctors to heal us, priests to take care of our religious matters, specialists for everything. This could raise a host of questions: Would a real shaman publish a book? How are they in connection in the late modern? What is a “real” shaman? How would you or I know one? Who is on the shaman choosing board? What are the criteria? All of these questions and more are integrated, intertwined with current expressions of the shamanic. The shamanic is a worldly expression of the integral as well.

If we investigate contemporary books on the shamanic, as suggested above, they represent rational, literate culture. They emphasize the gathering of personal power, individual growth and transformation. They talk of saving

the planet and the environment as if these were objects outside of the self rather than connected. They too easily fall into the predominant cultural morphology.

Actually, I think a lot of the books written on shamanism and shamanic practice merely reflect the predominance of the culture of the late modern world with all of its concerns. We don't live in a tribal society anymore how can we practice a tribal art like shamanism? American Indians had their shamans; actually most tribal cultures had shaman-like characters in the tribal community. Is there something of the shamanic that late modern culture is seeking to integrate? Of course, it is not like what is being integrated is some historic relic of the past, what is being integrated is a possibility of polymorphic experience, an upsurge of our current experience. Or more likely once the possibility, like the proverbial cat, is out of the bag the experience is already being integrated.

Finally, one "movement" that I think is a fair representation of the shamanic as a worldly expression of the integral is Arnold (and Amy) Mindell's processwork. Their work represents an integral shamanism that is grounded in worldly expression. Mindell was a particle physicist at CERN in Switzerland when he developed an interest in Jungian psychology. He trained in Jungian methods and eventually developed his own method of process psychology, which is not really a psychology because it easily goes beyond the psyche. Mindell's process work is grounded in the shamanic but the original impetus for the connectedness that Mindell works with grew out of field theory in particle physics. All phenomena are "unified" in the magical sense that every event in the cosmos is connected with every other event. The magical consciousness as invoked extends the experienced field to all events of the cosmos, not just physical events. Everything and every "not thing" is connected; dreams and even a person's gait relate to how the world unfolds.

Mindell's primary work that deals specifically with the shamanic is *The shaman's body*. Mindell's shamanic is grounded in the dreambody, a field experience that could be a working "model" for Merleau-Ponty's body as flesh of the flesh of the world. Mindell's dreambody is also grounded in originary magical consciousness as the dreamtime of the Australian Aboriginal peoples. He like Abram has lived with indigenous peoples in many places, and taken part in their rituals.

Mindell's work is self-created, and although not thoroughly consistent philosophically, the problems that exist are minor confusions and not central to his practice. His approach to the shamanic is a worldly expression of the integral in that it picks up on elements of the shamanic from each structure of consciousness and integrates them. The "path of heart" which is also the way of the warrior represents the mythic. In Mindell's larger body of work polarities deriving from the toaistic philosophy and practice are also

indicators of the mythic. Other shamanic aspects of the work include the hunter, the use of ally's, healing through tapping into the power of the world of spirit, and encounters with death.

The rational is present as one foci of the work. It does focus on the individual, and individual growth, but the self is always contextualized in the field that can be cosmic. The literate trappings of Mindell's work are also rational, with references to evolution, history, psychotherapy, and ego that cannot be missed.

The integral is present in the field of practice. Processwork can be read but only takes on significance when practiced. Each of Mindell's books includes exercises for working with the dreaming world.

His integral expressions are intentionally structured to surpass the instrumental rationality of our era. He says:

When we succeed at dreaming together, everyone realizes that we are all responsible for creating and changing culture. It is everyone's job to witness and investigate the altered states of oppression, pain, rage, and the freedom that permeates our groups. We have not alleviated our problems by repressing, avoiding, or ignoring them (p. 212).

And another passage after working in 1993 with a Russian group of members of parliament and different ex-soviet Republics on conflict resolution:

Our future global village has a lot with which to deal. We will always need politicians, but we also need citizen shaman-diplomats who deal with not only repressed gods, but dictators, victims, and minorities in a diverse world. What looks like trouble from one angle can be a new community from another (p. 219).

He builds from this sense of community and compares it with the dreamtime of tribal communities and how they shared a world that healed and revitalized itself in connection with the world. He suggests that future communities will have reinvent a dreamtime if our cultures are to survive.

Each culture's methods will be different, but certain common elements can be predicted. People feel life is worthwhile when they have participated in bringing up buried visions, forbidden spirits, and dead souls into their world. That is why dreaming together heals the eternal problem, feeling impotent about the direction of history (p. 219).

### **Dreaming a Conclusion**

What I have essentially demonstrated in this paper is that the fragmentation of our mental-rational world is calling for healing and the integrating powers of the magical. Attempts to recall the magical, the soothing world of nature are not only meaningless in a rational instrumental world, but also probably no longer possible. Katz is a typical example in *Running to the mountains* of how our issues call for connectedness, but where we find that connectedness is very (post)modern and not always satisfying.

Other contemporary shamanic practices and movements often don't face the shortcomings in returning to the magical placidity of nature. There are many texts about becoming magical, of the way of the shaman, but few accept the fact that the connected world they hope to recreate is a lost world. The experience of that world can be accessed but only as intertwined and integrated with the upsurge of the integral. As Mindell says of the shamanic in the late modern world:

Your home challenges you to realize your visions in everyday life. But since your experiences may conflict with the lives of others, everyone will have to change. And as we all change, we in turn transform shamanism, for its ancient setting is no more. Forgetting shamanism will never work, because psychology and medicine become one-dimensional without their ancient sister. (1993,p154)

I alluded to several works that were shamanic but which seem to be articulations of the magical shamanic in terms of mythic and mental-rational experience. The one work that I feel is complete in integrating the shamanic as a worldly expression of the integral is the dreaming body of Arnold Mindell. His work recoups the wild being of Merleau-Ponty's investigation of experience and puts it into practice in the brute world of today. Mindell's work is authentic because it begins with our world identity and hence our need to use every movement as ally in processing shamanically. It accepts the gods and demons; in fact it welcomes the fully polymorphic range of world experience as connected and in the process of being integrated. Our role is to enter the dreamtime of this integration and follow the process of its concrete action. In dreamtime there are no stadium seats for spectators, every (dream)body is on the team, part of the action as well as helping to call the plays.

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## Concreteness in Integral Worlds<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

The paper reviews representations and signs that might help us to come to common and shared realization in an integral age. It explores how we can use models and schemas in order to share "common frames of reference." The authors explore possible ways of embodying and linking worlds or realities. These include the construction of a–perspective or extra realities that can help us to jointly create meaning and understanding beyond our directly observable meso–scale and ego–centric "environment/vicinity." We explore ways to merge and morph – know, connect, translate and transform schemas – and overcome the dualisms or schisms in our conceptions and mental models, as this is understood as one criteria in Gebser's structure of moving from the Rational to the Integral. One step is seen to include and move beyond the physical and visual (perspective) space to shared and combined (merged and morphed spaces), spaces were we can jointly create and move boundaries in our perceived and created worlds using processes of dialogue. The authors suggest this fundamental step in coming to the concretion of shared dimensions in order to avoid the dangers of post–modern vagueness and Beliebigkeit, or the creations of new myths and belief systems, as they would lead us back into former forms of human development. Instead, we strive for a broader basis for imparting and dialogue – which is part the motto of the *integral structure* – coming to a broader and shared collective understanding. The authors believe that Gebser shows us a way out of dualistic, anthropocentric thinking that leaves us enslaved by physical space concepts and "boxed" thinking, and provides ways towards sharing not only physical but also mental manifestations and imaginations. Gebser seems to be urging us to look into the inclusion of all layers or structures and not ending only in meditative state, but standing on the ground, surveying the world with our eyes and sharing or imparting concepts of a bigger and shared picture in order to expand our realms of being.

"The concretion of time  
 is *one* of the preconditions  
 for the integral structure;  
 only the concrete can be integrated,  
 never the merely abstract."

—Jean Gebser, *The Ever–present Origin*, p.99  
 (*emphasis of "one" added by the authors*)

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<sup>1</sup> An updated copy of this paper with figures is linked on [www.govst.edu/ie\\_journal](http://www.govst.edu/ie_journal).

Words  
words – yes words.  
Make them solid  
So you can pick them up  
and throw them.  
That is the problem.  
How to make the intangible real, lifelike....  
—J. R. Lloyd

### **Introduction**

The authors endeavor in this effort to rephrase questions such as: Which frames of reference? My frame or world of references – your frame or world? Instead, we ask how to bridge and come to shared meaning and action beyond the island or isolation tendencies in an often overwhelming, antagonizing and confusing world. We ask, how can we perceive multiple frames of reference simultaneously—or more aptly, integrally. We want to show here how to reflect "common frames of references" on a broader basis (Brown 1994) (Benking/Brown 1994), and how to build shared models to better exchange and share ... come to more solid terms for abstract situations beyond our direct access, feel and touch in proportion and consequences beyond just our life (our anthropocentric view). It is an effort that seeks a broader picture for the Planet and aspirations and values as stakeholders for all humanity. It is an effort that seeks to develop further dialogue and co-creation by presenting work done in various fields; jointly transforming and "jumping" between models in order to develop dialogue between the "incompatible," where we need to rely on openness, tolerance and curiosity.

### **Awareness and Consciousness**

Astronauts have often spoken about "instant consciousness," something impressing and lasting they experienced the moment they saw the earth as a whole and themselves apart from it. They report that this changed their attitudes and awareness, they "suddenly" became aware about other positions; appreciating the value, fragility and beauty of the planet and their place and duty for safeguarding beyond a personal "vicinity."

Becoming conscious about an external object, state or fact is in part a process of widening one's horizons and perspectives and ultimately the sphere of responsibility. When we consult the dictionary we find that "consciousness is the quality or state of being aware especially of something within oneself." But, as we have seen above, we experience and widen our awareness, taking into consideration and experience something from "outside" which we feel has some relevance, proportion and consequence connected to our survival. As awareness widens, (external and internal) consciousness heightens (the integration of internal/external). Survival of a

greater whole along and across scales and cultures and times transcends the focus on personal survival.

Self-reflective consciousness is a unique human capacity. If consciousness is a state of being aware "especially of something within ourselves" that awareness is integrally tied with how we experience the awareness "within" in relation to our experience of how it relates to what we are conscious and aware of outside ourselves as well. Since the dawn of human consciousness, behavior has been guided by what we value, what we determine to be 'good' or 'better' choices for ourselves individually and collectively. Yet conscious choice, self-reflection and even rational thinking are usually secondary to habitual behavior informed by our personal and cultural experience. It is not only explicit knowledge that shapes us, but the implicit understanding of meaning and context which we each accumulate from personal experience and cultural interaction (Samples, 1981). If we were to consciously reflect and analyze every choice we made, the result would be a sort of paralysis—it simply is not practical. Moreover, much of the knowledge we gain experientially, like "knowing" we are in love, is almost impossible to reflect and analyze in a conscious language. Yet experiential knowledge seems to make up the most permanent and solid bricks in our subconscious foundation for choice. If we experience rejection, then the "truth" of our unworthiness persists in our subconscious, and that belief will influence our decisions and behavior until we consciously reason a new conclusion or until we experience acceptance and feeling worthy (Stalinski, 2001).

It is no wonder that Gebser, then calls so strongly for the 'concrete'—the experiential and tangible in the quest for integral consciousness. The age of reason has diminished the value for tacit knowledge and experiential learning and has relegated value only to that which can be proven rationally, empirically. Given new advances in physics, systems theory and evolutionary theory, even this wouldn't be so bad except that few bother to learn about these new understandings. Instead, habitual behavior and lives guided by subconscious understanding and meaning of the world and our place in it have taken over, especially in western cultures. And regardless of how embedded we are in a consciousness dominated by the rational, much of our living is based on the subconscious meaning we give to the experiences in our lives.

If the human tragedies in the United States witnessed around the globe on September 11, 2001 have any positive outcome, it is that many in western societies have been jarred from their comfort and subconscious behaviors. Many are once again reflecting consciously about meaning, values and behavior. While some yearn to return to the comfort and ease of their slumber, many more, now awake, are seeking new ways of understanding and being in the world. While the Internet has done much to 'globalize' our awareness, the terrorist attacks of September 11 have done much to "widen our awareness" on a much more tangible and experiential level. This

experience has come at an incredibly high price for such and externally induced widening of awareness, a "penalty" for indulging in our sweet isolation and self-righteousness, instead of growing and gardening awareness jointly and on a healthy gradient.

Humanity has come to realize that we can perceive and share dimensions outside our direct "reach,"— that with the help of technology we can even "immerse" into other realms or worlds, whether they be micro-cosm or macro-cosm, or other times, cultures, and ways to feel and express ourselves. A wide community of concerned generalists has cared to find ways to communicate the new dimensions of Global Change and modern means of transportation and communication, but on the political agenda all too often is the narrow scope of a certain region or narrow time frame. The Club of Rome Report from 1972 (Donella Meadows et. al.) showed so clearly where our focus is and what the span of issues includes, and the early system sciences researchers like Paul Weiss, showed that there is interaction between the levels and scales, and so schemas are needed to include interaction between sections.

Weiss, Gerard, Rappaport, Laszlo, Koestler, Smuts, Kline, Lorenz/Oser, Taylor, Guilford, Bertalanffy, ... there is an endless list of researchers and system scientists who have been caring about an organismic, comprehensive perspective. Some of them designed comprehensive, holistic, and concrete schemas to put contexts and situations into one coherent framework – A framework which is simple and self-explanatory and at the same time concrete enough to allow new views and practical insights for joint, multi-disciplinary, multi-perspective approaches. Benking (1997) has presented in the Emergence series of the Konrad Lorenz Institute how many unique simple and helpful schemas are around and that a next step is needed to see them in one common frame of references (see above and Brown 1994). The figures of that presentation are available on that web-site, so we kindly ask you to get and consult the picture for further study (Benking 1997)

While the authors have studied extensively the above mentioned scholars and some of their schemas, our hope here is to add some structure, coherence and day-to-day applicability for new empirical understanding by creating a "spacial" model, an immersive model for shared explorations . (For more please see the article in ["Knowmap 2001"](#) "Spatial versus Spatial" which outlines the development of the Cognitive Panorama (Benking 1996e) as a meta-paradigm from 1988–2002).

### **Concretion**

Let us go back to the example above. Will we become more conscious, responsible and caring when going into "orbit" —seeing planet Earth in its beauty? The authors would suggest these "pictures" which we can only see are not tangible and immersive, they are not real and so our "attachment" is fading, especially when we see colourful pictures of the globe now

everywhere. We've become too accustomed to the visual, not reflecting and wondering any more, nor feeling the "awe as we gaze" as we have lost humility – (free after George Santanya) – after looking at colourful pictures again and again, feeling "dumbed down" (Benking 1998 with reference to the CEC Report: "Towards the Humane Information Society" and Benking 1999 with his "Show or Schau?" reflection of the depth and fidelity of the images and models we use to map our positions and perspectives).

What we want to explore here is how to make intangibles real (see Lloyd citation above). We want to show in this article that it is not enough to use words and see pictures – even though they might be very appealing and powerful. We need to be "touched" – to develop an extended empathy for the things around us." – We can very well hope that astronauts come back "touched" and transformed by an instant comprehension. See below of seeing one specific "whole" and not just the parts, but we also need to question if this transformation is lasting or not like so many other pictures that become "out of sight – out of mind". The topic of wholeness and healing, feeling part and caring is central here, but in this paper we just want to point for further references to the "Wholeness Seminar" (Mandel, Benking 1994–) .

We need more than words and pictures. We need to experience with all our senses and attach ourselves empirically, rationally and emotionally to new worlds and realities. We need to share and bridge representations (signs), schemas, and models, analogies, metaphors and stories in addition to pictures and words in order to connect us with each other. This bridging of signs in the sense of Peirce is of central concern, as we need to connect the concepts and the contexts (Benking 1996b), the icons and the symbols. C.S. Peirce has introduced the "index" as the third kind of signs, and Benking has shown in (Knowmap 2001) that this index, when seen as part of an underlying map or model, is able to make "concrete" concepts and impressions across languages and cultures, at least in an overview or survey mode for knowing.

Gebser, in his "The Ever–Present Origin" speaks of the concretion of time as **ONE** of the preconditions of the integral, stating "only the concrete can be integrated." The authors believe he is suggesting 'concreteness' as being more than just having an intuitive "gut" and individual "feeling," or sensitizing oneself to be open for new experiences out of old molds and fixations. Instead, we believe Gebser calls us to experience being and realizations in ways which become sharable, collectively observable and experienced.

Before exploring this further, however, it seems relevant to comment on current "cybermania" trends, and technology–driven hopes that we can somehow achieve something in isolation when entering into synthetic "environments." Current technology seems to enable a very critical

possibility of sharing "extra" but virtual realities. Through pictures, maybe even virtual reality, immersive cyberpictures or films, we might easily get seduced to a dreamworld or fear and agony world, but these are not real and concrete, they are fake, illusionary and part of an entertainment or edutainment effort with open or questionable outcomes. If, however, in the sharing of illusion as stories or models, individuals can come together in dialogue that affects the heart and mind and creates new, shared meaning, then cyberspace as co-creative space-scape begins to fulfill part of its potential for serving the evolution of consciousness. Please understand, that we could use the eidetic concept of phantasy and imagination – real to many of us – and wait for the artists and architects within us to build art or artefacts, so we can share “new realities”. Virtual reality and Cyberspace is only an extra means to embody something not “real” or not “given” and in this way it is very overestimated. We can better multiply and share with large numbers of people this new artefacts, but on the cost of restricting to a very few senses, neglecting the full spectrum of making meaningful and in a shared way “sense”. Please see in the field of alternative education (Schärli, Benking 1998).

### **A Concrete Motto**

In his synoptic table column 17, Gebser is searching for a Motto for the Integral. He plays with the German "Wahrgeben – Wahrnehmen." "Wahrgeben" means to impart truth, whereas "wahrnehmen" suggests merely imparting what we can see with our eyes and measure.

To the authors, it seems appropriate to clarify "truth" as encompassing both the relative and the reality. While this paper is not the forum for an in-depth exploration on the nature of "truth," to discuss the concretion of the conceptual and abstract suggests to us the reasonableness of embracing both the relative nature and reality of truth. At once, Wahrgeben connotes to us an embodiment of truth to reality, perhaps a small facet of an ultimately unknowable absolute Truth, which we agree is beyond our ability to define in its entirety (an agreement which can be found in nearly all of the world's spiritual traditions). This embodied reality then, is at once relative and real, posing no real paradox or contradiction, and allows participants in a dialogue to experience a facet or perspective of another with understanding that can lead to creative insight.

The authors would like to explore what this motto could look like and how it could be realized. We might not only look into the concretion of time, but also other and extra "dimensions" which could help us to experience and share "Integral Cultures" by being precise and concrete, embodying meaning instead of merely conceptualizing vague definitions or abstract beliefs or dogma – mental exercises which require constant repetition in order to make us resonate with them.

### **How to make the intangible real (concrete)?**

Gregory Bateson wrote that we need to develop an antenna for ecological dimensions, to be more aware about the times and act accordingly. It is not enough to just believe in the beauty of the Creation, we must also have the issues concrete and real so we can adjust to "common frames of references" (as above Brown 1994, Benking 1994).

Stalinski (2001) explores the current obstacles to such an experiential embodiment of imparting truth (Wahrgeben) within the current traditional/modern perspective which relies solely on the empirical (wahrnehmen). Further, she identifies the inability of relativist, postmodern perspectives which remain ultimately abstract and vague to offer authentic 'reality' or concreteness within the experiential. Instead she proposes the inclusion and transcendence of both predominant current perspectives in such a way that enables us to see, feel, touch, and even measure when appropriate, various ways of understanding, calling the ability to apply and embody ideas, meaning and facts a key criteria for evaluating the abstract and conceptual. Such integration and transcendence ultimately enable diverse perspectives to share and create joint meaning in such a way that honors and acknowledges the value brought by each person or party to a creative dialogue. In short, the potential synergetic emergent of such dialogue could be a–perspective evolving out of multi–perspective consciousness. (Of course, a multi–perspectivist competence must precede the a–perspective).

Brown and Benking (1994) introduce concrete ways of manifesting such a dialogue through awareness of not only the terms and data we use, but to see them in context and perspective through concept and context mapping. (Benking 1996b and other work in the field of terminology research, meta–databases, and translation/switching systems — <http://benking.de/Global-Change/>).

### **Common threads in Patterns of Order and Ordering Schemas**

There is no presentation which stands out and is "better" than other forms and schemas; that all schemas are created to explain and give meaning, provide connections, and have to obey the laws of being easily memorized (being simple) but at the same time practical, versatile, meaningful and in themselves, logical coherent and complete. We have also shown that different cultures typically favor a certain type of schema, and that they can be easily categorized in Gebser's structures of the archaic, magic, mythic, and matrix structures in the rational "bracket." We have explored in the article on analogies and metaphors how we need to, and can bridge representation, merge and morph and translate between ways of representation, please see (Benking 1998b) and that we need to develop an share an "Integral Agenda" (1988–2002), that we need to develop a birds eye



for coherence and connectedness as concerned generalists and not just specialists, See also "SAYING NO – A culture of Refusal"(Benking 2000b).

The above figures show that representations can hold themselves against structures and forms and that the "experience" and wisdom of cultural traditions must be cherished – not neglected or turned down. The figures further demonstrate many practical insights good for community building and helping to connect with the world around us.

One final remark is in order. In the "Cartographer of Consciousness" by Brian Van Der Horst, "Ron Siegel probes the hallucinating brain to chart hidden features of our mental landscape" (OMNI Magazine Sept. 1980). The authors use Heinrich Kluvers form constants to present a geometric recursion. For this little journey along maps and representations such presentations and transformations can give us an idea of connectedness of physical and mental realms, and that such representations and co-relations are not new but part of many traditions. (Please see the figures in Benking 1998b).

The obstacles to inclusion and transcendence as proposed above remain our current preoccupation in believing in one 'authoritative' map or matrix, the one and only school or 'dogma.' Our contemporary fixation on outdated mechanistic, industrial-era thought relegates value to 'knowing' instead of 'learning' and we have been deceived by the proponents of modernistic thought to think in terms of one answer "above" or "better" than another. We have been taught that we must always choose between ideas, and that choosing ideas supported by only the empirical or measurable have value. We habitually choose from "either/or" and instead we must consciously practice ways of choosing "both, and." Through the courage to 'unknow' we can begin to re-learn, and create anew shared, lived and embodied realities. It is not by 'discrediting' or de-valuing that which is empirical and measurable, but through experienced congruency with the empirical and experiential that imparting truth becomes a way of being with ourselves and each other and not merely a way of knowing or understanding. The "evolution" of the presentation of the chemical elements proved (see again Benking 1998b) that there are many views and schemata possible and even they altogether are just maps, not the territory, as Alfred Korzybski and Gregory Bateson wrote.

In the figures mentioned above, it is interesting to note not only what different "wheel" or charts" attribute to certain sectors, but how they show a flow of meaning and continuation, showing that states of being and mind are not isolated but evolve and change – even in certain sequences. We are not going here into the enneagram or the astrological charts and how they help to see states and connections, but try to make a tentative next step towards the rational and integral – again – please note – by seeing the

connection and merging and morphing between states instead of being "stuck" in one form or schema.

### **Flatlanders?**

Are we cognitive flatlanders (Ken Wilber) or by our abstract intellectualism and depraved disembodiment; with a high need to go back to spacial and embodied forms? Benking's recent "Knowmap" article explores the rational and integral structures, not forgetting the body and direct ecological and social environment. We know that other cultures had a very well developed aesthetical and balanced way to sculpture, paint and live with embodied forms in nature. For most of contemporary our societies however, abstract sciences and writing, in combination with being detached from the practical physical world has deprived us from experiencing and understanding such interconnection and interrelation at a tacit level. The authors suggest a need to re-establish our tactile and sensorial gifts in order to make a possible next step – a step we think Gebser intuited and observed as the "evolution and integration of cultures" in *The Ever-Present Origin*. He foresaw ways to establish artificial synthetic realities (even though they are mediocre to our imagination potentials) but an interesting approach something which is "not-given" but of relevance for our survival and shared approaches and actions. We as humans are continuously making assumptions and drawing conclusions, often based on metaphoric reasoning and analogies. Building Models (see education section in "Knowmap") is a native skill and we just need to check if we want to build models which can be jointly explored and discussed – build in models and in thinking spacial is according the Architect Alfred Loos a social endeavor, a social task. Models are mediocre when compared to the realities or our imagination, but as physical or virtual models they can be jointly accessed, immersed into in real life or in "cyberspace" (as noted above), and realised wanted or something we should better avoid. It is definitely better to share agreement and not to make all possible models and actions "real."

### **Dialogue and Understanding in an a-perspective mode.**

Sharing conceptual positions and perspective in order to "see with other eyes" and thereby developing tolerance and understanding by seeing statements and assumptions in perspective and according to the specific situations, requires to see something not there, not in this space or our present reality, but be able to talk and dialogue about it. We understand here a – perspective as a means to explore and jointly inhabit extra-spaces for allowing us to assume "new" virtual or potential imagery or just abstract conceptual viewpoints, like a "bird's – eye" or a "long-view" collectively – jointly moving into 4 or more dimensional shared spaces..(as above) (see also "The House of Eyes" Benking, Rose 1998).

Again, a brief sidebar is in order to clarify the authors' value for understanding through tolerance. An eastern definition of "tolerance" is

expressed in the Tibetan term for patience: "*sopa*," which means "able to withstand." In the Tibetan tradition, tolerance is not an indifference or an apathy, it is an act of courageous participation and engagement. It is not in the least passive, but is an active response to a situation that would normally give rise to fear or anger. Tolerance, in the eastern tradition is an act of active strength and courage, not one of "putting up with" in a spirit of submission, resignation or withdrawal. (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1996)

According to Bohm and Peat (1987) sharp distinctions should be made between dialogue and discussion. In discussions the objective is to present one's view in order to convince the other. With some luck, this process may result in some sort of compromise, "but it does not give rise to anything creative" (p. 241). At worst, this sort of back-and-forth discourse leads to conflict or even avoidance of the issue. Dialogue, in contrast, is rooted in the Greek word *dialogos*, literally meaning "through (dia) the word (logos)" (Bohm and Peat, 1987; Pattakos in Banathy, 1996). Pattakos, notes Banathy, further suggests that various interpretations and translations of *logos* suggest a much richer, deeper meaning than "the word" or "the meaning of the word." Logos, according to Pattakos carries significant spiritual implications, that it can connote "a manifestation of spirit or soul" giving the concept of dialogue a much more meaningful and significant definition. This deeper understanding can be conceptualized then as a spirit which connects the members of a dialogue, creating a collective mindset or 'collective learning.' (Pattakos, in Banathy, p. 216).

The root meaning of conversation, Banathy notes, is "to turn to one another." (p. 219). Systems scholar Alexander Christakis (2000) shared with members of the ISI research community during our annual conference at Asilomar that the Greek word for conversation is *syzitis*, which means "to search together" Through such conversation, a *demosophia* emerges within a group, which is experienced as the "wisdom of the people". Such understandings of the nature of conversation as an integration of generative and strategic dialogue, gives rich context to its meaning and purpose. Indeed, Banathy notes the purpose of giving appropriate time and energy to the generative dialogue within a conversation is to create a shared worldview and shared meaning within and among the group (p. 218).

These rich concepts of the nature of dialogue and conversation have inspired the research team on the Design of Healthy & Authentic Community at the International Systems Institute to explore possibilities for design conversation that can transcend the idea of 'searching together' beyond processes of verbal communication. For two years the team collaborated with the team on Evolutionary Learning Community, and included non-scholars and youth in their inquiry process. Understanding the importance of experience to bring meaning to conceptual, often abstract ideas, the combined teams engaged in various activities in addition to traditional, verbal communication. The teams integrated a variety of supportive

experiential conversation "tools" such as co-created art, music, a trip to an equine sanctuary in the exploration of stewardship, and discussed other ways cultures expressed and experienced themselves, including food and meals, dance, and its relationship with the natural world. The contribution of Christakis' expansion on the definition of 'conversation' provides depth and breadth to the idea and its meaning, suggesting that groups can "engage in a conversation-guided process that will seek to experience and convey [a community's] evolving *demosophia* through consciously co-created cultural expression" (Stalinski, 2001a).

It has been said that wisdom is knowledge applied. As humans, we seem to learn best by experience. Although verbal and written communication is a powerful tool for sharing, conceptualizing and imagine new perspectives and possibilities, applying those new ideas makes them 'real' and gives meaning to information. Anyone who has teenagers knows how exasperating it can be to simply try to convey possible consequences to behavior. We seem to learn best in "the school of Experience." The experiences we have over our lifetime, as noted earlier, will either reinforce or contradict the values we hold at the time. Considering the impact of experience on our subconscious and consciously-reflected values, and its ability to transform those values and subsequent behaviors and choices, it is surprising how little importance is given to the value of experiential learning. We suggested earlier that new information can be tested against our personal experience congruency in order to evaluate it usefulness. Actually, we'd suggest that we'll do this anyway, if even at a subconscious level. At least if we make a conscious effort to reflect on this congruency, we can then also question whether our experience has resulted in learning which serves our sense of meaning and purpose as well as the resulting values. Conversation and dialogue engaged in with an emphasis on the experiential seems a healthy environment in which such fundamental perceptions and perspectives can be explored, evaluated and if necessary, re-created. (Stalinski 2001).

Dialogue in a-perspective mode is dialogue of *Wahrgeben*. It is a meaningful, shared experience of co-creation and includes the rational, but not at the expense of interactive myth, magic, metaphor, stories, play, artistic expression.

We called such a participatory peace dialogue at the International Peace University "Magic Round Tables" a place where you jointly embody issues and find ways to include the "missionaries" and "talkers" in a joint and peaceful endeavor you can call generations and intercultural dialogue. See [open-forum.de](http://open-forum.de) and their the account of experiences doing this process under the title "re-inventing democracy" or "getting along with the "talkers"".

## **Epilogue**

It is hard to get along with people you live with as we all have different experiences, expectations and perspectives. "Others" or "Aliens" are all too

often excluded as they do not share the same up-bringing and values. The question is: do we want to have boundaries everywhere, everybody in his "cocoon" hoping to be safe, or do we want to develop jointly towards feeling as a greater "whole"? We feel that Gebser saw a way to expand our horizons, and this not by just going somewhere else but including all the earlier steps of evolution, instead of dismissing indispensable levels of human evolution. What we try in this article is to test extra realms for carefully testing "extra" positions & perspectives in order to see where we agree and disagree and where we stand when looking in certain way, and how we can live with such a disagreement, and how it would be like to step out of the picture, seeing on a higher level the commons, so being able to step back from any fight over details we can not understand or oversee.

The alternative is the fight over belief systems in a foggy and vague continuum, a post-modern indecisiveness full of fear and aggression. See Information War and Cyberculture versus a Humane Information Society? (Benking 1998a) or a Kommunikative Gesellschaft (Benking 2000a). Shared models and metaphors only speak to you when you listen, so we tried dialogue and new stories, new analogies and architectures (Benking 1998d) showing that we belong together and that there are alternatives to clashes. One story is that of an extra skin we need to imagine around Gaia, [see: WOC'99], the other is building an imaginary social design (town" like the story in 1001 with Manu, the son of Harun al Rashid, see Ethics Summit contribution) Other stories are told around the campfires, real and virtual ones, visit us at [vun.org](http://vun.org) where we try to stay together because we are different, and the difference is the real beauty, mandatory for respect and tolerance.

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# Integral Manifestations: Contemplative Practice and Social Commitment— Quakers and Engaged Buddhists

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## Abstract

*Where can we find seedbeds of integrality as humankind enters the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?* The contemplative practices & socially engaged paths of Thich Nhat Hanh's Tiep Hien Engaged Buddhism and the Religious Society of Friends (commonly known as Quakers) can be seen as examples of groups, which embody significant aspects of Jean Gebser's concept of emerging integral consciousness. As respective groups they demonstrate a capacity for trans- or post-rational contemplative experience. Individual Quakers and Engaged Buddhists often are able to render transparent the salient social causes of the day well before these issues become clear to the consciousness of society at large. They seek to develop their capacity to integrate the personal and social dimensions of their lives, and provide cogent and sensitive ideas and practices to help lighten our common journey.

## Introduction

As educators we have often asked people what they would most like for themselves and for the broader community. After reflection, most respond that they would like to find the source of and develop the quality of peacefulness within themselves, and that they wish that there would be more peace and justice in the world. Their responses underscore the reality that the quest for inner and outer peace is indeed a significant one in our contemporary world, and is felt with an increasing sense of urgency.

There are numerous possible approaches for an exploration of the sources for peace building. In this article we will focus as examples on two historic traditions which continue to evolve as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one Western in origin, the other Eastern, which are doing creative work in nonviolent practices and peace education. The Society of Friends (Quakers) and the 'Engaged' Buddhist movement headed by the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh both have contemplative practices that assist the inner development of the practitioner. The two movements are also known for their support of social change activities that can be described as humanitarian in nature. Our inquiry here will be to seek to identify contemplative practices (such as meditation) which have helped practitioners develop insights that expand their conception of human rights and responsibilities, and also see how the benefits of these practices might manifest in the lives of communities and indeed throughout the world.

The specific concern in this article is: are we at the dawn of an age of an emerging integral consciousness and if so what might its manifestations

look like on societal level? Who and where are individuals and groups who are harbingers, whose level of understanding and social actions foreshadow integrality?

***Toward Integral Consciousness: Where Are We Now?***

We have only one option: in examining the manifestations of our age, we must penetrate them with significant breath and depth that we do not come under their demonic and destructive spell. We must focus our view not merely on these phenomena, but rather on the humus of the decaying world beneath, where the seedlings of the future are growing, immeasurable in their potential and vigor... this new spiritual reality is without question our only security that the threat of material destruction can be averted. (Jean Gebser)<sup>1</sup>

Many associates who share in our quest to understand the ethical and socio-political dimensions of the world in which we live have asked, with a touch of incredulity, how it is that we remain optimistic in a world so obviously riddled with strife and societal inequities? Jean Gebser dealt with the same questions and issues with the publication of *The Ever-Present Origin* at a time when Europe was emerging from the specter of World War II fascism. Following Gebser's example we assert that we need to emphasize the creative and transformative potential of our times; to focus primarily on the destructive possibilities would be both defeatist and partial. (This is certainly true as we write now in the days following September 11, 2001 and its aftermath.)

In the sometimes-pessimistic intellectual climate of post-war Europe, Gebser shone as a beacon of hopeful light. Today, his work continues to provide encouragement for a beleaguered world seeking to find a shared ethos for building human unity. While writing a half-century ago Gebser remains one of the grounded, yet inspired pioneers who can help us to make sense out of the "postmodern era" in which we are living.

Gebser yearned for the widespread emergence of the integral structure of consciousness. Speaking of those who would participate in the "emerging transformation", he wrote in a Postscript to *The Ever-Present Origin* in 1952: "Only those will succeed for whom the present becomes a time free moment, a perpetual plentitude and source of life and spirit..." (545).

Are there harbingers today of emergent manifestations of integral consciousness? As Mike Purdy has noted in his insightful article, "Gebser's Project: What Must We Do Now?" it is necessary to "trace out some signs of the integral in our contemporary lived experience in order to understand what we must do." <sup>2</sup> We believe that the present work may be helpful in

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Gebser *The Ever-Present Origin*. (Translated by Noel Barstad with Algis Mickunas) Athens: Ohio University Press. 1985, p.5.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Purdy, "Gebser's Project", *Integrative Explorations: Journal of Culture and Consciousness*. July 1994, Vol.2:1 pps. 20-35. Mike noted that Gebser's orientation was "wary of all quick fixes." Commenting also on "Gebser's optimism", he wrote: "I think

modestly contributing towards this goal, and that the approach and activities of the Society of Friends and Engaged Buddhists represent some of the brightest signs today of beginning to “live the integral into being” in the socio-economic realm.

***Thich Nhat Hanh and the Insight of Interbeing:***

Born in Central Vietnam in the mid-1920's, Nhat Hanh became a Buddhist monk at the age of 16. When war came to his country, first in the struggle for independence from France, and then with the United States, he and many of his fellow monks left their monastic isolation and became actively involved in helping victims of the conflicts and in publicly communicating their desire for peace. During the war in the mid 1960's he founded the Tiep Hien Order, The “Order of Interbeing”. It derived from the historic Zen School of Lin Chi and sought to develop a form of engaged Buddhism appropriate for daily life in society, not just in a retreat center.<sup>3</sup>

*Tiep*, a Vietnamese word of Chinese origin means first of all to be in touch with oneself in order to find out the source of wisdom, understanding and compassion in each of us. It also means to be in touch with the enlightened people in whom full understanding and compassion are tangibly manifested. *Hien* means in the present time.

Central to Thich Nhat Hanh's Order of Interbeing is the teaching of co-dependent arising. This is the idea that reality cannot be seen but must be viewed and experienced as a cohesive whole vs. as a system of isolated atomistic parts. The parts cannot stand alone, like three reeds they must lean against on another for mutual support if any is to stand. “This is like this because that is like that.” Thich Nhat Hanh [Thay,<sup>4</sup>] who is himself influenced by the teaching of the ancient Avatamsaka Sutra has the following to say about the radically interdependent nature of existence.

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Gebser's explication of the integral structure of consciousness gave him cause to be optimistic for the future. Today, depending on how we see the integral unfolding, or how we read the present and future, we could be optimistic or pessimistic. Or maybe our degree of optimism depends on how open we are to the emerging integral. If we are within the emergent integral structure of consciousness perhaps we are in harmony with the Ever-Present Origin, the Tao, or the Way of the Masters, and we are eternally optimistic, ‘unattached’.(p.34)

<sup>3</sup> For a full explanation of the concept of the term interbeing which Thay coined see his *Being Peace*, pp.83-102. The first of the original 14 precepts of the Order of Being speaks of the non-doctrinaire approach which Thay embodies. “Do not be idolatrous or bound to any doctrine, theory or ideology, even Buddhist ones. All systems of thought are guiding means; they are not absolute truth.”

<sup>4</sup> As is the custom in Vietnamese Zen, Thich Nhat Hanh is affectionately known by his students as Thay, which translates roughly as teacher.

In every speck of dust I see innumerable Buddha worlds, in each of these worlds countless Buddha's shining.<sup>5</sup> In the phenomenal world things seem to exist as separate entities which have a specific place: "this" is outside of "that." When we deeply permeate the principle of interdependence, we see that this separateness is false. Each object is composed of and contains all others. In light of meditation on interdependence, the concept of "one/many" collapses and takes with it "large/small," "inside/outside," and all other concepts.<sup>6</sup>

The one is in the many and the many is in the one. Because the insight of Interbeing is trans-conceptual we give special attention to the fact that the teaching of Interbeing is not a rational concept; it is an experience and post-intellectual mode of knowing.

In his book *The Sun My Heart*, Thay asks us to meditate on the presence of the entire universe within ourselves. Our hearts are beating within our bodies and they are carrying nourishment to every cell. We know that without a heart it would be impossible for us to live for even a second. But Thay notes, "we do not often take time to notice that there are other things, outside our bodies, that are also essential to our survival. Look at the eminent light we call the sun. If it stops shining the flow of our life will also stop, and so the sun is our second heart, our heart outside our body."<sup>7</sup>

Looking deeply at interdependence, as Thay recommends we do, can be a profound experience. When I (Brian) was studying with Thay in Plum Village, his monastery in the southern hills of France, I noted the beautiful fiery dawn and suddenly understood quite clearly what Thay had meant when he had said that the Sun was my heart. The experience was not a rational one; I had not simply modified my intellectual understanding of causation and interaction, I was directly experiencing the truth of interdependence and living my unmediated co-dependent relationship with sun.

The contrast between the cover of the book *The Sun My Heart*, which pictures a simple circular emblem of a sun with a heart inscribed within, and the actual lived experience of the summer dawn is one that stays with me to this day. It is a distinction that is often lost in intellectual circles. Jean Gebser describes the marks of integral consciousness as being arationality, aperspectivity, intensity, and immediacy. These categories also provide a wonderful description of the insight of Interbeing, the insight whereby the practitioner realizes his integral relationship with and within the universe.

The integral structure of consciousness, as opposed to the rational, is not mediated by ideas or concepts. The being-in-truth seeks to know the thing-

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<sup>5</sup> Thay is quoting here from the Avatamsaka Sutra here.

<sup>6</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Sun My Heart*. Parallax Press, 1986. p65.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 66.

in-itself without the biases of rational discrimination. This immediacy is the very essence of Zen and is deeply present in Thay's teaching on mindfulness. In *Zen Keys* Thay says, "In Zen, insight cannot be obtained just by the intellect— study, hypothesis, analysis, synthesis. The student must use his or her entire being as an instrument of realization; the intellect is only one part of our being, a part that often pulls us away from living reality, which is the very substance of Zen."<sup>8</sup> Thay invites the student to practice holding all of his daily activities with full attention of the present, wonderful moment. Every second is an opportunity for practice and insight. While concepts defer our relationship with the world, simple pure attention offers us a radical means by which we have access to the integral process of living reality.

### **Engaging the Buddhist Path**

Reading the above passages on the subjects of breathing and contemplating the sun one may begin to wonder where the engaged and socially active component of Thay's Buddhism is exercised. This is the same type of question that burned so deeply within Thay as he came of age as a monk, scholar, and teacher during the Vietnam War. The traditional life of a monk is quite different from that of an activist. At the beginning of the war in Vietnam Thay became very disillusioned – as he sat inside the meditation hall contemplating, bombs were exploding in the surrounding countryside. He knew that something had to be done. It was at this moment that Engaged Buddhism was born.

With the help of some young committed monks and laity, such as Sister Chan Khong (who was at the time not yet ordained) Thay began the School For Youth Social Service (SYSS.) Over the years the group grew to several hundred members. The SYSS worked tirelessly for peace, laboring to help the poor villagers and children receive food, utensils, clothing, shelter, and education. Their pioneering programs in village development helped tens of thousands of poor rural peasants secure basic living necessities, supported through sponsorship many thousands of orphans, and gave hope to millions. Sister Chan Khong's biography *Learning True Love* is the story of her life as a practitioner of Engaged Buddhism and social change. In this book she relays the story of arriving at the scene of a village that had been recently bombed by Americans.

"Bombs had just fallen as we arrived at a very remote hamlet, about fifteen kilometers from Son Khuong Village. There were dead and wounded people everywhere. We used all the bandages and medicine we had. I remember so vividly carrying a bleeding baby back to the boat in order to clean her wounds and do whatever surgery might be necessary. I cannot describe how

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<sup>8</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh, *Zen Keys*. Parallax Press, 1974, p. 28.

painful and desperate it was to carry a baby covered with blood, her sobbing mother walking beside me, both of us unsure if we could save the child.”<sup>9</sup>

Chan Khong carries this memory with her to this day, as an intensely real and personal experience of the suffering of the world. No merely conceptual understanding could possibly contain the insight and realization of the horror of war as well as her work that day did. One day while on a trip to the US to speak and advocate for peace Sister Chan Khong saw a woman on television caring a wounded and bloody child. She then:

understood how the American people could continue to support the fighting and the bombing. The scene on the television was quite different from the reality of having a bleeding baby in ones arms... [She] realized that there was no connection between experiencing the actual event and watching it on the TV screen while sitting at home in peace and safety.<sup>10</sup>

To truly understand the nature of suffering and oppression we need to experience it as a living reality. At this point we are called to integrate our insights and experience into action. Despite frustration Sister Chan Khong vowed to continue her work free from fear and ‘with serene determination.’

The Communist government eventually took control of the SYSS and closed them down. Nonetheless Thay, Sister Chan Khong and others continued with their social change work. They went on to serve as the Buddhist delegate to the Paris Peace Talks and tried to find a place for the voice of the peasant and Buddhist majority. Recognizing Thay’s courageous presence and innovative proposals for an alternative nonviolent resolution to the Vietnam conflict the American civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. nominated Thay for the Nobel Peace prize.

In the years that followed they continued to work skillfully and compassionately on the cause of the Vietnamese ‘boat people,’ the tens of thousands of refugees who had fled Vietnam on rickety boats for the high seas only to be continually turned away by the immigration officials of neighboring countries. They helped many of them receive necessary supplies and eventual resettlement. He also managed to bring the cause of the Vietnamese boat people to the attention of the world and before the United Nations High Commission on Refugees. In these and many other ways Thay engaged his Buddhist practice, and indeed the practice of a whole generation of monks.

### **Quaker Religious/Spiritual Experience:**

A fundamental belief of the Society of Friends (Quakers) is that divine revelation is immediate and individual, that indeed all people are capable of receiving the “word of God” in their soul, and need to heed it. This inner

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<sup>9</sup> Sister Chan Khong, *Learning True Love*. Parallax Press, 1993. p. 69

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 69.

revelation was termed “the inward light” or “the Christ within”, as the first Friends identified this spirit with the Christ of history.

In the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century George Fox, commonly described as the Founder of Quakerism, wrote: “I saw, also, that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that also I saw the infinite love of God, and I had great openings.<sup>11</sup> Fox experimented with various contemplative practices. In his meditation and prayer he experienced and became attuned within himself to what he termed a “still, silent voice”, a source of inner truthfulness. These experiences were key to a growing awareness and understanding that all human beings are intrinsically equal in the “sight” of the Creator. That which he experienced were potentially open to each person; Fox uses the phrase “that of God in everyone” 108 times in his writings.

He also used the phrase “the power of the Lord”; variations of which appear 388 times, by far the most often used expression in his *Journal*. One contemporary writer, Scott Martin, notes that the phrase “had multiple meanings for Fox and other early Friends, but the most common use of the phrase was to refer to a sensible, divine power or energy.... When seized by the power, some Friends quaked, vocalized or fell unconscious to the floor, while other Friends saw brilliant light, had visions, experienced healing, or felt a force emanating from them that was capable of subduing an angry and hostile mob.”<sup>12</sup>

Not all 17<sup>th</sup> Century Friends were of one mind with regard to this “power”, so it is certainly no surprise that there are many opinions about it today. For Martin, “far from being some kind of aberration or even unique to the Quakers, these phenomena represent archetypal forms of religious/ spiritual expression. In some ways they are akin to ancient or Eastern cultures that speak of subtle energy. And the statement in the Christian Bible “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be filled with light (*Matthew 6:22*), sounds very familiar to what would be called in India “the opening of the third eye.” Martin surmises that the traditional Quaker qualities of peacefulness and love which sometimes seem elusive today could be

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<sup>11</sup> George Fox, *An Autobiography*, Chapter 1. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Rufus M. Jones. [www.mindspring.com/~strecorsoc/gfox/title.html](http://www.mindspring.com/~strecorsoc/gfox/title.html)

Explicating Fox’s words, scholar Rufus Jones has noted: “This expression “opened” has a mystical import, and will be of frequent occurrence. He means to say that it was directly revealed in his soul so that he assuredly knew it to be true. Often he uses the expression in reference to some truth which he might easily have discovered in the Scriptures or have learned from contemporary sources. But in this solemn way he announces that this truth has now at length come to be a *living truth for him*. It is no longer a mere statement of fact — it is a principle, the truth of which he *sees*.”

<sup>12</sup> Scott Martin, “Quaking and the Rediscovery of Primitive Quakerism,” *Friends Journal*, Vol. 47:5, May 2001, p.9.



rekindled by a rediscovery of what Fox referred to as “the power”, and this could be enhanced by such practices as daily meditation sitting.<sup>13</sup>

### **Quaker History/Activism:**

While founded in individual revelation, the Quakers as an organized faith community sought to translate and integrate the values implicit in such revelations into high ethical standards for all of its faith practitioners. Accordingly, Quakers refused to take oaths, preached against war, and often found it necessary to oppose the authority of church or state. The Society of Friends emphasizes human goodness because of the belief that God exists in everyone. Truth and sincerity are Quaker bywords.

One illustrative historic example of the ever-potential link between inner religious/spiritual practice and consequent social action is the leading role that the Society of Friends had as advocates in England and America for the abolition of slavery as a social and economic institution. A clear line of development can be discerned from the spiritual experience of George Fox to the abolitionist stance of later Quakers like the American John Woolman. Born in New Jersey, Woolman experienced a crisis of conscience in his 20's when he was called upon to witness the bill of sale of the purchase of another human being. He was so deeply troubled that he vowed never again to put himself in such a position, and soon began what would become his lifelong ministry against slavery. Knowing that he had been complicit he began to root out the seeds of this complicity, first from his own heart and actions. Only then could he appeal to his fellow Quakers, a number of whom were slave owners in those days.

The recognition that no person should hold another in bondage led to the commitment first to release their own slaves and to implore their fellow Friends and then other slave-owners to do likewise. If the United States had learned from this positive example, the Civil War and much of its painful aftermath could have been avoided.

While a few Friends like John Brown continued to profit from the slave trade in pre-Revolutionary America, the great majority followed the example of his brother Moses Brown and became advocates for an end to the abhorrent practice. A prominent Quaker businessman and abolitionist, Moses Brown of Providence, Rhode Island “regularly received correspondence concerning free persons of color who had been kidnapped or decoyed back into slavery; he and the Providence Abolition Society worked diligently to obtain their release.”<sup>14</sup>

Even in the pre-bellum South over 100 abolition societies arose, many with Quaker leadership. In her recent book *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of*

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Joanne Pope Melish's excellent study, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780-1860* p. 102.

*History*, Professor Elise Boulding notes that: “Unfortunately, Quaker and other like-minded efforts were inadequate to the task of organizing the Middle Way that could have brought about abolition without war.”<sup>15</sup>

The evolving awareness which seemingly motivated John Woolman’s and Moses Brown’s actions could be seen as an early harbinger of integral consciousness— a recognition that a person’s thoughts, words and actions were all interrelated, and the imperative that one’s social actions reflect what one truly believes.

Almost from its beginning Quakers developed a strong stance against war and the taking of human life. They refused to take oaths and often found it necessary to oppose the authority of church or state. Quakerism emphasizes human goodness because of the belief that God exists in everyone. Truth and sincerity are Quaker bywords. Historically, the Friends were early proponents of universal education, equality between men and women, prison reform and the rehabilitation of wrongdoers.

Organizationally, most Friends support the work of the American Friends Service Committee, which was founded in 1917 primarily to handle Friends’ philanthropic activities. Over time the AFSC became a strong advocate for conscientious objectors to military service, especially during World War II and the Vietnam War. Today the AFSC is primarily concerned with social justice issues involving racial and gender equality and sexual preference. It remains a leader in calling for an end to the international arms race, eliminating nuclear weapons, and promoting nonviolent education and conflict resolution. The AFSC as well as its international counterpart, the World Friends Service Committee is a strong advocate for reducing the huge economic gap between the wealthy and poor throughout the planet, and promoting sound and sustainable ecological practices. From the beginning, many concerned individuals, a good number of whom are not themselves Quakers but who share common values and concerns, have been at the heart of the AFSC and its work. The AFSC over the years has done many projects in war torn countries such as within the former Yugoslavia. For example, in Mitrovica, Kosovo, where Serbs and Albanian are separated by a river and by violence, relief efforts were followed up by projects that encourage people to work together across ethnic lines.<sup>16</sup> Examples such as these are excellent displays of Friends social commitment.

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<sup>15</sup> The Quakers, when they exercised political leadership, also pursued an enlightened policy in their relations with Native American peoples. In colonial Pennsylvania the rules of governance instituted by William Penn lead to seventy years of peaceful relationships with neighboring Native American peoples, in stark contrast to the policies generally pursued by other colonies. (Boulding, 2000,59–60).

<sup>16</sup> At the AFSC’s regional office in Sarajevo, a community garden successfully brought Serbs, Croations and Bosnians to raise food for their families. However, in Kosovo where even talk of reconciliation was difficult, several projects initially focused on helping spirits recover. The AFSC refurbished a public library, which has become a gathering place, and

## **Quaker–Buddhist Political Consensus, Toward an Integral Political Economy**

The first two sections of this article provided us with an overview of both the contemplative practice and the social action of the Tiep Hien Buddhists and Quakers. We can now proceed to consider what we might term the Quaker Buddhist political consensus<sup>17</sup> considering first the common framework and methodology in which their agendas are situated.

### **Methodology:**

#### ***The Discovery of Time, The Making of Decisions, and The Practice of Love:***

As Gebser would have predicted, time plays an essential role in the worldview of both the Engaged Buddhists and the Friends. They embody what he would call the timeless nature of a perspectival consciousness, the groundless ground that is the ‘Ever–Present Origin.’ While being supported by this timelessness they nonetheless remain historically and temporally rooted. They invite us to remain in touch with our ancestors as a source of strength and stresses the historical Buddha in his teachings. Likewise, the Quakers draw inspiration from scripture and the teaching and writing of past Friends who stress the historical and social teachings of Jesus over the messianic. Both traditions reject any scriptural literalism or absolutism and encourage their faith to evolve and develop while remaining devoted to a few structural beliefs that serve as a core or bedrock. For instance the Quaker teachings on Inner Light or the Buddha’s teachings on Mindfulness. In *Faith and Practice*, a document on the history, faith, and practices of the Philadelphia Yearly meeting contains the following:

Bring the whole of your life under the healing and ordering of the Holy Spirit, remembering that *there is no time but this present*. Friends are reminded that we are called, as followers of Christ, to help establish the Kingdom of God on earth.<sup>18</sup>

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rehabilitated a center for blind people that offers classes in Braille. Hygiene kits assembled in the USSA by schools, churches and community groups were given to Roma (Gypsy) families who are shunned and criminalized by other groups. Children’s drama and art projects were initiated. See *AFSC Bulletin Service*, Winter 2000, for further details on these projects.

<sup>17</sup> This is not to say that the two groups arrived at this consensus through joint discourse. While historically there has been some meeting, for instance it was the Quaker–led Fellowship of Reconciliation that invited Thay to tour the United States, for the most part it is safe to say that the political leanings commonly held by the two groups were arrived at independent of one another. This fact makes consonance all the more striking.

<sup>18</sup> *Faith and Practice*. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. 1997. <http://www.pym.org/publish/fnp/index.htm> p.83 (*italics ours*)

Thay has conceived the seventh mindfulness training<sup>19</sup> of the Order of Interbeing, *Dwelling Happily in the Present Moment*, as follows:

Aware that *life is available only in the present moment* and that it is possible to live happily in the here and now, we are committed to training ourselves to live deeply each moment of our daily life... We are determined to learn the art of mindful living by touching the wondrous, refreshing, and healing elements that are inside and around us, and by nourishing seeds of joy, peace, love, and understanding in ourselves.<sup>20</sup>

It is easy to see the experience of timelessness and Origin (In Gebser's sense of the term) at work. Being deeply in touch with the Present Moment is being in touch with God. I (Brian) can remember Thay saying that when we practice walking Meditation, if we practice with full mindfulness, we can 'step into the Kingdom of God right here on this very earth, this very day.' This represents a bold theology. Thay rejects the view held by many other Buddhists that life is to be equated with suffering and the proper goal of the living is to acquire meritorious karma and ultimately escape the cycle of birth and death. For him, joy is available immediately, in this present instant. We can begin now.

Quakers spirituality is marked by the same seal of immediacy, the direct experience of the 'light within.' Quakers eschew any scriptural or priestly authority. The experience of being with God is intensely personal and available, through the process of openly awaiting grace, at this very moment. This amounts to a reconstruction of the eschatology of Christ along lines vastly different from the mythical/literal Christianity that dominates the cultural and political landscape of the US. The Kingdom of God, like the Buddha's depiction of Nirvana or the Pure Land, is available in the here and now, and it is our joyful task to construct it here on earth.

How are we to make decisions as we build our world? How are we to think about justice? In answering this question, Thay and the Quakers exemplify the marks of integrality. On the individual level, Friends make decisions and seek direction in their life through silent worship and experience of the light, a process that both transcends and includes more rational modes of deliberation like cost benefit analysis or logical argumentation. When seeking to pursue a leading, or feeling of being drawn by God toward a particular option, the friend will often worship and sit until she feels certain and moved in the depths of her being and has been given an answer. After this they will often seek support and recognition for their decision from the meeting to which they belong.

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<sup>19</sup>Lay persons are invited to take the five mindfulness trainings, which were mentioned earlier whereas monks and lay order members receive fourteen trainings that contain additional levels of detail.

<sup>20</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh, *Interbeing: Fourteen Guidelines for Engaged Buddhism*. 1987 Parallax Press.

This decision-making transcends normal rational adjudication in three vitally important ways: (1) it is willing to function in opposition to and outside of the mainstream moral sphere<sup>21</sup> (2) it seeks to move beyond the rational intellect and (3) it seeks to move beyond the individual ego. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting speaks well on these points:

Friends are encouraged to test the leadings of conscience by seeking clearness... Such testing enhances and clarifies insight so that the conscience may be purged of misconceptions and become more truly obedient to the Light Within. When conscience has been transformed by experiencing the Light, it gives more reliable direction even though it may seem to point in a direction that is contrary to generally accepted authorities.<sup>22</sup>

At the group level, the Quakers operate with a consensus process. Initiating from a place of belief in the light and divinity in each individual the Quaker group aims to make decisions guided by faith that respect that divine spark in each individual. No voice is to go unheard, insight can and does come from any source. The process, however, does not end with each objection being spoken and recognized. The meeting then labors to bring the voices into consonance and harmony. Common ground is sought and the integration of ideas and feelings is forged into what is called the ‘sense’ of the meeting:

Friends’ decision-making is rooted in the spiritual oneness of a religious community. We reject majority rule for the higher goal of reaching decisions in unity, through distinctive attitudes developed by Friends over the centuries. Our process is democratic in the sense that everyone is encouraged to participate. However, it also goes beyond democracy in that it does not rely solely on human will or ability. Participants are expected to put aside personal desires and allow themselves to be led by a Guide beyond the self.<sup>23</sup>

The leadings and testimonies of individual Quakers more often than not prefigure changes that will later become clear to society at large, that is they make transparent insights which, while bitterly contested at their inception, will one day be seen as self evident. Prominent examples of this are Quaker testimonies on Slavery and Women’s Suffrage<sup>24</sup>. The present authors are of the opinion that Quaker teachings on peace, integrity, and simplicity will one day share a similar self-evident status.

One can find a similar mode of decision-making in Thay’s practice of looking deeply. Deceptively simple and incredibly powerful, he invites us to

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<sup>21</sup> “Throughout our history Friends have testified that our lives are not meant to conform to the ways of the world, but that we are meant to live in obedience to the Light of Truth within, and through this witness to contribute to the transformation of the world through the Light of Truth.” *Faith and Practice*. PYM. 1997. P.72.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* p.24.

<sup>23</sup> *Faith and Practice*. PYM. 1997. P.27.

<sup>24</sup> “Of the five women who organized the first women’s rights convention at Seneca Falls in 1848, four were Quakers: Lucretia Mott; her sister, Martha Coffin Wright; Mary Ann McClintock; and Jane Hunt.” *Faith and Practice*.. PYM. 1997. P.9

investigate a problem or a conflict from as many sides as we can, and with as much depth as possible, all the while trying to maintain a mind of love and equanimity. We may sit with a problem in our 'store-consciousness' and water it with the nourishment of mindfulness, meditation and time. If we practice diligently, sooner or later we will have the experience of insight and the answer we were seeking will suddenly spring forward into one's mind and heart.

Thay is fond of telling the story of a reporter who during the conflict in Vietnam asked Thay if he was from the North or the South to which Thay replied, "I am from the center!" He did this because he wanted "to help the reporter, who was trying to discern if I was pro-communist or pro-American, to dislodge his preconceptions and meet the situation with fresh eyes." The ability to discern between right and wrong perceptions is a prerequisite to being able to transcend perspective and achieve what Gebser would call aperspectivity.

This is, in novel form, a recapitulation of the insight of Interbeing. When we look at a conflict or make a decision we need to be able to see ourselves as participating in all sides and dimensions of the conflict. It is only through seeing all perspectives that we can transcend perspective. At this point, we can begin to act with love and the assurance that we are doing the right thing. Ideally, in *Sangha* when a decision must be made the community does not argue. Instead they sit quietly, look deeply and meditate on an issue, and then work toward a group consensus.

When 'looking deeply' it is not that the intellect is discarded, it remains a vital component, and is transcended and removed from a position of sole authority. There is more to legitimization than logical coherency. A spiritual and ethical coherence is needed as well. The practitioner uses his/her 'whole being as an instrument of realization.' Cold logic is transcended and replaced by contemplative consensual deliberation.

As a function of their desire to remain open to fresh and creative insight both groups deny the validity of any form of dogmatism:

As Friends use this Faith and Practice, we should heed the admonition stemming from the Meeting of Elders held at Balby, England in 1656:

Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all with the measure of the light which is pure and holy may be guided, and so in the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, —not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.<sup>25</sup>

*Aware of the suffering created by attachment to views and wrong perceptions, we are determined to avoid being narrow minded and bound to present views in order to be open to others insights and experiences. We are*

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<sup>25</sup> *Faith and Practice*. PYM. 1997. p.84

aware that the knowledge we possess is not changeless, absolute truth. Truth is found in life and we will observe life within and around us in every moment, ready to learn throughout our lives.<sup>26</sup>

Ideas about the innate worth and sacredness of each being and a central ethic of peace have led both groups to develop a conception of justice that reflects integral consciousness.

Whole, holy, health, and healing all come from the Latin root *hale*, which means ‘whole.’ An integral conception of justice seeks wholeness. It seeks to reunite those in conflict at the level of emotion and being. Thay asks us to bring as many voices as possible to the table, to heal wounds, and to approach all conflict, however small, with a mind of equanimity and love and with the intention of successfully resolving the dispute and restoring a state of loving kindness and mutual recognition<sup>27</sup>.

Whereas the rational conception of justice is a retributive one the integral is reconciliatory and restorative. Where the rational society would be based upon the idea of a set of isolated and unrelated individuals coming together in a ‘social contract’ for mutual protection and the assurance of property rights, an integral society would be based on the idea of Interbeing. It would be founded from the start on an idea of radical interdependence. It would be seen that you cannot harm your neighbor without harming yourself. And conversely you cannot help yourself without helping your neighbor. You and your neighbor ‘inter–are.’<sup>28</sup>

There have been a variety of attempts to translate these ideas into actions and structures. The Quakers have the Friends Committee on Restorative Justice who seek to ‘heal the harm of crime’ and note that:

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<sup>26</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh, *Interbeing: Fourteen Guidelines for Engaged Buddhism*. 1987 Parallax Press. p.26

<sup>27</sup> The fourth Mindfulness training deals directly with these issues:

“Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others, I am committed to cultivate loving speech and deep listening in order to bring joy and happiness to others and relieve others of their suffering. Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I am committed to learn to speak truthfully, with words that inspire self–confidence, joy, and hope. I am determined not to spread news that I do not know to be certain and not to criticize or condemn things of which I am not sure. I will refrain from uttering words that can cause division or discord, or that can cause the family or the community to break. I will make all efforts to reconcile and resolve all conflicts, however small.” [www.plumvillage.org/trainings](http://www.plumvillage.org/trainings).

<sup>28</sup> “The fate of each individual is inexorably linked to the fate of the whole human race. The only alternative to co–existence is co–nonexistence.” Thich Nhat Hanh. *Love in Action* p.120.

Many early Friends were victims of an arbitrary and unreasonable criminal justice system. Knowledge of that experience has opened many later Friends to that of God in convicted persons.... Friends seek alternatives. Friends have acted out of the conviction that redemption and restorative justice, not retribution, are the right tasks of the criminal justice system....<sup>29</sup>

In the wake of the tremendous destruction of the Vietnam War, Thay has done important work toward reconciliation himself. He has held many retreats in which American veterans of the Vietnam War and Vietnamese refugees come together to practice peace and forgiveness. The process is not one of deciding who is at guilt, or of assigning blame; it is one of healing. Attendees look deeply at their own grief and at the relationships of hatred and pain they have formed and work to transform them

This is the same energy Thay brought when he was elected as the Buddhist representative at the Paris Peace talks. While there he sought to represent the voices of the non-partisan Buddhist middle and the countless unheard peasants. In his own words his practice was to try to become peace. Thay has also done work in prisons speaking with inmates and helping them to heal, transform, and ‘step into freedom.’ In this work he shares the same ethic of restoration and reconciliation.

We have now outlined the ways in which Quakers and Buddhists construct their politic and seek to heal the world. Through a mature and non-attached love, the guiding use of a contemplative practice, the support of a like-minded spiritual community, a recognition of the sacred and precious nature of each living being, a resistance to reification and dogma, a radically experiential base, a living tradition of immediate and continual insight, and a grounding in one of the worlds great spiritual traditions these groups represent what might be termed an integral methodology and hermeneutic. They constitute ways in which to think about, discover, interpret, act upon, and shape the world.

### ***Community, Self and Living In The World***

In the modern world to live a life of principle is to live a life against the societal current. Thich Nhat Hanh notes “Restoring mental health does not mean simply helping individuals adjust to the modern world of rapid economic growth. The world is sick and adapting to an unwell environment will not bring about real health”<sup>30</sup>

Likewise the often-iconoclastic Friends have noted that:

Throughout our history Friends have testified that our lives are not meant to conform to the ways of the world, but that we are meant to live in obedience to the Light of Truth within, and through this witness to contribute to the transformation of the world through the Light of Truth.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Friends Committee on Restorative Justice. [www.fcrjquaker.org/](http://www.fcrjquaker.org/)

<sup>30</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh. *Love in Action*. Parallax Press 1993. p. 123

<sup>31</sup> *Faith and Practice*. PYM. 1997. p.74.



Observing the same logic, as with the transcendence of rational consciousness the groups do not seek to escape from living within the world. They try to live all the more deeply.

Absolutely vital to this process is community. They have often said, “Gathering in community with like-minded people is one of the most important ingredients in fostering and sustaining personal and spiritual growth.” The *Sangha*, or “community of like-minded people coming together to practice in understanding and in love” is, along with the Buddha (teacher) and the Dharma (teachings or truth) one of the “Three Jewels,” without which there could be no Buddhist practice. A Quaker friend once replied to our inquiry about the importance of community to Quaker spirituality “We are Friends... we take friendship to the spiritual level.” Ideally, if we are to be integral in our approach, we need to be individuals seeking wholeness within communities seeking wholeness, within a world seeking wholeness, and we must honor the struggle, growth, and process at all levels of this undertaking<sup>32</sup>.

The Quakers have a proud history of seeking human unity in Government institutions. As far back as 1693 Quakers were advocating a progressive multilateral approach to global governance, one that included and yet transcended the nation state. In 1693, William Penn wrote a plan for the “Present and Future Peace of Europe,” which included settling disputes between nations by arbitration instead of war. This plan is considered a prototype of the United Nations, which acknowledges this legacy by celebrating UN Day on Penn's birthday (October 24). Today Friends<sup>33</sup> continue their work toward a progressive global community through their own personal testimony and through groups like the American Friends Service Committee, the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), in two locations: New York and Geneva, and the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Thich Nhat Hanh has also been a proponent of global community, asking us to see all beings as one cell in an overarching Sangha-body. For him humanity, and life itself, can be seen as an organic whole. Echoing the Buddhist tendency to deny a sharp tendency between sentient and non-

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<sup>32</sup> “We would work for greater understanding at all levels, from the kindergarten to the United Nations, of proven techniques for the nonviolent resolution of conflict. And we would promote and assist programs of conversion to peaceful uses of facilities built for war.” *Faith and Practice*. PYM. 1997. p.98.

<sup>33</sup> “Friends since William Penn have sought to promote institutions of peace. In this era we promote a vision of a new world order that recognizes the essential unity of a human family sharing a fragile planet. We prefer governing institutions that work face-to-face, within small communities. But we acknowledge the need for governing institutions at all levels, both as supportive, coordinating bodies, and as courts of appeal from the arbitrary actions of lesser jurisdictions.” *Faith and Practice*. PYM. 1997. p.123

*Faith and Practice*. PYM. 1997. p.123.

sentient beings, Thich Nhat Hanh has asked that we consider not only people but also animals, plants, and minerals in our culture and community and has been a vocal supporter of communication between nations, and specifically, the millennial United Nations Declaration of Decade for A Culture of Peace and Nonviolence.

***Peace is Every Step: Peace and Disarmament.***

Perhaps the beliefs for which the Quakers are best known are their pacifism and nonviolence. Once you recognize the presence of God in another it is no longer possible to kill them. It is for this reason that while recognizing the needs for coordinating bodies and larger structures, Friends prefer small, direct, face-to-face contact. At this level it is easier and more probable that one will experience the humanity and innate divinity of the people with whom one is in discourse. Quakers attempt to work actively to transform all ideas and structures that promote violence as an acceptable tool at the personal, community, or global level. The cultivation of peace in our hearts and homes goes hand-in-hand with the demilitarization of our world. When William Penn wrote "Present and Future Peace of Europe" he was trying to envision a system in which war would no longer have any validity or use as a mode of settling disputes.

Friends have consistently sought to redefine security witnessing for a diversion of resources away from military spending and toward social spending, education, and environmental protection.

The Quaker approach is a radical one; it seeks the roots of the problem. George Fox is attributed with a famous quote: "I told them...that I lived in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars." The roots of war are in both the yearning and lonely hearts of fellow humans and in the violent institutions and physical war machines that disgrace our world. Friends seek to transform both at the deepest level possible. They also realize that to work for peace and against militarism means more than opposing armed conflict; it means the creation of peaceful alternatives at all levels and in all sectors of society.

*Ahimsa*, the Sanskrit word for of Nonviolence literally non-injury, is for Thay the basis of his practice, any true spirituality, and a happy life. His is a path of understanding and of love where 'Peace is Every Step.' The first of the five mindfulness trainings is:

Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I am committed to cultivate compassion and learn ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants, and minerals. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to condone any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, and in my way of life.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> The Five Mindfulness Trainings. [www.plumvillage.org](http://www.plumvillage.org)

As with the Quakers the practice of peace begins within people, in this very moment, and with the help of supportive communities is spread outward through the world. The inner process begins at the level of thoughts and extends outward to actions and ultimately institutions.

Like the Quakers Thay supports steps toward disarmament with the resultant financial savings used to decrease human suffering. Thay says “we have to do it together, looking deeply into the nature of war in our consciousness. The war is in our souls.”<sup>35</sup> He implores us to move ‘from weapons to human solidarity.’

### **An Economics of Stewardship and Simple Abundance:**

It is impossible to consider the political climate of the world while ignoring the economic, and it is impossible to seriously consider the processes of production and consumption without noting the social and environmental repercussions of these decisions. Taking this to heart Thay stresses the Buddhist idea of Right Livelihood; if we are to follow the spiritual path we need to have a vocation that reflects our values and desire to do good. He has also expanded the idea of temperance common in historical Buddhist ethics to include a diet of mindful consumption for healthy people and a healthy world.

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I am committed to cultivating good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking, and consuming. I am committed to ingest only items that preserve peace, well-being, and joy in my body, in my consciousness, and in the collective body and consciousness of my family and society.<sup>36</sup>

For Thay while some members of the human family are suffering for us to enjoy a false sense of security and wealth is a sign of insanity. In accumulation and savings we construct a ‘false self.’ Thay supports economic justice and a lessening of the enormous gap between the rich and the poor but he does not stop there he also asks us to integrate nature into our worldview.

Although human beings are a part of nature, we single ourselves out and classify other animals and living beings as ‘nature,’ while acting as if we were somehow separate from it. Then we ask, ‘How should we deal with nature?’ We should deal with nature the way we deal with ourselves! Nonviolently.<sup>37</sup>

It is false consciousness to continue to live, produce and consume without recognizing and bringing our actions into line with the fact that our economic activity is embedded as a subset of a fragile and finite biophysical sphere. Thay offers a critique of an economic system predicated on limitless

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<sup>35</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh. *Love in Action*. 1993 Parallax Press. p. 86

<sup>36</sup> The Five Mindfulness Trainings. [www.plumvillage.org](http://www.plumvillage.org)

<sup>37</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh. *Love in Action*, p. 119

growth, which for him is a social manifestation of striving, attachment, and unwholesome desire.

The Friends take a similar stance in their economic testimony. Dating back to their opposition to human bondage they have long been opponents of economic injustice and systemic oppression. Their continuing testimony to simplicity and integrity posits them in opposition to the lavish consumption brought about by our economic system. Over two centuries ago in 1790 John Woolman asked “May we look upon our treasures, the furniture of our houses, and our garments, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions,” and the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting goes on to say:

In a world of economic interactions far more complex than John Woolman could have imagined, Friends need to examine their decisions about obtaining, holding, and using money and other assets, to see whether they find in them the seeds, not only of war, but also of self-indulgence, injustice, and ecological disaster. Good stewardship of economic resources consists both in avoidance of those evils and in actions that advance peace, simple living, justice, and a healthy ecosystem. Good stewardship also requires attention to the economic needs of Quaker and other organizations that advance Friends’ testimonies.<sup>38</sup>

Today individual Quakers, continue to witness for ecological and environmental justice. Groups such as the American Friends Service Committee, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, Friends Committee in Unity With Nature and the Friends Energy Project. Particularly noteworthy is the ground up Right Sharing of World Resources program. This group ‘supports grassroots development and economic discipleship’ through programs like a women’s banking community in Rwanda and a program to support the reclamation of saline soil by peasant women in India for purposes of women’s empowerment, food security, income generation, and environmental regeneration. This type of work is almost identical to the work done by the School for Youth Social Service in village empowerment and development.

### **Some Concluding Observations**

In taking stock of the present global scene, we do not want to give an overly-rosy prognosis. If humankind is to experience a more just and peaceful future we need to more fully understand the social institutions and structures of consciousness at play in our contemporary world.

Were he living today, Jean Gebser would undoubtedly see many strong remnants of deficient mythic consciousness, with the efficient rational still trying to assert itself, and only glimpses of the dawning of truly integral consciousness. The prominence of ethnic and religious conflict, millions of ill-nourished and diseased children, excessive militarism, the plunder of the

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<sup>38</sup> *Faith and Practice*. PYM. 1997. p.94.

planet's resources, and the all-too frequent presence of deficient mythic modes of consciousness. All point to the incompleteness of the task of even building sound rational structures, let alone the widespread emergence of the integral. It is for this reason that many committed peace builders, some well-recognized, others unknown by name, are working for more equity in the relationships among the world's peoples, sound ecological practices and a shared global ethos.

We are seeking in our ongoing project to explore where traces of emerging Integral Consciousness may be manifesting in our contemporary world. In the process of doing so we have come across a fascinating parallel between two path-breaking groups, Quakers and Engaged Buddhists. Emerging from widely different cultural and historical roots, they meet many of our Gebserian-inspired criteria for what an emerging, nascent integrally-aware social order might someday look like.

Yet keeping all things in perspective, we should not overemphasize the current socio-political influence of these two groups. The Society of Friends have only several hundred thousand members, primarily located in Anglo-American regions of the world, although their inspired peace-building, linking inner spirituality to public good works touches millions of people around the globe.

While only several thousand have received formal initiation into the various levels of Thich Nhat Hanh's Tiep Hien Order of Interbeing, hundreds of thousands, indeed millions, have been touched by the writings, talks, and active involvement of the Order. After the Dalai Lama, Thay is the most well-known and beloved teacher of Asian decent in the west today. He travels around the globe, yet the fearful political leadership of his native Vietnam will not allow him to return to his homeland.

All in all, these two spiritual communities, along with several other important groups not mentioned in this article, have a limited yet vital temporal influence over the socio-economic-political powers that now dominate the world's six-plus billion humans. It is the hope and belief of the current authors that the examples of these groups will continue to grow and develop.

What remains for all of us to do? We can help the integral awareness to emerge by recognizing that the "world" shines and sounds through the experience of each person. Everyone in her/his own way can contribute to the birthing of a more just and caring planetary community, which honors the manifestation of life and creative potential within all. We can continue to recognize the gifts of consciousness by integrating holistically the best of the archaic, magical, mythical and rational elements within our psyches, while recognizing their darker shadows. And lastly, we can follow the counsel and example of both the Quakers and the Engaged Buddhists, to

seek and dwell in the peace-giving silence of Origin and then go forth to serve in the spirit therein.

## Politics and Power Communicative Action in Frank Herbert's *Dune*

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### Introduction

In the *Dune Chronicles* Frank Herbert uses science fiction to elaborate on non-fictive and subtle nuances of communicative action. Set in a futuristic feudal society in which computers, robots and other "thinking machines" have been strictly forbidden by holy edict, the politically adept use verbal and non-verbal communication primarily as message technologies. However, the protagonist, Paul—Maud'Dib—Atreides, draws on several interpenetrated levels of rhetoric. These correspond to Gebser's archaic, magical, mythical and rational structures of consciousness. He uses his aperspectival awareness to become a messiah (a myth-maker) and wield supreme power by becoming emperor of the known universe (assuming the ultimate rational role—He by which all is measured).

This paper discusses Herbert's use of science fiction to realize aspects of communication and consciousness largely overlooked by contemporary communication theory. It explores, in particular, his contribution to an "integral (and ecological) theory of communication." The paper will cover the use of communicative gesture as technology, and multiple levels of civilizational consciousness that may be (re) called upon as rhetorical action. In doing so, the paper discusses manners by which larger than life figures (such as Kennedy and Hitler) are able to gain political power while paradoxically short-circuiting or circumventing the presupposed rational (persuasive argument) basis of political argument (in favor of magical incantation and mythical imagery).

### I. Peras

**To know a thing well, know its  
limits. Only when pushed beyond  
its tolerance will true nature be  
seen.**

—The Amtal Rule

—NOFHD

***If we define futurism as exploration beyond accepted limits, then the nature of limiting systems becomes our first object of exploration. ... The dominant pattern in current planning betrays a system of thinking that does not want to abandon old assumptions***

***and that keeps seeking a surprise-free future. But if we lock down the future in the present, we deny that such a future has become the present. ... Where we commonly believe meaning is found—in printed words (such as these), in the noise of a speaker, in the reader's or listener's awareness, or in some imaginary thought-land between these. We tend to forget that we human animals evolved in an ecosystem that has demanded constant improvisation from us. ... The virtuosity of our customary speaking tends to conceal from us how this behavior is dominated by improvisation. This non-awareness carries over into that talking with our universe by which we shape it and are shaped by it.***

**—Herbert: *Listening to the Left hand*<sup>1</sup>**

The limits of language and communicative action are tried and tested in the Dune Chronicles. These limits range from the militarization of language, to the mythical engineering of the Bene Gesserit's Missionaria Portectiva, to Bene Gesserit use of Voice, as magical incantation, to unintended gesture and other forms of nonverbal communication, such as music, which often speak louder than words.

***Messages of the body ... [often] complement—or contradict—the spoken word***

**—O'Reilly<sup>2</sup>**

Through dialogue and interaction, the ways by which communication may be reduced to signals (as in the case of hand-signals) and/or expanded to ambiguous, ambivalent and polysemic gestures (messages within messages, meanings within meanings, plans within plans) are explicated. We come to see that communication cannot be reduced to a theory of messages (a singularity) or transmission (a linearity). There is always something more and something less going on. Words, their structure in language, their use in speech, carry (and reveal) civilizational assumptions about the nature of things.

**The Duncans sometimes ask if I understand the exotic ideas of our past? And if I understand them, why can't I explain them? Knowledge, the Duncans believe, resides only in particulars. I try to tell them that all words are plastic. Word images begin to distort in the instant of utterance. Ideas imbedded in a language require that particular language for expression. This is the very essence of the meaning within the word exotic. See how it begins to distort? Translation squirms in the presence of the exotic. The Galach which I speak here imposes itself. It is an outside frame of reference, a particular system. Dangers lurk in all systems. Systems incorporate the unexamined beliefs of their creators. Adopt a system,**

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<sup>1</sup> . Frank Herbert, "Listening with the Left Hand," in Timothy O'Reilly, Editor, *Frank Herbert: The Maker of Dune* (New York: Berkley Books, 1987)

<sup>2</sup> . Timothy O'Reilly, *Frank Herbert* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1981), 19.



**accept its beliefs, and you help strengthen the resistance to change. Does it serve any purpose for me to tell the Duncans that there are no languages for some things? Ahhh! But the Duncans believe that all languages are mine.**

**—The Stolen Journals**

**—God Emperor of Dune**

These assumptions, as a *something less*, is what Herbert refers to as "consensus reality" (O'Reilly, 1981, p. 7; Herbert, *Listening to the Left Hand*). Consensus reality is the constitution of the common sense and the hypostasis for perception in a culture (as a spatio-temporal, or geo-historical phenomenon). The masses are, for the most part, doomed to live a severely limited sense of reality. Those who tacitly accept the words, and the ideas they convey, live lives that are prearranged and preformed by others who wield power over them.

They simply refuse to wake up.

**The person who takes the banal and ordinary and illuminates it in a new way can terrify. We do not want our ideas changed. We feel threatened by such demands. "I already know the important things!" we say. Then Changer comes and throws our old ideas away.**

**—The Zensufi Master**

**—Chapterhouse: Dune 12**

The *something more*, that which breaks the hold of the conventional, is the ambiguity and polysemy of communication; the idea that communication is excessive and can say more, and more, and more, than any singular intention.

**"Strong decisions," Hayt said. "These temper a man's life. One can take the temper from fine metal by heating it and allowing it to cool without quenching.**

**"Do you divert me with Zensunni prattle?" Paul asked.**

**"Zensunni has other avenues to explore, Sire, than diversion and display."**

**Paul wet his lips with his tongue, drew in a deep breath, set his own thoughts into the counterbalance poise of the mentat. Negative answers arose around him. It wasn't expected that he'd go haring after the ghola to the exclusion of other duties. No, that wasn't it. Why a Zensunni-mentat? Philosophy . . . words . . . contemplation . . . inward searching . . . He felt the weakness of his data.**

**"We need more data," he muttered.**

**"The facts needed by a mentat do not brush off onto one as you might gather pollen on your robe while passing through a field of flowers," Hayt said. "One chooses his pollen carefully, examines it under powerful amplification."**

**"You must teach me this Zensunni way with rhetoric," Paul said.**

**The metallic eyes glittered at him for a moment, then: "M'Lord, perhaps that's what was intended."**

**To blunt my will with words and ideas? Paul wondered.**

**"Ideas are most to be feared when they become actions," Paul said.**

**—Dune Messiah 67**

Words, especially power-words, are actions—even weapons. Herbert recognizes that all communication is communicative action. That is, it has consequences. It is political. It reveals power. Thus, his philosophy of communication is profoundly ecological because it deals with understanding the consequences of communication as action.

Ultimately, for Herbert, communication is a message transmission system (that may be examined at chemical and social levels) and a sense making system (that engages each and every person in the circularity between expression and perception).

Because of this, his characters have a depth about them that I find rare in science fiction—which often presupposes the scientific and technological life-world as the real world instead of a currently fashionable mythic world. This allows Herbert to explore science, religion and politics as socially constructed,

**The highest function of ecology is the understanding of consequences**

**—Pardot Kynes**

**—NOFHD 10**

communicated, mythological systems, to celebrate their achievements, criticize their narrow-mindedness, and avoid their dogma. This allows him as well to grasp the limits and significance of this epoch of radical change, and of the need for a mythology that is consequent with it.

## II. Logos

Herbert espouses the idea that the nuances of meaning emerge through language. Human evolution is, then, dialogical as well as ecological (Listening to the Left Hand).

*We sift reality through screens composed of ideas. (And such ideas have their roots in older ideas.) Such idea systems are necessarily limited by language, by the ways we can describe them. That is to say: language cuts the grooves in which our thoughts move. If we seek new validity forms...we must step outside language.*

—Herbert, Santaroga Barrier, in “Science Fiction and a World in Crisis,”

—in O'Reilly, Editor, Frank Herbert: *Maker of Dune*, 33<sup>3</sup>

They were using the mirabhasa language, honed phalange consonants and jointed vowels. It was an instrument for conveying fine emotional subtleties. Edric, the Guild Steersman, replied to the Reverend Mother now with a vocal curtsy contained in a sneer—a lovely touch of disdainful politeness.

In Dune, language is a medium in which thought grows, acquires form and communicative action is designed and directed toward a specific end. Like any mediator, however, it is an active participant in communication (the medium and message interpenetrate). Moreover, language, its form and function, is treated as one constantly shifting aspect of the larger phenomenon of communication. For the most part, due to the political environmental milieu—a feudal society—language is weapon. Characters select specific languages for specific communicational objectives.

Languages are played like musical instruments. One selects an instrument for its range, tone and timbre. In Dune, one selects a language for the mystical and magical import of its range, tone, timbre and rhetorical assumptions.

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<sup>3</sup> . Frank Herbert, “Science Fiction and a World in Crisis,” in Reginald Brentor, Editor, Science Fiction, Today and Tomorrow. (New York: Harper & Row, 1974)

**Ghanima nodded to her Aunt as Alia stopped in front of them, said: "A spoil of war greets her illustrious relative." Using the same Chakobsa [battle] language, Ghanima emphasized the meaning of her own name—Spoil of War."**

**—Children of Dune. 17–18**

This is the case in written as well as spoken communication.

**Alia touched the letter, experienced an odd sensation of mutual contact. This paper had been in her mother's hands. Such an archaic device, the letter—but personal in a way no recording could achieve. Written in the Atreides Battle Tongue, it represented an almost invulnerable privacy of communication.**

**—Dune Messiah 168**

Speakers make use of different languages in much the same way as a skilled jazz musician makes use of the different modes of a given scale and set of chord changes.<sup>4</sup>

**"Ah, yes," Scytale agreed. "We are energetic and we learn quickly. This makes us the one true hope, the certain salvation of humankind." He spoke in the speech mode for absolute conviction, which was perhaps the ultimate sneer coming, as it did, from a Tleilaxu"**

**—Dune Messiah 18**

While these characters display a profound virtuosity with regards to the use of language, the word, the logos, is ultimately a trap. This trap is set by the space–time orientation of the language espoused in its grammar, syntax and the assumptions made at the etymological point of word–origin.

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<sup>4</sup> . F. Touponce, *Frank Herbert* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988) notes that improvisation is thematic in the Dune Chronicles (p. 3). "It dismays some people to think that we are in some kind of jam session with our universe and that our survival demands an ever–increasing virtuosity, an ever–improving mastery of our instruments. Whatever we may retain of logic and reason, however, points in that direction. It indicates that creation of human societies probably should become more of an art form than a plaything of science" (Herbert: Listening to the Left Hand).

**Because of the one–pointed time awareness in which the conventional mind remains immersed, humans tend to think of everything in a sequential, word–oriented framework. This mental trap produces very short–term concepts of effectiveness and consequences, a condition of constant, unplanned response to crises.**

**—Liet–Kynes The Arrakis Workbook**

**—Children of Dune**

With regards to English, since this work is simultaneously a work of science fiction and heuristic philosophy (and thus uses the foreign languages of other worlds to teach us about our own), the threat lies in the modern spatial, perspectival assumptions that cultivate the myths of cause and effect, linearity and transmission.

***Linear thinking is a threat: the 1,2,3 . . . , A, B, C, . . . Mon, Tues, Wed, . . . orientation revealed by such "realistic" sayings as Kierkegaard's, "life can only be understood backward, but it must be lived forward," are not in tune with the circular–inclusive (not cause–effect) ways we live. "Events of tomorrow do change our view of yesterday." To fit stuff into this presupposition [linearity], we have to fill the unconscious.***

**—Frank Herbert**

**—Listening to the left Hand**

### **III. Magi**

**This is the awe–inspiring universe of magic: There are no atoms, only waves and motions all around. Here, you discard all belief in barriers to understanding. You put aside understanding itself. This universe cannot be seen, cannot be heard, cannot be detected in any way by fixed perceptions. It is the ultimate void where no preordained screens occur upon which forms may be projected. You have only one awareness here—the screen of the magi: Imagination! Here, you learn what it is to be human. You are a creator of order, of beautiful shapes and systems, an organizer of chaos.**

**—The Atreides Manifesto, Bene Gesserit Archive**

**—Heretics of Dune**

The western contemporary life–world tends to deny the influence of magic and dismiss it as mere illusion or slight–of–hand. This remains the case in spite of the pervasive use of prayer, faith healing, good–luck charms, incantation and other things that people use or do that would ultimately rely on some sort of magical hypostasis. Moreover, this remains the case in spite of the findings of physics, in

quantum mechanics, in which physical things and events appear to awareness as contradictory to rational thinking. Philosopher Jean Gebser suggests that magic is no mere trickery, but a structure of awareness that once dominated human consciousness and is still active and present, available to those who attune to it, and veiled to those who reduce human experience to a rational mentality. There are traces of *magic consciousness* in the earliest recorded human expressions (e.g., cave paintings) through contemporary culture.

**Fremen were the first humans to develop a conscious/unconscious symbology through which to experience the movements and relationships of their planetary system. They were the first people anywhere to express climate in terms of a semi-mathematic language whose written symbols embody (and internalize) the external relationships. The language itself was part of the system it described. The intimate local knowledge of what was available to support life was implicit in this development. One can measure the extent of this language/system interaction by the fact that Fremen accepted themselves as foraging and browsing animals.**

—The Story of Liet-Kynes by Harq al-Ada

—Children of Dune

Magic consciousness is, in Gebser's terms, a transition from the sleep-like quality and harmony with nature of *archaic consciousness* to the dawning of awareness: It is sleep-like in quality, but in it arises the adumbration of waking—the germ of need. For magic, as a structuring of consciousness, the human is no longer *in* the world; the human begins to *have* a world. *We see in the magic structure the emergence of ecological consciousness because all things are seen as interconnected.*

***Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.***

—Arthur C. Clarke

—*The Making of Kubrick's 2001, Jerome Agel, 312*

This is an interesting statement in light of the *Dune Chronicles* in which machines are given such an interesting treatment—especially those that result from Holtzman mechanics. For the most part, machines are subjugated by human intention as a result of the uprising against the "thinking machines" that had previously subjugated humans. However, while most machines in Dune are without computing ability, the machinic function is shifted from things to humans. Mentats are human thinking machines—they make prime computations. Voice is a machinic use of language—it makes people do things.

Magic consciousness is a *collective consciousness*. All members of a community are linked together—egoless. This interconnection between all things provides a

necessary way for magic to travel and work that is nonlinear. Instead of the individual (a mental–rational concept), we have at this level of understanding a group ego or collective: The shamans power is manifest because all share in it; all must believe in it, or it will not work.

**Tone of voice and attitude alone can subjugate another's will.**

—Duncan Idaho

—Notebooks of Frank Herbert's *Dune*, 47

Intonation and incantation are given special treatment in the *Dune Chronicles*. It is well known that the tone of voice is as vital as the choice of words for oral communication. Even when the listener cannot apprehend the meaning of words being spoken to him or her, the quality of the voice provides the listener with cues as to the speaker's intentions. Combining the conscious use of language, speech and intonation, perhaps the most significant treatment of verbal communication in the *Dune Chronicles*, and easily the most memorable, is the Bene Gesserit use of *Voice*.

Voice is the ability to use the expressive dimension of an oral gesture to subjugate another's will to an intended message. Voice is used to communicate a signal imperative. A signal is a communicative act in which there is a 1:1 correlation between an expression and its content. Put another way, a signal's meaning (if we can use that dangerous word) is established by a code that determines the way that a sign points. For example, the red light on a traffic light is a signal because the red light itself points to one meaning—stop. An imperative is a form of statement that bears a command and has the power to control. The signal–imperative, then, is an extremely powerful form of utterance from which only an adept is safe. We are introduced to the Voice in the very first pages of *Dune*.

Only the adept, those who are free and observe with clarity, recognize this power of voice.

**Paul nodded. He saw how Chani had been fooled. The timbre of voice, everything reproduced with exactitude. Had it not been for his own Bene Gesserit training in voice, and for the web of**

**"Now, you come here!" [said the Reverend Mother Gaius Helen Mohiam].**

**The command whipped out at him. Paul found himself obeying before he could think about it.**

**Using the Voice on me, he thought.**

**He stopped at her gesture, standing besides her knees.**

—*Dune*, 7

**dao in which oracular vision enfolded him, this Face Dancer disguise might have gulled even him.**

**—Dune Messiah 136**

The Voice is an extreme example of invocation and imperative. And yet, by taking the imperative statement to the extreme, to push it to the limit, and by use of analogy, Herbert explores the use of vocal power and verbal *magic* that is already always at play in human communication. It is this magic, through vocal incantation, that deserves further attention here.

Our contemporary notions of mass (e.g., mass communications, mass audiences), collective consciousness and the collective unconscious refer back to magic consciousness. In terms of mass communication, popular songs provide a good example of contemporary magic. Song lyrics are magical incantations. They are simple. Yet they are ambiguous, polysemic. Thus, they carry the power of the interpreter who can write on them his or her intent. Many words are nonsense. They are simple utterances powerful not because they bear meaning but because their invocation takes us into trance. This is one reason so many of the songs of Dune are uttered by the fremen. The fremen are still in touch and in tune with magic.

**O Paul, thou Muad'Dib,  
Mahdi of all men,  
Thy breath exhaled  
Sent forth the hurricane.**

**—Songs of Muad'Dib**

**—Children of Dune**



*Oh, worm of many teeth,  
Canst thou deny what has no cure?  
The flesh and breath which lure thee  
To the ground of all beginnings  
Feed on monsters twisting in a door of fire!  
Thou hast no robe in all thy attire  
To cover intoxications of divinity  
Or hide the burnings of desire!*  
—*Wormsong from the Dunebook*  
—*Dune Messiah*

This collective (mass) consciousness is expressed “in the visible interchangeability of the real and the symbolic” (Gebser, 1991, p. 48). This is to say that, for magic consciousness, there is a point-like unitary world. “The magic world is. . . a world of pars pro toto, in which the part can and does stand for the whole” (Gebser, 1991, p. 46).<sup>5</sup>

**Stilgar believed in a supernatural world very near him. It spoke to him in a simple pagan tongue dispelling all doubts. The natural universe in which he stood was fierce, unstoppable, and it lacked the common morality of the Imperium**

**(Dune Messiah 81)**

Magic works irrespective of time and place—it is Spaceless and Timeless. Indeed, spacelessness and timelessness are conditions of point-to-point unity. Gebser notes:

***All magic, even today, occurs in the natural-vital, egoless, spaceless and timeless sphere. This requires—as far as present-day man is concerned—a sacrifice of consciousness; it occurs in the state of trance, or when consciousness dissolves as a result of mass reactions, slogans, or “isms.” If we are not aware of this sphere in ourselves, it remains an entry for all kinds of magic influences. It does not matter whether such magic influences emanate knowingly from people or unknowingly from things***

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<sup>5</sup> . Jean Gebser, The Ever Present Origin, translated by Noel Barstad with Algis Mickunas (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1991)

***which, in this sphere, have a vital magic knowledge of their own, or are linked with such vital knowledge***

**—Jean Gebser**

**—Ever Present Origin, 49**

Not only do Gebser's comments describe the trance-like experience induced by the Voice, he notes that we are today susceptible to magic precisely because the presupposition of rationality obscures it and allows it to pass unacknowledged. To induce a trans-like state, the form magic takes does not want to be complex but simple, repetitive, lulling—incantation.

***But television directors, politicians, the psychiatric profession, advertising/public relations firms, and sales directors are seeking out predetermined preferences to exploit mass biases. In a very real sense, we already are conducting conversations (communicating) with the species as an organism. For the most part, this communication is not directed at reason.***

**—Frank Herbert**

**—Listening to the Left Hand**

Where for rational consciousness there is a separation of the human from nature, and in mythic consciousness there is a polar relationship, in magic consciousness there is an auidial enmeshment in nature. As sounds surround and engulf all within them, so magic consciousness is enveloped in nature without distance or disconnection. There is a merging with nature, and a reaction to that merging. According to Gebser, magic consciousness produced the earliest attempts to control nature in the ritual of cave painting and the hunt (for examples). Magic provides the necessary power to rule rather than to be ruled. Magic provides the power to make manifest. In this conquest to understand and conquer nature, the human with magical consciousness becomes the maker. <sup>6</sup>

**Names carry magic.**

**—Reverent Mother Superior  
Darwi Odrade**

**—NOFHD, 53**

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<sup>6</sup>. Of course this recognition lies at the heart and mystery of the giant sandworm—who the fremen call Maker. The worm is magic: Maker of the Spice Melange. Maker of myth. Maker of Dune.

***In the final analysis, our machines and technology, even our present-day power politics arise from our magic roots: Nature and the surroundings must be ruled so that man is not ruled by them.... Every individual who fails to realize that he must rule himself falls victim to that drive***

—Jean Gebser

—*Ever Present Origin*, 51

As cultural participants, we are as before hailed by a structuring of consciousness that we already live, although this is one that we tend to disregard altogether. As with myth, by circumventing the presuppositions of mental-rational consciousness, while expecting us to believe the presuppositions of mental-rational consciousness, magic is given a way, an opening to work on us precisely because we don't expect it. Those trapped in the rational world, for example, fear the Bene Gesserit and call them witches.

**When are the witches to be trusted? Never! The dark side of the magic universe belongs to the Bene Gesserit and we must reject them.**

—Tylwyth Waff, Master of Masters

—Dune Chapterhouse

## IV. Mythos

Paul, even at an early age, had already integrated into his psyche an understanding of polarity that (as Herbert notes throughout the *Dune Chronicles*) modern, rational (and deficient) science tends to overlook in favor of linearity, duality and three-dimensional, spatial, perspectival thinking.

Emerging from the one-dimensional (magic) consciousness which revealed a rudimentary endeavor to deal with nature, but prior to the three-dimensional (rational) consciousness that separates itself from nature, there emerges a two-dimensional, polar, relationship with nature that Gebser has called the mythic or psychic structure. Like the magical and rational, the mythic is a structuring of consciousness that will have rhetorical, that is, communicative import. We are in the presence of myth whenever we are in the presence of stories, of organized verbalization, within the presence of mouth, within the presence of psyche, within the presence of soul. The implicit attempts of magical consciousness to extricate itself from the vegetative, vital sphere and to

**At the age of fifteen, he had already learned silence.**

—from "A Child's History of Muad'Dib" by the Princess Irulan

—Dune 241

orient the body to the world lead toward polarity and a resultant mutation to psychic consciousness and a mythical civilization.

Says Paul of the rationally corrupted Museum Fremen of his own dynasty:

**The Fremen must return to his original faith, to his genius in forming human communities; he must return to the past, were that lesson of survival was learned in the struggle on Arrakis. The only business of the Fremen should be that of opening his soul to the inner teachings. The worlds of the Imperium, the Landsraad and the CHOAM Confederacy have no message to give him. They will only rob him of his soul.**

**—The Preacher at Arrakeen**

Mythic consciousness, like magic and mental consciousness, is less based on some innate human physiological or psychological make-up than on a consciousness transformation or mutation. Such a mutation can be found in the signs of the times. Indeed, whenever we encounter a profound civilizational shift in awareness the available signs—that is, any expressive acts such as stories, pictures, music and so on—are re-articulated in terms of the new orientation. The mutations from vital-magical to mythical-imagistic consciousness, and mythical to mental-rational consciousness are preceded by a shift in depicted body orientation, shape, physiology and posture.

For mythic awareness, psyche, mouth, and speaking are all are connected. There is a consciousness of breath—inspiration. At the same time there is a development in the use of language. Indeed, the very word myth comes from *mythos*, *mythonami*, or “to speak”. But the very root of myth is the Sanskrit *mu* from which you get also *mythos* and *mutus*, the speaker and the mute—a polarity between speaking and silence (Gebser).

**You Bene Gesserit call your activity of the Panoplia Prophetica a "Science of Religion." Very well. I, a seeker after another kind of scientist, find this an appropriate definition. You do, indeed, build your own myths, but so do all societies. You I must warn, however. You are behaving as so many other misguided scientists have behaved. Your actions reveal that you wish to take something out of [away from] life. It is time you were reminded of that which you so often profess: One cannot have a single thing without its opposite.**

**—The Preacher at Arrakeen: A Message to the Sisterhood**

**—Children of Dune**

One of the primary lessons of the *Dune Chronicles*, one that we are in dire need of recognizing today, is that our sciences are themselves a form of mythos. This is a point that cannot be underestimated. We have been fed for years a story that tells

us that religion is paramount to superstition, since God can neither be proved or disproved, and science, because of its ability to objectify, measure and produce (e.g., drugs, treatments, automobiles and so on) is a better, more rational way of knowing and understanding the world. However, while the sciences are sublime achievements of human being, they are, in the final analysis no better or worse than religion or any other explanatory system. They merely tell a different story—one with a different beginning, middle and end.

**Greatness is a transitory experience. It is never consistent. It depends in part upon the myth-making imagination of humankind. The person who experiences greatness must have a feeling for the myth he is in. He must reflect what is projected upon him. And he must have a strong sense of the sardonic. This is what uncouples him from belief in his own pretensions. The sardonic is all that permits him to move within himself. Without this quality, even occasional greatness will destroy a man.**

—from "Collected Sayings of Muad'Dib" by the Princess Irulan

—Dune

Apprehended in its own terms, myth is not some false story about the past, but a system of communication, a type of speech, a mode of signification, or way of understanding the world. For Gebser, myth is a structure of consciousness that emerged as dominant in Western history around the second millennium BC, and is still manifest today, although it is often obscured by the mental-conceptual bias of our time.

**At the quantum level our universe can be seen as an indeterminable place, predictable in a statistical way only when you employ large enough numbers. Between that universe and a relatively predictable one where the passage of a single planet can be timed to a picosecond, other forces come into play. For the in-between universe where we find our daily lives, that which you believe is a dominant force. Your beliefs order the unfolding of daily events. If enough of us believe, a new thing can be made to exist. Belief structure creates a filter through which chaos is sifted into order.**

—Analysis of the Tyrant, the Taraza File: BG Archive

—Heretics of Dune

Although it is one of the hardest ideas in Gebser to grasp, a major contribution of Gebser's thought are his attempts to think mythically even while writing a book in dissertation form (a mental-rational endeavor). Gebser is careful throughout his work to caution us as to the pitfalls of such interpretive work. We must be wary, he notes, of reading one structure in the terms of another.

**Such a rich store of myths enfolds Paul Muad'dib, the Mentat Emperor, and his sister, Alia, it is difficult to see the real persons behind these veils. But there were, after all, a man born Paul Atreides and a woman born Alia. Their flesh was subject to space and time. And even though their oracular powers placed them beyond the usual limits of time and space, they came from human stock. They experienced real events which left real traces upon a real universe. To understand them, it must be seen that their catastrophe was the catastrophe of all mankind. This work is dedicated, then, not to Muad'dib or his sister, but to their heirs—to all of us.**

**—Dedication in the Muad'dib Concordance as copied from The Tabla Memorium of the Mahdi Spirit Cult**

**—Dune Messiah**

Mythical–imagistic consciousness is dream–like speaking; it favors polarity, undergone experience and imagery. As was the case when considering mental–rational consciousness, we, as cultural participants, are hailed by a structuring of consciousness, employed as rhetoric, that we already understand, even if tacitly, and thus stories make sense, even when we cannot put our finger on (i.e., point to) why they work. If we can grasp the mythic dimension of imagery we do not have to fall prey to its rhetoric. We will be able to see the dream laid out before us, and gain an ability to ask if these are the dreams we want.

**What social inheritance went outward with the Scattering? We know those times intimately. We know both the mental and physical settings. The Lost Ones took with them a consciousness confined mostly to manpower and hardware. There was a desperate need for room to expand driven by the myth of Freedom. Most had learned the deeper lesson of the Tyrant, that violence builds its own limits. The Scattering was wild and random movement interpreted as growth (expansion). It was goaded by a profound fear (often unconscious) of stagnation and death.**

**—The Scattering: Bene Gesserit Analysis (Archives)**

**—Heretics of Dune**

This realization lies at the heart of ritual—the enactment of myth.

**Empires do not suffer emptiness of purpose at the time of their creation. It is when they have become established that aims are lost and replaced by vague ritual.**

**—Words of Muad'dib by Princes Irulan**

**—Dune Messiah**

**With the Lady Jessica and Arrakis, the Bene Gesserit system of sowing implant-legends through the Missionaria Protectiva came to its full fruition. The wisdom of seeding the known universe with a prophecy pattern for the protection of B.G. personnel has long been appreciated, but never have we seen a condition—utextremis with more ideal mating of person and preparation. The prophetic legends had taken on Arrakis even to the extent of adopted labels (including Reverend Mother, canto and respondu, and most of the Shari—a panoplia propheticus). And it is generally accepted now that the Lady Jessica's latent abilities were grossly underestimated.**

**—from "Analysis: The Arrakeen Crisis" by the Princess Irulan [private circulation: B.G. file number AR-81088587]**

**—Dune**

## **V. Diaphenon**

Using an ecological and semiotic understanding of civilizational consciousness as rhetorical device, Herbert brings to light the idea, consequent with much contemporary philosophy, that all communication has a basis in politics; there is no pure thought. The adept on Dune recognizes that the seemingly obvious, that which is given, the *data*, Q.E.D. (*quod erat demonstrandum*), are actually not at all given, but are that which are taken, *capta*, Q.E.I. (*quod erat inveniendum*), or interpreted—captured.<sup>7</sup> The mentat, the human computer, is the one who is able to recognize the political intentions and historical conventions of the *capta*–*data* continuum and thus enters into analysis, *acta* (that which are done), in a systematic and methodological approach which sets aside (i.e., brackets) prejudice and presuppositions and focuses on conscious experience (*capta*).

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<sup>7</sup> . See Richard Lanigan, 1988, *Phenomenology of Communication: Merleau-Ponty's Thematics in Communicology and Semiology* (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press).

Paul Maud'Dib Atreides taught a simple warning:

**The [socio–historico–political] mind imposes this framework which it calls "reality." That arbitrary framework has a tendency to be quite independent of what your senses report.**

**—Paul Maud'Dib Atreides**

**—NOFHD, p. 37**

Mentat methodology deals with *data*, the given, as that which are accepted, taken, as *capta*, before moving to action—*acta*. That is, to see the given, as what is taken, to that which is done. Mentat analysis thus focuses on conscious experience (*capta*) rather than hypothetical constructs (*data*). The mentat refuses to stand on the proverbial shoulders of giants, and thinks as freely and as completely as possible; the mentat institutes an emancipatory reflection.

This methodological movement is precisely what Husserl called for in his phenomenology. Moreover, Lanigan points out that such a thinking process is what distinguishes the human sciences from the physical sciences. The physical sciences study data. The human sciences study *capta*. The historical notion of "crisis" in the work of Husserl, "paradigm shift" in Kuhn, and "legitimation crisis" in Habermas represent a scientific concern with a bifurcation of *capta* and *data* in *acta*. In other words, "the human sciences are incorrectly seen to be or are treated as methodologically different from the physical sciences, rather than essentially different" (Lanigan, 1988, p. 7). The importance of this when considering the Dune Chronicles as using science fiction as a vehicle for philosophy cannot be underestimated.

Today, as we rely more and more on the computers, the "thinking machines" that Herbert warns us about in the pre–historical Butlerian Jihad (the world we live in today), there is a lesson being offered by Herbert. When we learn to look at the speaker as a speaking subject in an ecological communication, we learn to look at the constructions inherent in our language and speech. Recognizing the limits of these constructions may well indeed provide us with opportunities to solve the problems of our time.

The way we speak, the act of speaking constitutes the given, even though it is much less given than taken. Often we borrow a word–idea from one realm of experience and apply it, as a tool, weapon or Band–Aid, to a problem without recognizing that the very act of shifting *capta* into *data* concretizes the idea, and may keep us from achieving the very goal we seek, *acta*.

**We have long known that the objects that our palpable sense experiences can be influenced by choice—both conscious choice and unconscious. This is a demonstrated fact that does not require that we believe some force within us**



**reaches out and touches the universe. I address a pragmatic relationship between belief and what we identify as "real." All of our judgments carry a heavy burden of ancestral beliefs to which the Bene Gesserit tend to be more susceptible than most. It is not enough that we are aware of this and guard against it. Alternative interpretations must always receive our attention.**

**—Mother Superior Taraza: Argument in Council**

**—Heretics of Dune**

**Humans have this deep desire to classify, to apply labels to everything. . . . We lay claim to what we name. We assume an ownership that can be misleading and dangerous.**

**—Reverend Mother Superior Darwi Odrade**

**—NOFHD 51**

Once you recognize these prejudgments, linguistic or otherwise, you can see their limits—peras.

This is why:

**Above all else, the mentat must be a generalist, not a specialist. It is wise to have decisions of great moment monitored by generalists. Experts and specialists lead you quickly into chaos. They are a source of useless nit-picking, the ferocious quibble over a comma. The mentat-generalist, on the other hand, should bring to decision-making a healthy common sense. He must not cut himself off from the broad sweep of what is happening in his universe. He must maintain capable of saying: "There's no real mystery about this at the moment. This is what we want now. It may prove wrong later, but we'll correct that when we come to it." The mentat-generalist must understand that anything which we can identify as our universe is merely part of larger phenomena. But the expert looks backward; he looks into the narrow standards of his own specialty. The generalist looks outward; he looks for living principles, knowing full well that such principles change, that they develop. It is to the characteristics of change itself that the mentat-generalist must look. There can be no permanent catalogue of such change, no handbook or manual. You must look at it with as few preconceptions as possible, asking yourself: "Now what is this thing doing?"**

**—*The Mentat Handbook***

**—COD, p. 227**

This is desire for presuppositionless thinking lies at the basis of Husserl's phenomenology. Developed in the early twentieth century in response to a

perceived crises in the sciences brought about in part by increasing specialization, mathematical reduction and psychologization, Husserl's phenomenological method is a rigorous approach to thinking that conditions thinking but does so without systematizing or applying discrete, mathematical steps to thinking.

The mentat, while working in the medium of language, does not confuse or concretize language (structure), speech (system), or action (desire).

**I know a profound pattern humans deny with words even while their actions affirm it. They say they seek security and quiet, conditions they call peace. Even as they speak, they create seeds of turmoil and violence**

—Leto II, the God Emperor

From language to speech to gesture, we find all forms of signification entangled in power relationships. Herbert debunks logocentrism by recognizing the *magic force of incantation and the deficient mental-rational force of concretization and fragmentation in logic as well the mythical narratization of discourse.*

**In all major socializing forces you will find an underlying movement to gain and maintain power through the use of words. From the witch doctor to priest to bureaucrat it is all the same. A governed populace must be conditioned to accept power-words as actual things, to confuse the symbolized system with the tangible universe. In the maintenance of such a power structure, certain symbols are kept out of the reach of common understanding—symbols such as those dealing with economic manipulation or those which define the local interpretation of sanity. Symbol-secrecy of its form leads to the development of fragmented sub-languages, each being a signal that its users are accumulating some form of power. With this insight into a power process, our Imperial Security Force must be ever alert to the formation of sub-languages.**

—Lecture to the Arrakeen War College by the Princess Irulan

—NOFHD, 25

Magic, myth and rationality co-exist in these power words. Only people have yet to learn to understand that words communicate at several simultaneous levels.

**You will learn the integrated communication methods as you complete the next step in your mental education. This is a gestalten function which will overlay data paths in your awareness, resolving complexities and masses of input from the mentat index-catalogue techniques which you have already mastered. Your initial problem will be the breaking tensions arising from the divergent assembly of minutiae/data on specialized subjects. Be warned. Without mentat overlay integration, you can be immersed in the Babel Problem, which is the label we give**

**to the omnipresent dangers of achieving wrong combinations from accurate information.**

**—The Mentat Handbook**

**—Children of Dune**

By "diaphanous rhetoric" I mean several things. First, modes of consciousness function rhetorically and interpenetrate. Second, verbal and nonverbal communication interpenetrate

The main idea based on the discussions above, is that mythical, magical and rational structures of consciousness may be employed as the rhetorical force that motivates a statement. For example, if you, as a speaker (sender), want to short-circuit an audience's (receiver) ability to reason or consider rationally a proposition, you rely on magical and mythical rhetoric to guide your use of words. You chant—incantation ("no new taxes," "the evil ones"). You rely on mythical images (as Clinton drew upon the mythos of Kennedy). These methods have been used by politicians for centuries to ensure their victory by persuading audiences to their cause without the audience ever being aware of what that cause may be. How else can one explain Hitler or Stalin? The popular economic argument does not—quite simply—go to the magical heart or mythical imagination of the matter. How does Leto II maintain his Fish Speaker army in God Emperor of Dune? By incantation and ritual—Siyanoq. What is important to note is that these forms of rhetoric are not only based on structures of human consciousness but that they can be used simultaneously, one through the other—diaphanously. As such, we must abandon the linear model of communication for a multileveled, multivalent and multisemic model.

### ***Magic Rhetoric***

When the magical dimension of communication is ignored, or worse, when we pretend that magic does not exist—that magic is no more than illusion or slight-of-hand—we are at the mercy of a force that may work on us at unconscious levels. This is the power behind the Bene Gesserit use of The Voice:

***You are controlled by that which you are unaware and by that which you deny***

**—O'Reilly, 1981, 51**

### ***Mythic Rhetoric***

When the mythical dimension of communication is ignored, or worse, when we pretend that myths are legends that the foolish ancients lived by, we are at the mercy of the best story-teller. This is the power behind modern techno-science:

***A man must recognize the myth in which he is living because he is a creation of his times.***

**—Frank Herbert**

**—*The Sparks Have Flown, in Maker of Dune, 109***

### ***Mental–Rational Rhetoric***

When the mental dimension of communication is ignored, however, we fall prey to the powerful invisible rhetoric of myth and magic.

**In all major socializing forces you will find an underlying movement to gain and maintain power through the use of words. From witch doctor to priest to bureaucrat it is all the same. A governed populace must be conditioned to accept power–words as actual things, to confuse the symbolized system with the tangible universe. In the maintenance of such a power structure, certain symbols are kept out of the reach of common understanding—symbols such as those dealing with economic manipulation or those which define the local interpretation of sanity. Symbol–secrecy of this form leads to the development of fragmented sub–languages, each being a signal that its users are accumulating some form of power. With this insight into a power process, our Imperial Security Force must be ever alert to the formation of sub–languages.**

**—Lecture to the Arrakeen War College by The Princess Irulan**

**—Children of Dune**

### ***Integral Rhetoric***

When consciousness is attuned and integrated we open ourselves to the polysemy and multivalency of rhetoric as diaphanous and transparent.

**The universe is just there; that's the only way a Fedaykin can view it and remain the master of his senses. The universe neither threatens nor promises. It holds things beyond our sway: the fall of a meteor, the eruption of a spiceblow, growing old and dying. These are the realities of this universe and they must be faced regardless of how you feel about them. You cannot fend off such realities with words. They will come at you in their own wordless way and then, then you will understand what is meant by "life and death." Understanding this, you will be filled with joy.**

**—Muad'Dib to his Fedaykin**

**—Children of Dune**

# Spirituality in Abundance: Diversity and Integrity in Australian Pilgrimages, a Christian Response

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I am telling an old myth in a new way. Each society takes that myth and retells it in a different way, which relates to the particular environment they live in. The motif is the same. It's just that it gets localised. As it turns out, I'm localising it for the planet. I guess I'm localising it for the end of the millennium more than I am for any particular place<sup>2</sup>. (George Lucas)

We are about to experience what could be called a 'second enlightenment', a postsecular enlightenment, where religion and spirituality will return to centre stage and where secular materialism will appear out of date and anachronistic. However, with this new religious enlightenment, the sacred will be experienced in radically different ways from the past. The new awareness will not champion premodern religious categories but, rather, will introduce new and altered concepts of the sacred<sup>3</sup>. (David Tacey)

The new consciousness which was anticipated and first took shape in the creation of artists, thinkers, and scientists, will not be fully valid so long as it is not lived in daily life. What form can it take? It will take its own necessary course. Yet the confusion of the present situation requires a certain readiness, open-mindedness, and co-operation of each individual. It will happen of its own accord since the structure of the new mode of realization has begun to manifest itself with an undeniable intensity in the most diverse areas of our lives<sup>4</sup>. (Jean Gebser)

## Australia: A Place of Burgeoning Spirituality

Spiritual life in Australia seems to be going through something of a period of revitalisation. The forms of spirituality that are manifest may not be ones that the Christian Church has traditionally recognised but they are a reflection of the human desire for the Numinous<sup>5</sup> and its presence in our lives. It would appear from popular writings such as those produced by John

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<sup>2</sup> Lucas, G., and Moyers, B., (1999), 'Of Myth and Men: a conversation between broadcaster Bill Moyers and director George Lucas on the spiritual meaning of the Force and the true theology of Star Wars'. *Time*, 3 May, 1999. pp. 71–74.

<sup>3</sup>Tacey, D., (2000), *ReEnchantment: the new Australian Spirituality*, Harper Collins, Sydney, p.7.

<sup>4</sup> Gebser, J., [1949] (1985), *The Ever Present Origin: Part One: Foundations of the aperspectival world, a contribution to the history of the awakening of consciousness. Part Two: Manifestations of the aperspectival world, an attempt at the concretion of the spiritual*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, p.530.

<sup>5</sup> The words Numinous, Sacred and Spirit are used interchangeably in this paper to represent the reality of God. However, it should be noted that language such as Spirit refers to an abstraction that arises in Gebserian terms from the Mental – Rational consciousness.

Shelby Spong, or books like *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran and *The Celestine Prophecy* by James Redfield; the growth of various forms of New Age movements; the attraction to mythical narratives such as *Star Wars*; interest in Eastern spirituality and philosophy; the popularity of the work of Michael Leunig; the desire for alternative forms of therapy and healing; and Mind–Body–Spirit festivals that spirituality is not out of fashion in Australian culture.<sup>6</sup> Although these are diverse forms of spiritual expression they have a common element in that they are predominantly experiential. While it can certainly be argued that there is intellectual credibility in these movements, the experience of the Sacred is the preeminent concern.

Australia is a culturally diverse country and our culture is providing us with an eclectic variety of responses to the Sacred. Many factors have contributed to this eclectic mix; not least the people coming from many countries that make up Australia’s population, the variety of reasons that people have immigrated. These factors sit alongside wider society’s increasing awareness of the significance of the spirituality of Australia’s indigenous peoples, appreciation of the need for reconciliation, the movement(s) described as post–modernism and a disenchantment with the ‘good–life’. It is also arguable that our landscape and history have shaped our spirituality<sup>7</sup>. From my experience and research, I would argue that spirituality in Australia has an anti–authoritarian streak, tolerates little pious rhetoric and is earthy. Put in recognisable Christian terms it is radically incarnational and highly contextual. Tacey highlights this yearning and this uncomfortable place that we find ourselves in:

How we conceptualise spirit in Australia is still beyond our imagining. And this spirit appears to be “waiting” for something to happen, waiting for some transformation or transfiguration. But of what? And of whom? It may be that Australian spirit is presently beyond our imagining because it is non–dualistic, non–otherworldly, and deeply linked to physical reality. As such, it could be “unrecognizable” (Eliade) from the point of view of the old Judeo–Christian dispensation, with its transcendentalist and dualistic character. This is perhaps why the churches have not been able to identify the spiritual renaissance in Australia, nor offer leadership in this spiritual discovery.<sup>8</sup>

Tacey is a committed Christian and is concerned to show that there is a strong movement of the Spirit in this land at present. Significantly for those in the Church there seems an incapacity to respond in a creative way. In our society the diverse of forms of spirituality that one may participate in at present suggests that our response to the Spirit is in a state of flux. There is

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<sup>6</sup> For a fuller list of manifestations and expressions of spiritual renewal in a variety of forms, groups, movements, artists and writers see Tacey, (2000), pp.3–4.

<sup>7</sup> In particular see, Veronica Brady’s “Called by the Land to enter the Land” in Hammond, C., (1991) (Ed.), *Creation Spirituality and the Dreamtime*, Sydney, Millenium Books.

<sup>8</sup> Tacey (2000), p.98.

no cohesive or unifying narrative that is the all-encompassing expression of our response to the Sacred. Perhaps, for the moment, we might suspend judgment on the depth and substance of our current spiritual landscape. It may very well be argued that in some ways this might be a delight to the Church, even though the Spirit might not be ‘blowing’ in ways that we feel it should, or is moving in ways that are perplexing to those of us who remain in the traditional forms of the Christian community.

Clearly, within the Church there is much disquiet and concern about the “watering down” of the Gospel in such a cultural milieu. Spirituality in such a context arises because of the cry of the human heart for roots that go down deep and provide the grace to let us know who we truly are, both as individuals and as a community. Liberals and conservatives<sup>9</sup> are often fighting with one another about what is central to the content of Christian faith. These debates seem superfluous to many outside of the Church in Australia, not least because these arguments seem predominantly concerned with ideas that are divorced from the reality of everyday experience. Therefore, these concerns further remove the significance of the Christian narrative of existence from the lives of many people, as the Church does not seem to offer an experiential narrative that is vibrant for their lives. I do not believe that these are necessarily uniquely Australian problems, but possibly concerns of the overly rationalised world.

***What does the Christian narrative offer our society?***

To summarise what the Christian narrative has to offer our society is to be in danger of trivialising the tradition. Nevertheless such articulation is required if the Church is to engage with society effectively. The Christian tradition has a narrative of “reality” that tells us we are not alone, that we are upheld by an infinitely creative God, who is profoundly and radically intimate with the creation, is redemptive and loving, relates to us individually and communally, seeks justice, compassion and mercy and

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<sup>9</sup> I certainly do not use either of these words pejoratively, but rather inclusively to describe the groups of responses to the Christian tradition. It might be argued that both of these responses, when taken to an extreme position, become divorced from our individual and communal experience, the treasures of our tradition, and most significantly stifle the possibility of transformation by the Sacred as these responses are couched in fear of real engagement with the Sacred. For those manifesting extreme forms of liberalism there appears to be the consistent deferment of engagement with the Divine through an unwillingness to state anything specific about the nature of this reality, possibly arising out of fear of intimate connection with the Sacred. For those bearing an extreme conservatism there appears to be a desire to overly control the understanding of the nature of the Divine through legalistic and dogmatic formulation that is prescriptive. In other words there is a predetermined understanding and interpretation about the Divine and how the Divine engages with humanity. Such ossified interpretation is protected by such believers through particular understandings of revelation that are self-enclosed and self-referring in the construction of understanding the relationship between God and the world. Perhaps such fear and rigidity arises from a fear of entering the unfolding narrative of existence.

knows the cost of existence in the person of Jesus. These are some of the fundamentals that come to us through the Christian tradition.

### **Possible problems With a Christian Response to Australian Spirituality**

...in a period of religious crisis one cannot anticipate the creative, and, as such, probably unrecognizable, answers given to such a crisis<sup>10</sup>

It is arguable that a Christian response to the Australian spiritual milieu, which is couched in predominantly theological assumptions, operates out of a particular mindset, which is a cause of difficulty for much of the Church in communicating and engaging with our culture. In other words the presumptions and *modus operandi* that we use to address and present theological issues may not be necessarily working as efficiently and effectively as it might. Perhaps there are new ways of experiencing and articulating the reality of existence that might require us to let go of previously held ways of knowing. Such a radically different way of experiencing and articulating reality might involve a shift in consciousness, an eruption of new methods of 'knowing'. Such a process need not be reductionist, syncretistic or non-realist.

The question arises for those grounded in the Christian tradition; "how might we maintain the integrity that we ascribe to our personal and communal narrative while remaining in open and honest engagement with others in our society? How might we maintain integrity within our tradition and at the same time be called to experience "reality" in new ways?" One way of addressing these problems is to look at the very framework that we bring to our experience, our questions, and resultant answers about the nature and description of 'reality'. This may be necessary for the Church to make a significant contribution in this polylogue, but may also be of great benefit to the society of which we are a part as the spiritual wisdom of this tradition can provide depth and balance to new insights. As Tacey suggests:

The religious spark has been rekindled in Australians, but how are we to tell the genuine spark from all the new age fires currently burning in our towns and cities? The truth is, we are completely unprepared for the spiritual renaissance which is currently upon us<sup>11</sup>.

A thinker that might help provide a framework to appreciate this process a little better is Jean Gebser (1905–1973), a Prussian born cultural philosopher.

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<sup>10</sup> Eliade, M. [1969] (1975). *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*, The University of Chicago, Chicago, p.4.

<sup>11</sup> Tacey, D., (1997), *Australia in Search of a Soul*, Eremos Magazine Essay Supplement No. 22, March 1997, Eremos Institute, Sydney.



## Jean Gebser's Structures of Consciousness and Contemporary Spirituality

Jean Gebser looked at the unfolding of consciousness in the human condition. He did not believe that there was a predetermined pattern to this unfolding but rather there was a requirement of the human being and his or her culture to respond to the latent structures of consciousness within the awakening human condition. Gebser argues that humanity is utterly dependent on the Sacred<sup>12</sup> but there is also the capacity within humans to respond to the Sacred in different ways<sup>13</sup>. Different ways of responding arise because of differing structures of consciousness. Those bearing a different consciousness experience reality in a radically different way to those bearing different structures.

At the heart of Gebser's work is the belief that humanity stands on the threshold of the emergence of a new structure of consciousness<sup>14</sup>. Gebser highlighted differing structures through the history of humanity and suggests that much of the turmoil that humanity has encountered in the last couple of hundred years is the result of the deficient manifestation and consequent breakdown of the mental structure of consciousness that he technically calls the 'rational' consciousness.

Gebser's dense theory of consciousness is explicated in his *magnum opus*, *The Ever Present Origin*. In brief, he highlights five distinct and yet overlapping structures of consciousness: archaic, magic, mythic, mental and integral. These structures can be latent, that is, dormant, or manifest, that is active. Through the intensification of consciousness, the experience of reality – that is, the spiritual – becomes transparent. Put another way, through the manifestation of the integral consciousness the individual and the community experience the diaphanous nature of reality.

Each structure of consciousness can be manifest efficiently or deficiently, including the integral. That is, the efficient experience gives the bearer and society the full benefit of that particular appreciation of reality. When working deficiently, the structure dominates the consciousness to the extent that it does not allow the bearer to appreciate the insights and experiences of other structures<sup>15</sup>. For Gebser there is no sense of superiority of one structure of consciousness over another. Indeed, each structure is born by the individual and the society, whether or not they are manifest. The hierarchical interpretations or valuation of one structure over another is an

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<sup>12</sup> Gebser, (1985), p.530.

<sup>13</sup> These different ways of responding arise from different structures of consciousness. Gebser provides an overview of the evidence for these differing mutations, their manifestation and the way that the bearer appreciates the world through each structure on pp.36–115 (1985).

<sup>14</sup> Gebser (1985), p.xxvii–xxviii.

<sup>15</sup> Gebser (1985), p.3–4.

interpretation arising out of our dominant structure with linearity, objectivity and hierarchy as defining characteristics. Each structure “must be lived commensurate with their constitutive values if we are to live a whole or integral life”<sup>16</sup>. I will briefly describe the characteristics that Gebser attributes to differing structures of consciousness.

### ***Archaic Consciousness***

The archaic structure is a pre-human consciousness. It is dream-like. It is pre-egoic. It is the structure of consciousness most distinctly removed from our own. For the bearer there is a sense of undifferentiated unity of all things. We may glimpse the sense of archaic consciousness when we feel the overwhelming sense of absorption when stand on the edge of the sea or look into the depths of the night sky.

### ***Magical consciousness***

The magical structure reflects the beginning of the awakening of consciousness. There is no sense of self as we understand it, but there is the awareness of being fused with nature and a sense of the world being filled with Sacred power. There is a vital connection between all things and humanity stands up and starts to ‘control’ these connections and this Sacred power through ritual, although this is not necessarily done consciously. It can be argued that such a consciousness is at the heart of an appreciation of the Eucharist. The sense of self is in the context of a tribe. We can see the deficiency of this context today through the over attachment to various clubs, corporations or gangs, or in extreme cases the roost of conflict in the Balkans and the collective identity in Nazi Germany.

### ***Mythic Consciousness***

Gebser describes the mythic structure as the ‘next’ to become manifest in the unfolding of consciousness. Those bearing this structure still experience life as enmeshed in nature but they also experience the further development of communal identity and communal response to the nature of reality. Imagination becomes active and the community ‘understands’ that it is part of a larger canvas of existence. This structure sees the emergence of the soul or psyche in response to the numinous. The Sacred begins to be envisaged in anthropomorphic ways. Obviously the sense of communal identity and imagery of the Sacred finds its place in various mythic narratives in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Ultimately, the plurality of myths and the plethora of differing communities living their myths result in a further intensification of consciousness. This is a consciousness that enables abstraction and a capacity to systematise differing world-views so as the human consciousness is not overwhelmed by a cacophony of mythic imagery. The communal imagination, that is of the mythic consciousness, necessitates the emergence of a ‘new’ consciousness is

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<sup>16</sup> Gebser (1985), p.155.

also the basis for the birth of much of modern civilisation because of the capacity to see and experience new possibilities. The ‘new’ way of experiencing reality is called the ‘mental’ consciousness.

### ***Mental Consciousness***

As humanity wrestled with the vast array of mythic imagery that dominated the collective soul, the process of abstraction gave humanity a sense of distance and objectivity from an ultimately stultifying enmeshment that we experience with the clan and the myth when the myth is lived deficiently. According to Gebser the emergence of this structure can be located in the middle of the last millennium BCE<sup>17</sup>. This process of abstraction was clearly evident during the thinking of the Renaissance and Reformation, when this structure of consciousness was again manifest after a period of latency. The mental consciousness is at the heart of our Western legal system, modern medicine, engineering and many other disciplines that require the capacity to stand back, observe, analyse and devise solutions.

Humans bearing this consciousness are able to objectify items as being distinct from the self. Abstraction enables the development of dualistic and linear thought. It enables the systematisation of thought. Monotheistic and subsequent doctrinal constructions arise because of this capacity for linear abstract thought. Another characteristic of this consciousness is the development of the individual identity, the egoic self. Ultimately these factors lead to an anthropocentric world-view.

### ***Rational Consciousness***

The deficient manifestation of this consciousness is the ‘rational’. The process of objectivisation leads to fragmentation of thought, atomistic interpretation of reality and competing truth claims that have radically different epistemologies, and “hypertrophied abstraction devoid of any connection with the world”<sup>18</sup>. The flowering of the ego leads to egocentrism, isolationism and a blind belief in progress at all costs.

In much of academic life this consciousness is seen in the obsessive desire for outcomes, for that which is empirically provable or is economically valuable. Logic and clarity is valued over intuition. In the Church, there is a desire to speak about the liberating power of the gospel. However, the Church is constrained, by its doctrinal edifice, that is, in part, a result of mental articulation of experiences that have spoken to those bearing magical and mythic consciousness. The Church is constrained because it has over-systematised its beliefs, the interpretations have become factionalised, fragmented and removed from human experience. It is arguable that the rational consciousness now dominates so many our ways of experiencing

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<sup>17</sup> Gebser, (2000), *The Invisible Origin: Evolution as a Supplementary Execution*, <http://www.ctl.unca.edu/combs/IntegralAge/InvisibleOrigin.htm>, p.7 Accessed 25/07/2000.

<sup>18</sup> Gebser, (1985), 95.

‘reality’ that many of us are unable to even see its inefficiencies in celebrating the Sacred in our midst.

The Church has in large part failed to address the structures of consciousness that its individuals and communities bring to its discussions. For example, there is a perpetual fear of unorthodoxy. Why? Perhaps this is because of over-dependence on a hypertrophied rational consciousness. Perhaps this fear arises because of predominantly unquestioned desire for myopic and monological truth. Gebser suggests that there is an emergent consciousness that might provide not simply a framework for understanding where we are at but also enables a radically new way of experiencing reality.

### ***Integral Consciousness***

The integral consciousness is not about an expansion of consciousness as some in the Church might fear, but rather an intensification of response to that which is already present. Gebser argues that this consciousness is becoming manifest in a wide variety of areas in our culture. The integral consciousness enables the bearer to experience and hold a variety of differing perspectives at one time. This does not mean conflating these perspectives but seeing their interdependence and limitation. Where the mental consciousness has linearity, integrality has multiplicity. Where the mythical consciousness might be represented as circular because of the predominant experience of enmeshment and community and the mental expressed in terms of a line to express progression and the objectivity between two points; a sphere might represent the integral, to reflect the experience of multiple experiences of reality at the one time. For the person bearing the integral consciousness these are not necessarily conflicting but complementary experiences of reality that has interlocking and interpenetrating layers.

Where the person bearing the magical consciousness experiences the Sacred predominantly through ritual, the bearer of mythic experiences the importance of communal narrative. For the bearer of the mental structure there is an awareness of the importance of systemised patterns of thought. For the bearer of the integral there is an awareness of the concretion of the luminescence of the Sacred in and through the creation. Gebser describes this as the concretion of the spiritual. The spiritual is concretely perceived. There is also an awareness of the importance of each of the structures and that they are not superseded but rather intensified in the experience they provide of reality. The integral experience is not regressive or uncritical but post-rational.

These are necessarily caricatures of Gebser’s understanding of the structures. While they are to a certain extent distinct, they also overlap and there can be a good deal of discomfort for humanity in the process of the emergence or eruption of a further intensification of a particular structure.

**Gebser's Thought: A Brief Note**

Gebser's work is not idealistic but begins with the evidence before him of "present-day weapons of destruction"<sup>19</sup>. The breakdown and destructive influence of the rational consciousness<sup>20</sup> and emergence of a 'new' consciousness is understandably one that provides a time of crisis for humanity, not least in our relationship with the Sacred. Some images will live on, others will be transformed and experienced in new ways and other imagery will not depart from our consciousness other than by a process of a painful death for the individual and communal consciousness.

If we take Gebser's theory and our contemporary experience of Australian spiritual life seriously, we might imagine two roads, one that is life-giving and full of uncertainty but leads to an intensification of the Sacred, and a road that enhances the process of ossification of the Spirit in our lives because of the reified and de-contextualised rational interpretations of the Sacred's relationship with humanity. It should be noted here that Gebser's theory of consciousness is not Gnostic because it is not concerned with hidden knowledge but rather the latent and manifest structures of experiencing reality that unfold through the experience of existence:

...Gebser does not subscribe to the belief that individual intention and effort alone can bring about the new reality. The spiritual is "larger" than the personal and follows its own incomprehensible laws.<sup>21</sup>

Gebser's theory is useful for those in the Church because it helps to understand the different modes of constructing and reflecting on the reality of the Sacred in the context of culture. His theory is not idealistic or lacking evidence. It is an invitation to become aware of the manifestation of the spiritual and the cost of responding to it:

The Grand and painful path of consciousness emergence, or, more appropriately, the unfolding and intensification of consciousness, manifests itself as an increasingly intense luminescence of the spiritual in man.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps the difficulty the Church has in communicating the wealth of spiritual wisdom that it bears is not so much about the content of its message or perhaps even presentation but about the assumptions that we place on the stories and consequently on the Sacred. Perhaps as a society and as Christians we might be called to experience the luminescence of the Sacred in our lives in an intensified way. This is potentially dangerous ground. Gebser's theory provides one way of giving us direction and raising

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<sup>19</sup> Gebser, (1985), p.5.

<sup>20</sup> Such manifestations can be seen in the overly rationalised and fragmented approaches to academic disciplines, economics, health sciences, international relations, isolated individualism, egocentrism and dualism.

<sup>21</sup> Feuerstein, G., (1987), *Structures of Consciousness: the genius of Jean Gebser*, California, Integral Publishing, p.166.

<sup>22</sup> Gebser, (1985), p.542.

difficult questions about the nature of the spiritual life of Australia at this time. Gebser's work gives a unique way of looking behind the questions and concerns that face many people in contemporary Australian life, not least in terms of our spirituality. I believe this process enables us to look with our own eyes, to see life through the eyes of others and to begin to understand the multiplicity of spiritual paths in Australia and the movement of the Sacred in such voluptuous and evocative ways in our time.

### **Integral Implications for the Church's Engagement with Society**

Gebser's theory of consciousness might generate some of the following implications for the Church and its tradition of faith as it engages with Australian society. The bearers of integral consciousness may have a plurality of perspectives in relation to our tradition and society. They may at one and the same time be able to sit within a particular tradition and yet explore the deep well of ecumenical wisdom and spirituality about life in the Sacred.

Those who bear an integral consciousness will not be relativistic or reductionist in their approach to the Christian tradition, but they will be aware of the vibrancy and limitation of this tradition<sup>23</sup>. Neither will they try to create a false homogeneity that conflates and over-simplifies differences and experience – so that the Christian tradition can be easily interpreted in a rationalised and contained manner.

The bearers of the integral consciousness may have a critical appreciation of the potential and concrete reality of the unfolding of the Sacred that their tradition conveys. For example, parts of our tradition such as the exodus and the resurrection become manifest time and again, concretely showing the experience of and response to the Spirit in human consciousness. These narratives draw the bearers into a relational and non-dualistic appreciation of reality. Furthermore, such experience appreciates the significance of these narratives in a way that is not constrained by time, space or ego, but erupts and effects individuals and communities in many and varied time and spaces.

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<sup>23</sup> Relativism is related to reductionism in the sense that a relativistic perspective does not value the depths of the tradition but rather reduces it to a lowest common denominator. Such a process arises out of the 'logic' of the mental rational consciousness and the bearers' determination to make sense of the world in a clear and logical interpretation. Consequently, a false homogeneity is created. Likewise, for those bearing the mental rational consciousness who are convinced of the superiority of their perspective there may be an inability to listen to other patterns of experience because their view of reality places predetermined and unconsciously assumed logical constraints on their interpretation of their community's narrative. Therefore both reductionist and relativistic responses to reality find their basis in the mental rational consciousness' 'need' for clarity, logic, linearity rather than the interdependent complexity and transparent simplicity that is reflective of the integral consciousness.

The bearers will respect and experience the importance of the tradition in which they are grounded. They will be critically appreciative of their own tradition and of others and yet allow humanity's traditions and narratives to 'speak to' and 'read us' in a conversational manner, aware of the differing traditions' wisdom with respect to the unfolding of the Sacred. The bearers of this consciousness may experience the uniqueness of a given tradition in an intensified way because of the traditions place in the plurality of perspectives. In this intensified relational milieu the tradition can be brought into relation with other narratives without a sectarian or tribal defensiveness or bias. There will be a genuine exploration of diversity and unity.

The bearers of integral consciousness may be expansive in their exploration and interaction with other disciplines and with what these disciplines say to people about the Sacred and the sacred nature of reality. This is possible because the fragmentary ways of perception are known to be limited. The bearers of integral consciousness have an awareness of the self's dependence on, grounding in and diaphanous experience of the Sacred which permeates and is explored in all dimensions of existence.

The bearers may realise that the Sacred is profoundly and concretely experienced but can also be illuminated beyond our grasp. Our tradition points to, remind us and takes us further into the experience of the Sacred, sometimes confronting us through its eruption, surprising us by a 'new' awareness and also making humans aware of its presence in the concrete reality of existence as explicated by our tradition. In this consciousness appreciation there is no domestication or trivialisation of the Sacred as the bearer does not rationalise the Sacred; rather existence is re-sacralised. The diaphanous reality of the Spirit means that the Sacred is transparently manifest and concretely experienced. Those bearing this consciousness may be aware that myth is a vehicle, or a tool, just as the mental construction of doctrine is, but that it is not a container of the Sacred, so much as a mediator.

The diaphaneity<sup>24</sup> of the Sacred, as experienced in the integral consciousness, brings about a radicalisation or intensification of commitment to the world. In such a consciousness context the Christian experiences the Sacred drawing humanity into a deeper commitment to compassion and justice through being in interdependent relationship with the rest of creation. This experience gives the bearer a concomitant commitment to the transformation of the self and the world, which promotes

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<sup>24</sup> In this context this seems to be one of the few words that is applicable. It refers to the experience and reality of the shining forth of the Sacred through all and in all. It also applies to the awakening of our consciousness to this reality in which "we live and move and have our being". For Gebser this is the awakening of our consciousness to the luminescence of the Ever Present Origin who is our beginning and end, Gebser (1985), p.542.

the desire for mutuality, wellbeing, and benefit of the other, which is also of and manifests the Sacred.

Furthermore, in the mutually interdependent play and dynamism between the bearers of integral consciousness and the Sacred there may be an ever more intensifying manifestation and interaction, by which the Sacred and the bearers of integrality become more manifest to each other. Potentially this intensification of consciousness begets more intensification and commitment to the world and so the world and its inter-relations are experienced most profoundly as the place of interaction with the Sacred.

The resistance and fear exhibited toward such a shift in our consciousness by those bearing the overly rationalised perspective may start to highlight some of the difficulty that the Church has in presenting the Gospel as a way of providing life-giving, world-transforming life-maps, in the big and small places of life for individuals and communities. Those who have an integral appreciation of reality may need to face the ego-based defenses, within themselves and others, against the Sacred and each other that have been set up by rational constraints, not least a dominating sense of control and logic. Such people may also need to face the intellectual empires that have been built upon discrete, non-communicative and sometimes combative disciplines and ways of interpreting reality.

Nevertheless, such exploration is inspired by an awareness of the emergence of integral consciousness and the bearers are able to address and discuss the concerns that are of vital importance to the open and inquiring mental consciousness. Understanding the limits of our previous ways of 'knowing' and articulating 'reality' may help the Church to encounter our culture, concretely experiencing the intensification of the Sacred, and enabling the Church to provide society with the opportunity of entering into the mystery of Grace as presented in the Gospel.

### **Some Questions for the Church When Engaging the Spirituality of Australian Society**

To address the eruption of desire for the Sacred in Australian society we may have to ask some deep questions. Questions such as: how do we as Christians respond to the possibility that our Mental Rational conceptions of the Sacred may be anachronistic? How does the Church respond to the possibility that there might be a shift in consciousness that causes people to be less concerned about particular mental constructions of the Sacred that they are required to believe in? Particularly when these constructions are predominantly representations of the Sacred from a structure of consciousness that is no longer efficient? Indeed at their worst these constructions might be seen as a significant inhibitor to the experience of the Sacred. How do we respond to those who believe and experience the Church as a place that stifles the desire for the Sacred because it refuses to allow this reality to be made manifest other than in systematic and pre-



determined patterns? How do we encourage community in such an environment? What is the basis for the community's faith in such an environment? What does an integral consciousness mean for the Church's "mission"? Can we assume that we are the only ones with a mission? What might be the culture's mission be to the Church?

These are preliminary questions and, of course, there are many others that could come before these questions. There would definitely need to be more questions to follow if the Church is to begin to engage in the spiritual exploration that is occurring at present in our society.

As a Christian priest, I believe the Church has much to contribute to this sacred journey. This paper has reflected the idea that the Church may need to look at the assumptions it holds about the nature of the Sacred and the shape and colour of its own glasses, through which it approaches its questions and answers in relation to this reality, if it is to effectively engage with society. This may raise the eyebrows of some and the ire of others but it may very well be a way of participating in what appears to be a shift in our consciousness and an intensification of the experience of the Sacred in our society.

# Magic, Will, and Discourse: Rhetoric as Technology<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

This is the age of rhetoric. Persuasion, in both overt and covert forms, is everywhere. The drive to remake reality through influence, scientific and political influence in particular, gained a great deal of power with the Enlightenment and has been powerful since (Mickunas, 1992). This ability to exert will through language has been exploded by contemporary forms of communication. The proliferation of telecommunication, in the forms of mass communication and interpersonal communication in the form of telephony and the Internet, has increased the extent of this power greatly. This power is not only used to create and cultivate markets for capital in “The West.” This power is now used to influence and attempt to remake culture worldwide. While this is a broad conception of the rhetorical dimension of communication, it is at least arguable that influential communication is used for such purposes. If rhetoric is influential communication, then we can say that this is the age of rhetoric.

In this essay I first outline a brief Gebserian theory of rhetoric that emphasizes rhetoric as a technology of influence. Second, I apply the theory to the communicative act of the destruction of the World Trade Center Towers and the Pentagon. In this section, I demonstrate why the message is likely to be misinterpreted as a piece of rhetorical communication in the traditional disputational sense and why understanding the message as communication on the magical level more clearly interprets the message as meaningful. Finally, discuss some implications of the difference between the two and the importance of getting the real message, as well as the implication that all rhetorical messages contain a magical dimension.

## A Brief Gebserian Conception of Rhetoric

A condition of the concept of persuasion is separation. Measurement and division ensure the need to argue for one measurement over another. Opposition, clearly expressed in the mental rational structure of consciousness, is a condition necessary for disputation, and for the possibility of disputatively derived (constructed) knowledge. This is the product of the technology of rhetoric. Systems that rely on disputation in order to “find truth,” or exercise power are rooted in the idea of disputation as a technology. These systems pervade our civilization as well as others. In our own culture, the legal system, the knowledge-producing system (academics), and the political system are only a few of the many systems that share this assumption. Of course, the idea of truth as the *right* or

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correct judgment about a disputed case is, as Gebser (1991) argues, a primary characteristic of the mental–rational. Philosopheme, antithesis, and spatialization, all elements of mental–rationality, are necessary for rhetoric.

The philosopheme, a system of thought with its own specific and individual validity creates the need for disputation, because it is “Pyramidal thinking [and] is [the] taking apart of concepts. Perspectival thinking separates, which renders unity of the concepts from earlier structures fragmented” (Gebser, 1991, p. 256). This system of the separation of concepts operates by division as method. In “conceptual science that revolves around the linguistic study of concepts, such as in analytical philosophy and in social science, one sees the continual division of theories and concepts into other concepts and the similar remaking of concepts into others for the purpose of what is said to be further description but which is actually the further division. Even the materialist version of this method continually finds smaller and smaller units to designate. These units depend on method, which allows access to inference of the units’ existence. Philosopheme is systemic thinking that seeks to divide, unitize and systematize. This mode has the quality of flattening description into binaristic difference.

This is distinguished from mythologeme, which has universal validity and does not necessitate disputation, as does the philosopheme, which fragments validity with directed thinking:

The fact that oceanic thinking circumscribes something is a vivid demonstration that the mythical, circular, world has content. By destroying the circle with directed thinking, man, to the extent that he is mental man, has lost the this content; for space is without content. This lack of content, which initially appears as openness, became obvious in the deficient rational phase (of the mental structure). This openness has been described ever since as emptiness, and indeed since then its is emptiness. For that reason any mere description is today empty and noncommittal. In this sense, descriptions are rational, flattened, and quantified attributions that initially had a *mental value* and made out conceptual world possible. Circumlocutions, on the other hand, as in the examples of Heraclitus and St. John, suggest the close proximity of oceanic thinking to myth. (Gebser, 1991, p. 253)

It is the introduction of difference as method that, in part separates the mental–rational and the earlier structures, and makes philosopheme distinctive.

Second, antithesis is an expression of modernity and is essential to disputation. An individually valid specific system (philosopheme) is bound by its conditions or by its first principles (theses). Pyramidal thinking divides thesis onto sub–theses, and then divides those. Disputation works through deciding at what level an argument should be disputed and then proposing an antithesis, a competing linguistic statement. These two are put into opposition in the belief that probable truth will arise from the debate. Of course, since the method presumes division, it cannot produce unity; unitary truth seems unlikely to arise.

Third, spatialization is also intrinsic to disputation. For the perspectival, experience is spatialized and measured. Perspectival–rational modernity is characterized by thought that is discursive and directive. The quality of directedness highlights the spatial bias that pervades the modern. “Directed”

means “toward,” which implies space and perspective. Gebser notes that the perspectival is also identified by the identification of rightness with directionality and judgment. That is, the concept of “ought” or “should” is born with modernity. The “right thing to do” is identified with a direction one ought to be “traveling in.” Also, division presumes spatialization.

However, these systems of rhetoric have their extended roots in the earlier structures of mythic and magic consciousness (Mickunas, 1992). The need to be against something, also the need to exercise will in order to gain power, is clearly rooted in the magic structure, as Gebser explicitly states and as Mickunas has argued. This quality is clearly a condition for rhetoric, since polarity precedes duality and isolation, which is the mental–rational’s foundation for discursive, directed thought. In addition, the remaking of concepts through interchangeability, a characteristic of all technology is clearly present in rhetoric as a process, since it could be argued to be the technology of transforming concepts. If philosophy deals with concepts, rhetoric is the technology that enacts or expresses those concepts. Thus rhetoric is inherently tied to abstraction. The technological exercise of will and power, a consequence of the ego and of atomization and sectorization, is a mental rational phenomenon with its roots in magical consciousness. This form of expression is used to exert power over all aspects of the world (Mickunas, 1992). Rhetorical communication is a form of exercise of power and will.

**Why asking “Why?” Makes No Sense and Also Makes Sense:  
The Difficulty of the Mental–Rational in Comprehending the Act**

We can apply this theory to a complex rhetorical piece of communication. The destruction of the World Trade Center and the damage to the Pentagon can be viewed as rhetorical, demonstrating a clear presence of a message. In addition to the material destruction and the loss of life, the rhetorical message of the attack was used technologically to inflict damage through influence. Of particular interest here is the way in which this piece of communication obliterates the sender–receiver model that has been popular in communication scholarship. This model can say almost nothing about this communication. As noted below, the absence of a self–proclaimed sender precludes the ground from which encoding can be said to take place. In addition, because of complications arising from the presence of multiple modes of awareness the decoding process is also impossible to force into existence from a description of the communication. Likewise, the “message” is ambiguous when cast in the form of the signitive or even the argumentative. The result is that after the attack, most Westerners find themselves asking, “Why do they hate us so much? Why did they do this? What are they trying to tell us?” The answer has since been elaborated to some extent and for various propagandistic and plainly rhetorical purposes. What is of concern here is the immediate message, that of the act of crashing the planes into the buildings. Answers to the above questions are not forthcoming because the message is meaningful predominantly at the level of magical communication,

elaborated by Kramer (1997) as the theory of idolic communication. Because of this quality, Gebserian theories are best for examining this problem. Gebser's theory best allows for the tracing of multiple modes of awareness and multiple symbolic designs in communicative phenomena (Mickunas, 1993). This section demonstrates the difficulty of understanding the act as a piece of argument and then the necessity of comprehending it as idolic communication. The intent is to get beyond the disputational interpretation of the act, which can only lead to a misunderstanding of the situation, and further violence. History clearly demonstrates, and Gebser notes, that when civilizations fail to understand messages that work from very different forms of expressivity, from different communicative outlooks, the result is almost inevitably disaster. A response that treats this message as disputative in nature will fail in its purported intent of ending conflict. Instead, it will result in a failure to comprehend the self-examination necessary to be a receiver of such a message. Without this, there can be no appropriate response.

### **The Difficulty of the Disputational Interpretation of the Act**

The Western type of international communication is, in presentation at least, disputational. That is, it is based on the logic of binarism and conflict as the way to truth. "Conventional war," the mechanized version of war, with rules, conventions, and a sense of fairness, is a system that expresses the modern bias toward outcome-oriented processing of units. Lives (units) are lost. Territory (space) is gained, with the hope of remaking the space into a place that is "ours." Twentieth century war was an expression of atomization and sectorization, as well as systemic abstraction. As such, it is a mental-rational version of one of our oldest activities. This tradition, along with the disputational and binaristic outlook of the Western approach is likely to restrict the interpretation of the message to this kind of modernistic thinking. Indeed, the response so far has been to respond to terrorism with conventional war technique. While the rhetoric has been that "this war is different" and that "we are using many methods," the predominant interpretation appears to have been in accord with recent past war-communication norms.

What could such an interpretation look like? Can we make the message fit into the disputative mold? This section attempts it. In this case, the only communication is the terrorism. There have been no claims of responsibility, no threats of subsequent action; there is no rhetorical situation here in the strict sense. There is no "they" to make these claims. The attribution of motive has been constructed, by the receivers, to include the Taliban. We are told that the evidence being gathered implicates them. This may be true. It is not necessary to consider for this study. In the terrorist act of flying commercial airliners into two clear symbols of Western power, terrorism is the only communication made.

Failing to claim responsibility gives terrorism as a kind of communication a particularly infuriating quality. The audience is left to mull over the motivation behind the communication to a much greater extent than in a traditional

rhetorical situation. Who did this? What do they want? Why did they do it, and why this way? What are they trying to tell us? All of these, especially the last, are the questions that have dominated analysis since the action.

In a disputative communication situation ground is presumed on both sides. This is especially true in the case of explicitly rhetorical communication. That is, this is true in communication aimed at persuading with the goal of exercising will. While one can argue that this is the goal of all communication, this is not the focus here. This argument has been made and answered elsewhere. Rhetorical communication is the motivated exercise of will through language, discourse, or expression. This makes it technological. It is the use of communication to exercise will in the world. This exercise may be long term, as in the case of a monument, which is a tool for simply saying "I (or we) were here," or it may be short term, as in the case of using the world media to say "You are with us, or you are with the terrorists." Both are cases of using communication as a tool for affecting material and abstract conditions.

In the traditional sense of rhetoric, described above, ground is a critical concept. A rhetorical statement is inherently disputative, dividing ground according to a perceived difference of opinion. Such a statement usually, even if it is at a minimum, defines the ground of the rhetor, even if the implied ground for the opponent is only vaguely or implicitly indicated. This is why rhetorical communication is disputative in assumption, and why it is a form of war, even as war is a form of rhetorical communication. In a highly rational sense, rhetoric that is played fairly defines both sides of the argumentative ground and then seeks the truth (probable) that will result from the interaction of the arguments. This is an assumption behind our legal system and behind some of the idea of a democratic political system.

What happens when ground is not defined in a game? The game does not work. If one player knows that the ground is not defined, she is in a better position than her opponent, who struggles to make sense of, to find the order in, the game as it appears before him. She knows she can make any move. He does not know what move is an acceptable move or the right move. What happens if the pieces moved without here and one played against an unseen opponent and also did not know the rule, did not know what his ground was? The opponent would be in an even worse position because of a lack of information.

The same is true of language games. A legal system in which one side can change the rules at any time means that there are, in effect, no rules. The person who assumes there are solid rules is at a disadvantage. The one who can change the rules has the power. In a rhetorical situation, the rhetor who claims no ground breaks the system of rhetorical communication. The rhetor who uses ambiguity is not what I mean here. Ambiguity still implies a range, and is usually selective. I mean someone who simply refuses to acknowledge something that the communication is intended to defend or offend. In fact, I mean someone who refuses to acknowledge that he communicated. In this case, the system breaks.

The purposeful exercise of will is not the same kind as intended in other rhetorical settings. It is not meant to expand one area of conceptual ground into another, to remake one concept into another, which is the magical function of rhetorical communication. It is not directed exercise of will that is directed toward disputation. It is directed in another way. It is directed toward disruption.

A rhetoric of disruption is one that claims no ground. Its only intent is to disrupt order. Of course something that disrupts order probably has an order to it as well. But we can envision a case in which an agent may simply find as many ways as possible to disrupt a communication ecology without regard to the coherence or rhetorical ground that the methods may have in common. In this case the desired change in meaning is not from one meaning to another specific meaning or to another range of meanings, but is simply a desired change.

Terrorism is a rhetoric of disruption. A communicative act without ground or an announced actor fails to establish *direction*, an essential marker of rhetoric. Of course disruptive action is motivated, except in the case of real nihilism, but the condition of purposely failing to make clear either the demands within the rhetorical act or the agent doing the rhetorical act makes the rhetoric much less presentational. This quality makes the act both more rhetorical and less. It is less because it is less structured, less designed. It is more because it is more strategic, depending on the goal. If the goal is simply disruption of order, then simple nihilism will suffice, although actually communicating randomly, without meaning, might be difficult or impossible, except for Zippy the Pinhead, the comic character who communicates only in nonsequitur. If the goal is getting attention, again nihilism will do. If the goal is to disrupt and get attention, but for some motivated reason, things are more complicated. One is still exercising will, but in a different way.

The case of the terrorist attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon present this kind of complication. One may construct a motive, a will, from the profiles and histories of those believed to have hijacked the planes and crashed them into the buildings, but this is only guessing at motive. A rhetorical act that is suicidal but is not announced as such is a disruptive rhetorical act as outlined above because it claims no ground explicitly.

Given this, we must ask whether the acts were rhetorical. This seems clear. We can say that the act was rhetorical without knowing who the rhetor was.

Anonymous letters are still rhetorical. The difference between an anonymous letter and an unclaimed rhetorical act is that the content is more ambiguous. In the case of the WTC and Pentagon however, that ambiguity was accompanied by a clear intent to send a message. The content of the message however, is unclear. Whatever the case, it is important to keep in mind that we can make the claim that the message is rhetorical without knowing who the rhetor is. The media has assumed the rhetors were people who were Islamic and of a particular approach to Islam.

But if the acts were rhetorical, what was the motive behind them? Let us assume for a moment that this is not clear at all. Let us assume that we did not know who had been on the planes and had no real way to establish who had committed the acts. What elements of the message present themselves to us? These are the same elements that indicate the message's rhetoricity. The World Trade Center was a clear symbol of the West. Volumes will be written demonstrating this, but even a cursory glance is more than enough for our purposes here. First, the name, "World Trade Center" makes it a symbol of the West as well as an arrogant expression. In spatial rhetoric, claims to be central are strong claims. That which is at the center of something is assumed by the rhetor to be intrinsic to it, one of, if not *the* most important element. Centrality is also seen in a life-giving capacity. The sun is at the center of the solar system and gives life. Cities sprawl around the urban center where much of the economic life of the city has most of its energy, which is dispersed to the rest of the city. Claims to centrality are claims to not merely importance, but to defining and creating power. They are claims to *author-ity*.

That these buildings were "said" by those who built and named them to be the center (authority) of trade for the world made them a heavily rhetorical statement all on their own. Even smaller buildings, or a complex of small buildings with the same name would be a rhetorical statement, although perhaps with different rhetorical force. The size, function, style, and placement of these buildings, however, made their expression clear. In terms of sheer size and material nature, the buildings were massive (literally). They were made up of over 200,000 tons of steel, 425 cubic yards of concrete, and 600,000 square feet of glass. Together, they had 220 floors. As rhetorical symbols, they had many meanings, but were unambiguous in their rhetoricity and in many specific messages. The Pentagon is of course a clearly rhetorical building. It is the seat of the military of the United States, the most powerful military of the West, and the major force in its force.

To continue with the elements of the message independent of the rhetors, we must look at the other elements of the act. These buildings were struck by airplanes. Commercial airplanes are the largest airplanes easily accessible to someone who wants to commit such an act, since military planes and planes carrying freight do not ordinarily sell tickets for passage. The commercial airplane is a symbol of affluence and mobility. Much of our constructed life makes transportation necessary. The Western culture as currently practiced would be much different without fast transportation, so at one level the choice of using the airliners might be seen as symbolic. Perhaps it was. More likely, however, they were chosen for accessibility and for their destructive potential resulting from size and fuel load.

From the primary elements of the message, the planes, the buildings and the impact, we can discern clear rhetoricity. Whoever committed this act did so with purpose of message. If simply killing were the goal, other means might be more effective. However, in this case, the technology of rhetoric was more effective. Disruption, as a goal, is better served by rhetoric without apparent ground. The message is not "We will conquer you with overwhelming force, if you do not comply



with our rules,” as is the message of U.S. bombing campaigns against various targets that have violated some international law or some other kind of agreement. Here the message might be “We don’t play by your rules. In fact we aren’t even playing the same game, and we aren’t going to tell you what it is. In fact we aren’t even playing a game, which you are.” The message might be more or less, or something different. Clearly, unclaimed rhetorical acts such as this send this message. Of course this message was also a case of war technology. It is a case of destruction and killing. The elements of the act, however, point to clear meaning beyond those qualities and different from “conventional” war.

“Conventional” implies something done by convention. “Conventional warfare” means war according to agreed-upon methods. Sides agree to boundary conditions for war. In this case, unconventional war—acts did more than simply effectively assault targets. They also achieved a rhetoric of disruption. Those governing the U.S. recognize this, as evidenced by their rhetoric urging the population to continue on living as they have. They are arguing to continue the order that the terrorist acts sought to disrupt.

As a form of war, the rhetoric of disruption does much more damage than conventional warfare can do. In conventional warfare, sides agree to conditions under which it is acceptable, and, in fact, responsible, to kill and die. This contextualization of killing and death gives the societies involved a way to think about the acts. It gives them a way to make sense of them. They can be seen as “proper.” Thus while one might grieve losses in a conventional war, one is better able to cope with the losses, because they have socially defined meanings. Terrorism does not proceed according to such conventions. The resulting deaths have no “meaning” as a result. The bereavement process is affected. One cannot grieve a meaningless death in the same way as a heroic death.

In addition, and perhaps clearer as a harm, rhetoric of disruption creates fear. Because the rules are not clear, and, in fact, it is not clear that there even are rules, one is able to affect many people beyond those killed or injured. Fear in the rest of the population results, giving the technology of terrorism a uniquely rhetorical power. Here a communicative act enables a rhetor to exercise will to affect many people. Of course, the same holds true for conventional war. The statement that “We can destroy everything here in a short time,” is clearly meant to invoke fear that leads to action (surrender, compliance, etc.). The difference is that the threat is constrained in the case of conventional war. With terrorism, the threat is not as constrained. The statement “We are willing to strike anywhere, without regard for who or what may be present,” is likely to invoke more fear than the earlier statement. It is the implication of unpredictability and of seeming randomness that agitates.

Here we come to the difference between the terrorist and the victims. If terrorism is a rhetoric of disruption, it is effective because it “seems to make no sense.” In the logic of modernity, even violence is ordered. Early on, the European colonizers had difficulty fighting the Native Americans because their ordered form of fighting

was not reciprocated. Guerrilla warfare disregards the rules of ordered violence. Terrorism also disregards these rules.

So, one may force the act into the mold of disputative communication with some results. We find that terrorism disregards the rules of war and is meant to disrupt order. These seem accurate, but also seem to miss the point. What such an interpretation is missing is the recognition of other forms of communication besides signalic disputative communication. As argued earlier in this essay, rhetoric is a form of technology. Technology, as a mental–rational phenomenon is magically motivated (Mickunas, 1992). What would an interpretation that acknowledged this multiplicity look like? This is the subject of the next section.

**Destroying Gods:  
Idolic Qualities of the Act and Why the Mental–Rational Interpretation Fails**

In terms of the mental aspect of the phenomenon, we can first explore the difficulty that many had simply comprehending the image of the plane crashing into the tower. This difficulty is due in part to its abstraction by the form of communication by which it is viewed. The image shown on the television screen looks like many images of violence we have seen on screens. In these viewings, however, we understand that the violence we are seeing is “not real.” It is understood as abstract only. Being used to this quality of viewing on screens, many were unable to comprehend the images of disaster from other areas of the world. Because it was abstracted on the screen, and was not happening to us, it remained abstract.

Here we get to the difference in this situation. The difficulty in comprehending the image is evidence of abstraction and magical consciousness clashing. As Gebser notes, abstraction fragments unity, threatening to destroy it. In this case, seeing the image felt “unreal” but one knew it was real. This tension has caused a great deal of anxiety. To be honest, it still barely feels real to me. It is identity that makes the difference. Magical identification, characterized by part for whole, accounts for the rhetorical weapon attack. The destruction of the WTC was much more than a destruction of a symbol of Western modernity. It was an attack on magical identity. The attackers knew this, perhaps the attacked did not.

The attack on the WTC is an example of idolic communication. Idolic communication is one dimensional and univalent (Kramer, 1997). This quality accounts for the unmistakability of the message, because, as Kramer argues, “With magical idolic communication, meaning is not a problem. It cannot be “lost,” misinterpreted, or misconstrued...In the magic world there is no semantic space between the expressed and the expression” (p. xiv). In this case the message is the destruction of identity, but it is more. In the magic world, there is no distinction between a god and an idol. It is the god. The WTC was such an idol. Its destruction was no different in intent than any attack on any other idol in and the reception of the attack was no different either. It is on the level of the magic that our pain occurs.

But what identity has been destroyed? What god has been killed? Several answers arise on the level of the magical. First, as so many rhetorical castings of the “New War” refer to it, the attack was on “our soil.” This characterization tells us much. It further highlights the difficulty of abstraction/mentality has in coping with the attack. A society that has not experienced a true threat to their corporeal nature, their existence as embodied beings, for decades is one that seems likely to move toward abstraction with increasing swiftness. Absent the magical grounding of threat of identity and existence, more attention will be paid to abstraction. Abstraction/mentalization sprints away, building on itself. It should not surprise us that the U.S. has placed so much emphasis on the development of “cyberspace.” As an abstraction, this form of mentalized rationalized “space” is an expression of our emphasis on signalic dissociative communication that helps us create a form of space completely unconnected with world. The U.S. has placed much emphasis on developing a non-referential reality.

This emphasis may also be seen in our self-obsession. Absent threat not related to intent of other beings (that is, threat other than natural disaster), we have focused much research and thought on what we are doing to ourselves. Scholarship as well as group identity has been focused on self-examination for decades, and not without some justification. The tragedy of Columbine, for example, clearly warrants examination, even as it is an expression and result of our dissociative abstracted outlook. The dim but growing realization that our problems have been largely self-made has been achieved as a luxury. Insulation has made possible such self-produced problems and the ability to then self-diagnose them. The accusation that the U.S. is self-interested is true in a way much deeper than the simple empire-hegemon explanation. Our emphasis on abstraction has led to a more complex condition.

This is disrupted by a non-abstract threat not of our making. Identity is threatened/destroyed by action that is not of our making but is “on our soil.” This treat to identity was also perceived in the cold war, but was abstract. Nuclear destruction was a prevailing, ever-present threat. Its technological nature was an expression of magic consciousness, but its presence as a technological threat that might result of some kind of loss of control of the situation was the real fear. We were afraid that the logic of nuclear attack would take control of the situation. This thinking gave us many fictional works in which the technology took control despite humanity’s real desire not to destroy itself.

Magical attacks “on our soil” are much different threats. Idolic communication is unambiguous and destroying a part is destructive of the whole. Thus attacking the WTC communicated magically. It attacked the idols of the WTC towers. It attacked the magical consciousness of the West that identified with markets. This is a key element in the idolic communication of the attack. World Trade Center, as argued earlier, was a rhetorical symbol. It was also an idol. In the magical world of part for whole, it was an idol of the market/god.

In brief, we find that much of the rhetoric/communication about “The Market” or “The Economy” is theological in form. Any disaster or significant event can be judged by the way that the “market reacts.” No policy that “hurts” the economy is one that should be pursued. Our actions should “keep the economy healthy.” We fear the effects (wrath) of a bad (an angered) economy. The parallel to religious language referring to a god are striking. Potential examples for this argument are numerous.

The result of the message has been a conflict between two structures. This conflict now creates a real problem for the magical identity. The government tells the citizens to go on with normal life. They tell us to consume, to continue running the machine. If the machine fails, there will be big trouble, and *real* misfortune, literally and figuratively. This expresses both magic and mental–rational consciousness. The abstraction of the economy is a mental phenomenon that has been given primacy over the material world. It is clearly a unitized and spatialized construct. Our identification with it, however, is magical. In addition, it is, as technology, a result of the magical structure as well. The economy allows us to exchange. It is the changing of one thing into another, a clear characteristic of the magical structure. The plea for the American to continue consuming is a plea to keep faith, literally, in the economy. The message is that if we lose faith, we will suffer.

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## ALIENATION: The Body and Color in Question

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"Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" As children we accept that "the fairest" is the same sort of measure as the fastest, the tallest or the richest. Later, in the growing sophistication of adulthood, we determine that the most beautiful is more like the bravest, the most popular or the most powerful. It becomes a judgment about which one might have an opinion but remains a quality that ultimately can be established by an independent and attentive authority. "Ladies and Gentlemen, the judges have reached a decision. The new Miss World is . . ." Thus the question continues to be posed . . . who is the fairest as though it were meaningful, even if the category of them all includes women of diverse races and nationalities. Indeed female beauty is becoming an increasingly standardized quality throughout the world. A standard so strikingly white, western and wealthy it is tempting to conclude there must be a conscious conspiracy afoot.<sup>1</sup>

Sure there is. Isn't there? There is no need of a hidden plot to explain the pervasiveness of this image. The LOOK, the image, the western model, represents a mandate for an acceptable way of life . . .

The difference of the Other has proved adaptable to a wide range of theoretical frameworks and practical expressions. Modes of analyzing the Other are intertwined in complex and subtle ways with the changing fashions of the difference expression. There is a growing recognition now, though hardly universal, that the discourse of the Other in question is more chameleonic in its nature, in some ways more subtle in its modes of expressions, and more central to the modern self-conception than the traditional view allows. The Other, some now insist, is a category that should no longer carry social effect, "Many, whether supporting or contesting this contention, nevertheless agree that 'Other' (my emphasis) continues to color if not pervade contemporary cultural expressions."<sup>2</sup> Relations of theory and practice may be identified between historically transforming conceptions of Self/Other and the other changing categories of social inclusion or exclusion, such as ethnicity, nationality, class or gender. Alienating the Other has served as a central category of naturalizing, socializing, recognition and self-representation. The discourse of Self/Other and racist ways of seeing the world and representing it, have constituted and, more subtly still, articulate central tropes of modern characterization and contemporary figuration of oneself and Other.

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<sup>1</sup> Wendy Chapkis, "Skin Deep," *Beauty Secrets: Women and Politics of Beauty* (South End Press, Spring, 1994) 37 – 38.

<sup>2</sup> David Theo Goldberg, "Introduction," *Anatomy of Racism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990) xi.

The discourse on the Other is not a singular monolithic phenomenon; it has a manifold of racisms. In short, the difference of the Other is found to be a function of the fashions of racial formation in given social temporal conditions. For Fanon, values of beauty and ugliness are racially defined and instituted. The fact of blackness is taken as the sign of nothingness, of the exclusion and position of a tradition that belongs elsewhere. Fanon contributes to exposing and opposing all forms of such oppression. The general object of resistance, for Fanon, is the hypostasized fact of a single essential and undifferentiated blackness. Roland Barthes pursues Fanon's suggestion and uncovers the superiority claimed by the European tradition over the Other. Fanon reveals that powerlessness and what is socially excluded are defined not simply as having nothing, but as being nothing, yet in full, though tacit, recognition of the Other and his/her power that must be suppressed and thus given credence.

Reflecting anticolonial writing, Bhabha interrogates the racialized constitution of personal and social identity, of Self and the difference of Otherness:

The colonial identification is characterized by ambivalence: the Self posited subject as superior, both desires and desires to deny its Other. There is no origin of Self or Other, no place or time at which identity is definitively established, where Self ends and the Other begins. The absence or invisibility of otherness alters the terms in virtue of which we recognize subjectivity and personhood: the drive to fix cultural difference is found by Bhabha to lie in the hypostasized structure of a visible object or fact of nature given by the voyeuristic gaze. By contrast difference—the Other's otherness—can be articulated only in transience and uncertainty of language. Difference is usually dismissed in terms of the image of identity, which employs the language of resemblance and analogy to construct a self-identity (“the real me”). . . . Denial of the Other effectively implies identification: disavowal presupposes acknowledgment of otherness and of the Other's being. This ambivalence renders the (post)colonial subject difficult to locate. Efforts to find and to position the subject yield only an intersection where in the subject and the Other are mutually articulated. The post colonial body shifts between the metropolis and their various levels of periphery. The shifting boundaries of colonial identity and identification involve an illusory image of presence which really is a sign of absence and loss. The otherness of black being undercuts the myth of Western subject's self-identity and autonomy and its accompanying fantasy of a singular separate being, that lie at the foundation of Western subjectivity. Thus any politics of resistance to cultural racism as to racism in general must confront the many complex difficulties of and in difference.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, this discussion of the difference and the domain wherein the subjected and the Other are mutually constituted comprises universal antirealism in current cultural discourse. This appears in the form of the death of the subject and undergirds at the same time the radical denial of subjectivity to the Other at the very moment the Other is asserting a

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<sup>3</sup> Goldberg xix – xx.

subjectivity autonomous from the white western racism. We must also note that the effort to establish a non-western subject is premised on the manner in which the West and the subsequent neo-colonial discourses have accepted the language of the "subject". The point is this: to avoid the DIFFERENCE as the result of cultural definitions, even the Other cannot claim to belong to a race and, therefore, to be possessor of a different subjectivity without falling into the same logic that led the difference in the first place.

The white cultural supremacy is established, that familiar alignment of colonial subjects; Black/White Self/Other is distributed on the traditional grounds of racial identity. The extremity of colonial alienation is felt in the colonial Other who is marginalized in the framework that illuminates the Other, that promotes the pleasure of pain of the Other and the agnostic fantasy of political power. When Fanon turns to confront the colonized world, he asks, "What does a man want?" and in the "Introduction" to *Black Skin White Masks*, he asks specifically, "What does the Black man want?" To this loaded question, where the cultural alienation bears down on the ambivalence of psychic identification, Fanon responds with an agonizing performance of self-images

I had to meet the white man's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema . . . I was battered down by tom-toms cannibalism intellectual deficiency fetishism racial defects . . . I took myself far off from my own presence . . . What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood?<sup>4</sup>

The white man's eyes break up the Black man's body and in that act of epistemic violence its own frame of reference is transgressed, its field of vision disturbed. From within this metaphor of vision even the aesthetics of the Others' art is judged inferior, debased; it is not even art for it does not meet the standards of the western aesthetics. This bizarre figure of desire, the supremacy of the politics of power, as Sartre says of the anti-Semitic consciousness, turns on the idea of man as his alienated image, not Self and Other, but the Otherness of the Self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity. Not the colonialist Self or the colonized Other, but the disturbing distance in between, constitutes the figure of colonial Otherness, the white man's artifice inscribed on the Black man's body. In relation to this impossible object there emerges the liminal problem of colonial identity and its vicissitudes. Like the saying, "Mama look a Negro I am," which frightened and assailed historicity at various points, it shows the corporeal schema crumbling and its place taken over by a racial epidermal schema.

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<sup>4</sup> Frantz Fanon, "The Fact of Blackness," *Anatomy of Racism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990) 109.

As Fanon states, no longer was it a question of being aware of my body in the third person . . . I was responsible for my body, for my race, for my ancestors. Identification, as it is spoken in the desire of the Other, is always a question of interpretation, for it is the elusive assignation of myself with a one-self, the elision of person and place. If the differentiating force of the Other is the process of the subject's signification in language and society's objectification in law, how can the Other disappear? Can desire, the moving spirit of the subject, ever evanesce?

Sketching these texts, I wonder, Why a discussion of the Other and colonialism? Aren't we already aware of how the colonizer used the difference of the Other as a tool of oppression within and among nations? Are you born black or brown? Isn't it interesting that one can be accused of being too much of a particular race or too little? That one person can become the very embodiment of an entire race of people? We live in an age where the identity of the Other is to be celebrated and difference is intolerable. Despite the attempts to define and redefine the Other, and the call to eliminate differences as a social category to be, in other words, color blind, fails, and alienation still continues to have value and purpose in our lives. The difference/Other's identity operates within a very complicated web of social definitions, personal meanings, and political realities. So much of the world functions within this dynamic that the conceptualization of a free world may be neither possible nor useful, though the conceptualization of a difference as free existence is both appealing and constantly fought for. Still, bad faith lurks; it is always the question: Can I choose not to choose as I face the options . . . and to make sense of it all, I find myself constantly facing questions, "Who am I? What am I? The fallacy here exists, exists even for me, me being a colonial body.

### **Disruption of Traditional Other**

Traditions carry habitually established aesthetic styles, deemed to be appealing and beautiful, of high permanent value. They present stability and are recognized by scholars, critics, and members of the public by their permanent features. In many cases they acquire the reverent designation "classical." In this paper, I exemplify such arts that are accepted as western classical styles, painting, music, dance. A brief outline of these styles shows specific features that appear to be invariant, such as containment in a "frame," whether the latter appears in painting, music, or dance. In addition, such styles are deemed to be creations of the geniuses of a "race," e.g. European. Such styles are also posited as true standards of artistic creations. We can use them to judge the Other in order to point out its inferiority, its being less than, and perhaps not even art.

Given a civilization that maintains its own artistic stability, the appearance of an alien style is judged in many negative ways: demonized, denigrated, assaulted, and even classicized (belonging to "lowest classes"). This is



obvious from the judgments visited upon the appearance of jazz, which was regarded as demonic, total destruction of civilization, frameless, an intrusion from the dark and chaotic recesses of the black soul. I call this intersection by the art of the racial other as permanence disruption. This is to say, the African, and African American arts do not follow "proper structural frames," stylistic stabilities and parameters, and hence are a threat to "real classical" art. The music has no central key, the dances are wild, and the masks are distortions of "true" human form. Indeed, the arts of the "Other race" and the race itself are regarded as parts of the natural landscape, while "we" are the humans who create something above nature. I show that this denigration of the "Other race" is an effort to maintain the permanence of one's own invented superior position. But to maintain this position, one engages in hermeneutics of suppression. The latter does not claim to exclude the arts of the Other, but by usurping the privilege of aesthetic criticism recontextualizes, renames, repositions, and finally, abolishes the sense of art of a given tradition. This is to say, in most cases the art works are not subjected to physical destruction; they are rearticulated in ways that make them into monsters, demonic images, expressions of immoral and indeed lesser beings. I would even state that this fate might be worse than that of complete destruction, since in the latter there are no images to show, but in the hermeneutics of suppression, the images, stories, texts and dances, are paraded in their reinterpreted fashion and thus located as the arts of the Other that have only negative designation: they are to be paraded in this reinterpreted manner as disruptions of "permanent human values," creative geniuses, and high aesthetic standards.

This aspect of difference is not only in Black faith or Black culture, contemporary Black art or omnipotently present during Brits in India but still present in subtle variations in the contemporary India/neocolonial India/postcolonial or for that matter everywhere the Other is the race apart from the Eurocentric "I." Even the colonized have incorporated the judgments of the colonizer concerning their own traditional arts. The colonized, in short, see with the borrowed gaze of the colonizer and, hence, pass judgments on the inadequacies of their own aesthetic traditions, on the inappropriateness of the subject matter and the use of sayings and images. For instance, my aunt, whenever I used to visit, would ask me if I had scrubbed myself really well so that the brown dirt (the darkness of my skin) would wash away as I am not the fairest of all.

With reference to Indian sculpture, the figure of goddess Kali (fig. 1), was first viewed by the British travelers as diabolic, monstrous, demonic, for she is so colossal, so huge and terrible, that there is no beauty in her size and numerous arms. The Brits said Indians don't have a clue about anatomy, they don't know how to draw and render in art the real shape of things. The Brits never bothered to learn; the Indian aesthetics is replete with

symbolism of cosmic conceptions and not of representations of “proper” bodies. Kali was one form of *shakti*, power, force, symbolism and is encompassed within the Hindu mythology and aesthetics as the all-powerful *saguna Brahman* form. She is an image of matriarchal, maternal power, force, originator, *adya shakti*, the primal energy, cosmic energy world mother. Cosmic energy in its dynamic form is symbolized in the form of *shakti*, the world mother, who is power and energy by which the creation, preservation and destruction of the world, universe is portrayed in this all-encompassing form.



Figure 1 – Goddess Kali

The form image is completely misinterpreted not only by the British at that time, but also in contemporary India. This misinterpretation is looking at

the Other, the race, apart from the aesthetics of this Other. This difference subjected itself to become the Other, the inferior, and hence, having now achieved the status of being civilized and scientifically educated, enlightened, the Other who uses the same western logic to critique his own art as inferior, lewd, morally rotten, etc. A classic example of this is Sudhir Kakar's work on Indian sexuality; "He sees the main psycho–sexual problem in male children as the work of the 'bad mother' or the sexually devouring phallic woman."<sup>5</sup> The Kali spectrum of goddesses, the *apsaras*, embodies this aspect of the overwhelming sexual mother. For Kakar, the male child feels castrated by his mother. This reading of oneself as the other, as an identity that cannot locate itself, is constantly deflected both by the presence of the traditional imagery, and by the interpretations that one assumes to be civilized and hence valid in face of one's traditional aesthetics. In brief, he too, denies the difference while engaged in the Others' judgments. Significantly it is the women, who traditionally tend to be designated as the culture bearers and given the burdensome responsibility of preserving traditional values and aesthetics. This is obvious in India in matrimonial advertising columns, where the ads for brides read:

Wanted a traditional, fair skinned woman (remember the beginning of this paper, the fairest of all) who has traditional Indian values, customs, for a greencard Indian boy, *Vaisnava* community residing in US with a five figure salary, well settled in US and adapted to western lifestyle of living and western social values.

One can see the patriarchal power, but now understood in terms of the western logic: the male can accommodate to the West, become a westerner, the so–called superior race, but the female should continue to be subjected to the position allotted to her by her "traditional" role, the less significant, the weaker race. The boy, after all, has become the Other to his own race and is asked to make his own race into the inferior Other. Though Indians are on the darker side, including my aunt, for her, still, the white skin was, nevertheless preferable, the fair are the prettier lot.

Other examples show equally the subordination and genderization of woman as a bearer of the race, of the other weaker inferior race, just as the white views the Other. The Indian men view the woman as a feminine principle who should be docile, innocent, domesticated, the ideal subject for colonization. If she is the opposite, a strong personality, she is viewed as treacherous, lustful and rampant with insatiable contaminating sexuality. As Khakar pointed out, she is the presence of the "bad mother," the Kali that looms in front of the male children. Stereotyped notions of the goddess Kali haunt the European mind, as can be seen in the observations by Geoffrey Moorehouse, in his book *Calcutta*: "The very name of Calcutta is

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<sup>5</sup> Giti Thadani, *Sakhiani* (London, New York: Cassel, 1996) 70. Reference from Sudhir Kakar, *The Inner World* (Delhi, 1978) 35.

derived from the symbol of fear and evil." He writes, "all representations of Kali are designed to frighten an illiterate and superstitious mind . . . She appears with devilish eyes, or with tongue dripping blood with snakes entwined round her neck or with a garland of skulls."<sup>6</sup>

Stereotyped notions that are opposed to the powerful goddess include the image of the subordinate controlled wife: "in childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth her husband and when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent and she should never slight her husband, she is called the virtuous wife, if otherwise, she is Kali, she is not virtuous." Once again, this is a way of speaking colonially of the Other. After all, the colonial and Other has no voice, is subordinate; this inferior other role is assigned by Indian patriarchy to the Indian women and her aesthetic imagery.

This same colonizing and self-colonizing appears in the manner in which the sculptures at Khajuraho were and are viewed (fig. 2). These beautiful, immense sculptures, which portrayed the cosmic-*kamic* union, were thoroughly misinterpreted and taken out of Hindu context by being called pornographic. The carved imagery is designed to articulate the *kamic*, erotic connection of all events, things, mythical figures without social gradations. They form, so to speak, an entire universe connected by erotic attraction. Yet, this blissful cosmic nexus is denigrated as the art of the inferior Other and, hence, located in the unspeakable and uncivilized region of immorality, sexual promiscuity, bestiality, and hence, is deemed not deserving the title of art. The colonial period, indeed, brought the question of morals, moralizing, gender, and genderising issues into art:

The British even said the sculptures at Khajuraho were extremely indecent, obscene and offensive specially to find them in the temples that professed to be erected for good purposes on account of religion; everywhere there are number of female figures who are represented dropping their clothes and thus purposely exposing their persons.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey Moorehouse, *Calcutta* (Harmondsworth, 1974).

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India* (Report of the Year 1862 – 65, Vol. 11.



**Figure 2 – Sculptures at Khajuraho**

The British regarded these aesthetic images as indecent and obscene, and thus to be judged morally and not aesthetically. Once again, the significant aspect of this art, its cosmic nexus, the cosmic union, the cosmic aesthetics is excluded and thus inserted into an entirely different context. The way of looking at sexuality is perceived as something different, excessive, Other. These images are aestheticised thinghood, and the body is projected as nexus of exotic sexual fantasies about the Indian body. Approached as a textual system, the bodies point to an erotic, hypersexual aesthetic objectification of bodies as an idealized form of homogeneous type, thoroughly saturated with a totality of sexual predicates. The cosmic energies, which symbolize both creative and destructive forces, impinged on British imagination the wildest proclivities of India and the Indians. For the British, the Indians evidenced depravity and intimacy, the forces of darkness. The British viewed such imaginings of the cosmic energies as

ritualized sexuality, suggesting that Indians should be feared as subjects who had the dark forces playing as perverts, threatening to invade and seduce, rape the white world. A visitor to India during the 1930s was warned by a seasoned British woman: 'You'll never understand the dark and tortuous minds of the natives . . . and if you do I shan't like you – you won't be healthy.'<sup>8</sup> The British women found their safest course was to barricade themselves within their own community, to shield their consciousness against India's immoral encroachment: "Hold ye the Faith – the Faith our Fathers sealed us; / Whoring not with visions – oversize and overstale" (Kipling, "A Song of the English").<sup>9</sup>

But they did colonize us and our art, and even how we ourselves perceive art today. They have inbred us to subjectify, genderise, personalize art and limit us to things, objects, sex, biology, gender. And this, in turn, has made us look at our own culture as the immoral Other, as inferior, barbarous, uncivilized, without aesthetics although laden with immoral pornography. The art of the Other, just as the difference of the Other, is held to belong to the natural landscape, but not to be art. The images, just as the native naked bodies, are judged on the grounds of morality, i.e., lack of cultural elevation, and hence as belonging to mere nature. After all, the very term "native" suggests that those so designated live merely naturally. Thus they even taught us to view our own art as indecent and naturally sexed and to consider European western art as superior.



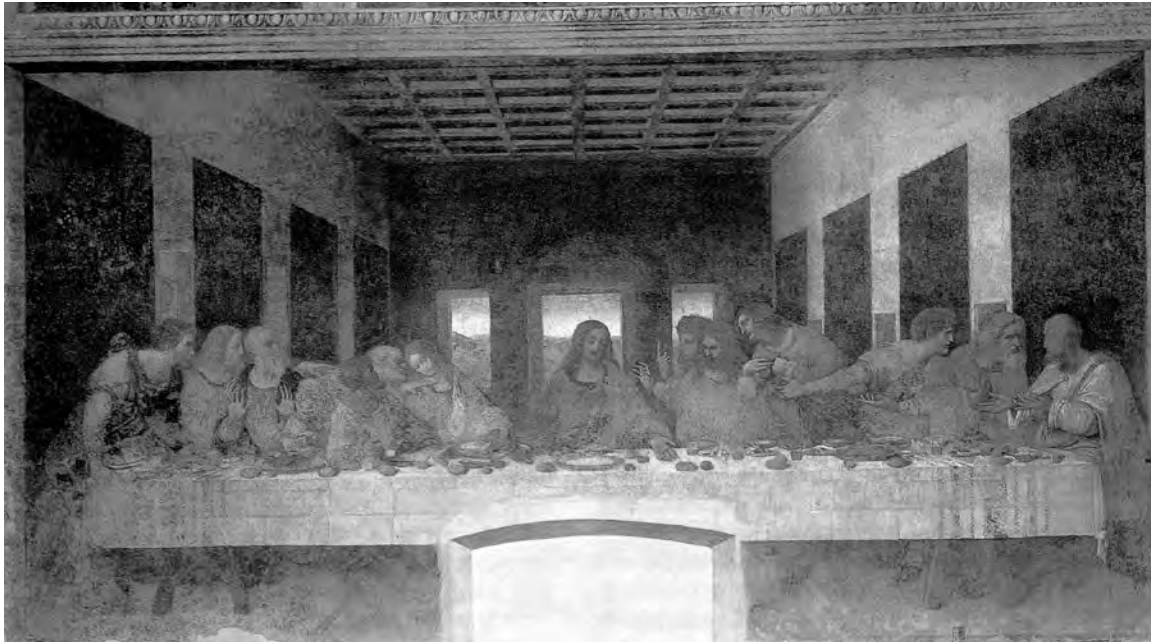
**Figure 3 – Indian miniature painting**

<sup>8</sup> J. R. Ackerley, *Hindoo Holiday: An Indian Journal*. (1932) 23 – 24. Also mentioned by Benita Parry, *Delusions and Discoveries* (London, New York: Verso, 1998) 31.

<sup>9</sup> Parry 31.

Even our miniature paintings did not escape colonial judgment. While the Europeans knew how to draw, we, the Indians, did not have the art of drawing and sculpting. We have been told to look at the inadequacies of Indian miniature paintings (fig. 3). The British announced that the Indian artists have no clue of perspective and therefore do not know how to perceive, to visualize, in comparison to western paintings, which had a central perspective with a central vanishing point. We have been told to look at Leonardo Da Vinci's work (fig. 4), but of course, such a look would demand that we forget that Indian aesthetics deployed multiple perspectives and cosmic symbolism. Thus, in the hermeneutics of the Other's art and the Other, objectified as inferior, supremacy and power are given, in turn, to the phallogentric European man whose flesh becomes burdened with the task of symbolizing the transgressive fantasies and desires of the White western male subject.

Thus he must float the western logic as the superior image, even for the neocolonials. As Homi Bhabha has suggested, "an important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of fixity in the ideological constructions of otherness."<sup>10</sup> Looking at these examples and broadening this theme, one can see that representations of the hermeneutics of the Other in western culture entail different degrees of Othering or, as it were, different practices of representations of the Othering, i.e., different positions of identification on the part of the White subject.



**Figure 4 – Leonardo Da Vinci's Last Supper**

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<sup>10</sup> Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle* (New York & London: Routledge, 1994) 176. Mercer quotes Bhabha.

### The Logic of the Other

The Other is constituted in an objectifying process that comprises "bad faith," this is, in the logic of the Other there is an authentic recognition of the Other, and an immediate negation of the Other's humanity. This negation not only rejects the Other's art and achievements but, above all, the Other as an equivalent counterpart of "myself." In turn, as long as the Other accepts the designation of its own position as Other, he/she too is engaged in bad faith and in self-victimization. The latter is a way of constituting negative morality in art, "our art is superior and worthier, because we are innocent victims and hence have a moral voice that is superior to the victimizer."

The contemporary artist Chila Kumari Burman's work, for instance, portrays the Divine image, Kali (fig. 5), as one of the dominant representations that celebrates the dynamism, reclaiming empowerment, and self-definition of the maternal in a woman's image. She uses the Kali image, on the one hand, as a self-definition of identity as an Asian woman, and on the other, to challenge the dominant western stereotype of Asian femininity. She reclaims the image of an Asian woman in order to resist the racist stereotype of the passive exotic Asian. Through Kali, she focuses on affirmation of the female body as a symbol of resistance and self-determination.

Burman uses the body as a weapon: in the image of the dark Kali, she shows a dominant representation of the dark body as the Other who is inscribed as the locus of danger, desire, fear, and fascination.<sup>11</sup> Yet she, too, might be caught in the very logic of assuming the neo-colonial position of the mutual difference of Otherness. This is evident from the focus on the power of femininity as the point of resistance against the Other. And yet, this femininity, as the Other, is the Other of patriarchy, and hence, is defined as feminine. I do not propose to have argued for a universal logic that is applicable to all cases; such universality would require concrete researches in the arts and the conceptions of the Other in specific cultures. What I show is ways in which focus on the Other and the constitution of the Other also plays a role in the understanding of art. Moreover, in understanding the art one does question the alienated body and color in art. Currently it seems to be unavoidable to see oneself and the Others in an alienating form, in "bad faith."

Though these issues are unavoidable, I wonder whether by questioning I, too, get trapped like Said, Bhabha, or Spivak, into Eurocentric logic. Said, examining and analyzing the politics of western ethnocentrism in *Orientalism*, formulates and charts evidences according to the constructed

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<sup>11</sup> Lynda Nead, *Chila Kumari Burman, Beyond Two Cultures* (London; Kala Press, 1995) 67.





Figure 5 – Burman's Divine Kali

discursive field of Foucault. Yet, his logic fails, since he essentializes the very object of the knowledge, ethnocentricism, which he is critiquing, thus the vacillation from an inner dissension that he disallows in *Orientalism* re-emerges in his own writings. Bhabha, on the other hand, "suggests that this 'median category' of recognition and disavowal of the 'Other' (my emphasis) is 'analogous' to the Freudian theory of sexual fetishism." That is, "In racial stereotyping colonial power produces the colonized as a fixed reality which is at once an Other and yet entirely knowable and visible."<sup>12</sup> This also poses the problematic aspect of using a western logic of psychoanalysis for the analysis of the phenomenon of colonialism and the Other, falling into the same trap of Eurocentricism. Thus Bhabha uses or teases western logic in the form of mimicry and hybridity to analyze the colonial discourse.

In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha explores, discusses, and reveals a "Third Space" by showing the legitimating narratives of cultural domination in the context of colonial history, contemporary literary and psychoanalytic theory. Through a series of essays he explains why the culture of western modernity must be relocated from the postcolonial perspective. Homi Bhabha discusses "the question of culture in the realm of the *beyond*," the

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<sup>12</sup> Young quotes Bhabha 143.

'beyond' is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past . . . Beginnings and endings may be the sustaining myths of the middle years; but in the *fin de siecle*, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion."<sup>13</sup> He says that our existence today is marked by surviving and living on the borderlines of the present, which is currently named with a prefix 'post': *postmodernism, postcolonialism, postfeminism* . . .

Bhabha discusses the emergence of the interstices, the overlap and displacement of domains of difference that create the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationhood, community interest, or cultural values. Through these negotiations, the cultural identity is produced at the boundaries in-between forms of difference, in the intersections and overlaps across the spheres of class, gender, race, nation, generation, location. The cultural engagement is produced performatively and the "process estranges any immediate access to an originary identity or a 'received' tradition."<sup>14</sup> As Bhabha states, "the borderline engagements of cultural difference may as often be consensual as conflictual; they may confound our definitions of tradition and modernity."<sup>15</sup> Bhabha shows these processes of estrangement from examples of works by various writers and artists. The works by Renee Green, for example, portray the split identities, the in-between space. In *Sites of Genealogy* she constructs the binary logic Black/White, Self/Other through identities of difference, to show the spatial distance of the beyond is signified. The act of going beyond is a reflection of the present, and the present can no longer be a synchronic presence, either as a break or a bonding with the past and the future. In this sense Green draws attention to the boundary as the place from which, "something begins its presencing in a movement not dissimilar to the ambulant, ambivalent articulation of the beyond."<sup>16</sup> Bhabha further exemplifies this process by works of various writers: Salman Rushdie, Toni Morrison, and Gordimer. Through these he projects the unhomely lives, unhomely conditions, the projection of Otherness, the cultural displacements, the perplexities of the in-between space, the image of interstices, the "in-between hybridity of the history of sexuality and race."<sup>17</sup>

The in-between space, the boundary defining the presencing, is the beginning and end, "the once inside as outside, the insider's outsideness."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994) 1.

<sup>14</sup> Bhabha 2.

<sup>15</sup> Bhabha 2.

<sup>16</sup> Bhabha 3.

<sup>17</sup> Bhabha 4.

<sup>18</sup> Bhabha 4.

For Bhabha "the aesthetic image discloses an ethical time of narration."<sup>19</sup> He references Levinas, "the real world appears in the image as it were between parentheses."<sup>20</sup> Green's aesthetic approach provides and exemplifies the deeper, discursive issues of signification, boundaries, cultural identities, in-between forms of difference, the Self and the Other, East and West, and invites further exploration of the complex phenomena of the polarities of the "Third Space." Nonetheless, there are some points that seem problematic. If the current state of affairs of cultural life is the being "in-between," one may wonder how is it possible to speak of estrangement. To be estranged requires a standard on the basis of which one makes judgments of estrangement. The same dilemma appears with the term "unhomely." To be unhomely means to not have a home, yet by Bhabha's own analyses one finds that, for the contemporary personality, there is no other home than the one of being "in-between." While Bhabha promises to displace the western culture, he fails to do so due to the fact that all the methods and means of such displacement are western theories: postmodern, deconstructive, partially structural, dialectical and psychoanalytic. He even uses such notions as "the end of the century," thus employing western historical time.

Spivak, on the other hand, is described by many scholars as heterogeneous or a feminist Marxist deconstructivist or, by, herself as a Europeanist who loves the English language. Her disquisitions, too, issue from a theory that assigns an absolute power to the hegemonic discourse in constituting and disarticulating the native, the Other. She articulates the epistemic violence, in a very metaphoric manner, through western discourse/logic. In her article, "Can the Subaltern Speak," Spivak uncovers instances of doubly oppressed native women who are caught between the dominations of native patriarchy and foreign masculinist-imperialist ideology. On this account, I agree with Benita Parry, who critiques Spivak for restricting and eliminating the space for the colonized, since, as Spivak suggests, the colonized does not have a voice, nor a *discourse* (my emphasis) insofar as Spivak's interventions are exploited through deconstructive strategies.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Spivak's recent book, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason Toward a History of The Vanishing Present*, is commented upon by Terry Eagleton, who has remarked that she has endless digressions and self interruptions, "this study meanders from Kant to Krishna, Schiller to Sati, and belongs, among other places, to a politically directionless Left."<sup>22</sup> When asked, in an

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<sup>19</sup> Bhabha 15.

<sup>20</sup> Bhabha 15.

<sup>21</sup> Benita Parry, "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse," *Oxford Literary Review* 9 (1 & 2, 1987) 27 – 58.

<sup>22</sup> Terry Eagleton, "In the Gaudy Supermarket," *London Review of Books* (Oxford University Press, Vol. 21, No. 10, May 1999) 2.

encounter with her, about the emphasis on Eurocentrism, rather the exaltation and glorification of the European discourse in this book, Spivak's answer was, "I am a Europeanist and I love the English language." Of course dismissing me, she said, "The ethics of alterity should not be turned into politics of identity." In Spivak's tedious hotchpotch exercise to analyze, she too falls into tropes of linear narrative, enlightened White European discourse, to question the practice of the native Other.

With all this discussion one can still say that the creation of the Other can also be a reversal. As Fanon observes, "Europe is literally the creation of the Third world, so is the Other a creation of the Self."<sup>23</sup> The pressure for decolonization is as old as European colonialism itself. Sometimes, by using colonialism as a platform to say that the Other is the victimized, I am reminded of Sartre's announcement, "the settler which is in every one of us is being savagely rooted out. Let us look at ourselves, if we can bear to, and see what is becoming of us . . ." Can we see our naked selves today or are we all so caught up in this fold of western logic, thus calling ourselves the Other, the victimized by the colonizer. Is it possible for us to get rid of all these hermeneutics and be who we are or do we know who we are? Do we really know or is it just verbal orgasm or can we see beyond? In conclusion these are few lines I reflect on:

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<sup>23</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967) 81.

## Verbal ORGASM

My feet at the bottomless edge  
Face stared in the reverberating flame  
Does it matter **Colonial top Colonial bottom**  
Sure they lock you in lock you out  
It's the anti-Semitism that splits out of clothes  
The veil is thin between **Black and White**  
The colors do they matter  
Sure they are unveiled in public  
Colors are melted into the Skin  
Its not just **Verbal Orgasmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm** is it  
CAN WE SEE BEYOND  
*Last night she filled herself with Man*  
*She spread her legs*  
*Rooted in each other their Bodies branched up into vast night*  
*They got what they deserved*  
Unfolded sex smeared with Blood  
Did color matter,,,,,,,,,,,,,  
A pulp of after birth  
Bloodyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy between her legs,,  
a Child hangingggggg  
Color does matter....  
*Isn't it —— or does it——*  
Can we see **beyond**

*Rekha Menon*

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## STRUCTURES OF CORPORATE CONSCIOUSNESS

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### **Introduction**

In Gebser's understanding, our contemporary consciousness is multi-structured or, to change the metaphor slightly, multi-layered. The complexity of human behavior comes out of the interplay of these several "layers" or "levels" of consciousness in whatever we do.<sup>1</sup> Gebser suggests that the acknowledgment and appreciation of these discrete structures is a step towards their integration with the rational structure in a more "integral" way of experiencing the world. From the point of view of the rational-scientific culture that has been dominant for a few hundred years, magical and mythical thinking are primitive and inferior forms of thinking that have limited value in the contemporary world. However, we can argue that it is our capacity for mythical, and even magical, thinking that enables us to find meaning in our lives and gives us a grounding in the concrete world that rational thinking seems bent on destroying. It makes more sense to say that magical and mythical consciousness is neither better nor worse than mental/rational consciousness. They are simply older and different.

In this paper I want to focus on the ways the discrete structures of consciousness are observable in business organizations.

### **The Archaic Organization**

There are a number of elements in Gebser's theory that are particularly relevant when we look at the culture of organizations. We are inclined to see groups or organizations as collections of separate individuals. Yet there were groups long before there were individuals. The notion that we are separate individuals living inside the boundaries of our own skins and communicating by passing messages to other individuals walking around in similar capsules is a very recent one, relatively speaking. We are inclined to think of consciousness as a personal, self-reflective phenomenon. If we think of group consciousness at all we are likely to think of it as the sum, or maybe the consensus, of the consciousnesses of all the members of the group. Gebser's theory is based on the evidence from archaeology that, in evolutionary terms, it goes the other way around. Group consciousness comes first. It is more basic than individual consciousness, which has emerged from it only recently. We may have a considerable investment in the notion that we are free, choosing, initiating individuals, but we have to admit that sometimes a group – or a mob – of so-called individuals acts as though it were a single organism.

When we examine the behavior of a termite or ant colony, or study schools of fish, flocks of birds or herds of animals, we find evidence that groups of creatures sometimes behave as though they are single organisms. The simpler or more primitive the forms of life, the more sense it makes to describe them in this way. If we could view the human species from a great enough distance we might have an impression of it



as a single organism. Gebser argues that individuals in archaic humanity could only behave as elements of a single organism. As individual consciousness evolved humans came to act independently, so that, in the past three or four centuries, they have thought that human beings are essentially discrete and separate beings. When we look at the way human groups behave, we can see that, in spite of our individuality and separateness, we have retained some sort of connection with other people that causes groups to act as one. It sometimes makes sense to talk about a tribe, a nation or an organization as though we are talking about a single person. Jung, with whom Gebser was associated for some years, developed his own way of talking about this. He became convinced that individual consciousness has grown out of what he called the “collective unconscious” or the “objective psyche” – a collective, impersonal, unconscious mind that is older than individual consciousness and that goes on functioning as the ground of individual consciousness. If we follow Gebser and Jung here, we will be acknowledging that, while we are usually conscious of ourselves as separate individuals, there is another level of our experiencing in which we are not separate at all.

Bion’s observations of the ways that groups function suggested to him that individuals in groups are constantly seeking to regain within the group their infantile relationship with mother<sup>ii</sup>. This explained for him the irrational behavior of what he called the “basic assumptions group”. Gebser and Neumann suggest rather that in explaining this behavior we should look beyond the individual’s attachment and separation from uterus and breast to the experience of the species losing its primal “participation mystique” in the life of Mother Earth herself.<sup>iii</sup> According to this argument, we have a residual awareness of oneness with the earth, an awareness that some of us may rarely acknowledge but which is the ultimate basis of the sense of “belonging” that we may seek in group membership and the source even of our capacity to feel empathy with others.

Neumann, in discussing the original “uroboric” state of primal human beings, argues that unconsciousness is our “natural state”.

One has no need to desire to remain unconscious; on the contrary, one is primarily unconscious and can at most conquer the original situation in which man [sic] drowns in the world, drowns in the unconscious, contained in the infinite like fish in the environing sea.<sup>iv</sup>

In mass behavior or mob behavior we see groups of human beings acting out of collective instinct and impulse to preserve or propagate the collective identity. Neumann argues that, since contemporary urban human beings have lost their connection both to the earth and to a clan to which they might be consciously and unconsciously bound, there is a schism between conscious and unconscious experience. There is still a largely unconscious mass component in modern human beings, but it is irrational, emotional, anti-individual and destructive, where the primal group consciousness was constructive, synthetic and creative. We do not

have to either romanticise primal cultures or take an entirely negative view of mass phenomena in the twentieth century to acknowledge that his argument has some grounding in experience. Neumann's contrast between primal group consciousness and contemporary mass consciousness echoes Gebser's distinction between the "efficient" and "deficient" structures of consciousness. In Gebser's language, the archaic, instinctual consciousness of primal humans was "efficient" in that it represented a valid and creative way of experiencing the world. By contrast, mob behavior as we might witness it today represents a takeover of rational consciousness by a repressed archaic structure and accordingly is likely to be negative in its manifestations. In Jung's language, it signals the emergence of the collective *shadow*.

Merlin Donald has a different take on the phenomena that Neumann associates with primeval consciousness. In *The Origins of the Modern Mind*<sup>v</sup> he traces the evolution of human cultures through three stages: the mimetic, the mythic and the theoretic. These correspond fairly closely with Gebser's descriptions of archaic/magic, mythic and mental-rational structures of consciousness. Like Gebser he imagines the culture of the primeval hominids to be not so much unconscious as pre-linguistic. He suggests that *mimesis* forms the core of human culture in its beginnings and that, no matter how intellectually and linguistically sophisticated we manage to be:

the use of patterns of mimetic representation in modern society have remained distinct from the uses of our later cognitive acquisitions (like language and literacy). In effect, there is still a vestigial mimetic culture embedded within our modern culture, and a mimetic mind embedded within the overall architecture of the modern human mind.<sup>vi</sup>

If we reflect on the way mimesis functions in a contemporary organization, we might imagine organizational culture as the effect of "everybody copying everybody copying everybody". Margaret Wheatley, in commenting on the "fractal" nature of organizational behavior", draws attention to this phenomenon:

I can't think of any organization that isn't deeply patterned with self-similar behaviors evident everywhere. I am often struck by eerily similar behaviors exhibited by people in an organization, whether I'm meeting a factory floor employee or a senior executive. I might detect a recurring penchant for secrecy, or for openness, or for name-calling, or for thoughtfulness. These recurring patterns of behavior are what many call the culture of the organization. I believe we all experience this fractal nature of organizations in any of our encounters with them. As customers, we can learn how employees are treated by their bosses by noticing how employees treat us. As a consultant, I was taught that I would be able to spot the dominant issues of the client system by noticing how the client interacted with me."<sup>vii</sup>

We are not talking here about conscious imitation, where an employee copies an executive's behavior out of admiration, fear or sycophancy. This may indeed occur, but *mimesis*<sup>viii</sup> is grounded in a pre-reflective, pre-linguistic experience; it is an expression of the connectedness of human

beings. As adults we may indeed learn to behave in certain ways by observing and copying others, but as infants we learned to be not only human but to be members of a particular tribal and family group by absorption rather than observation. This capacity survives as an underlay in our adult collective behavior. We are drawn into collective habits (fashions, ideologies, cultural movements) because we are organically connected not only to other human beings, but to the planet. It is only when we start consciously observing and reflecting that we are able to choose to resist this drift to unconscious, collective, instinct-driven behavior and assert our individuality.

Julian Jaynes developed the notion that humans have been unconscious for most of their history, and that most of our experience is still unconscious<sup>ix</sup>. If this is observable of individual experience, it is even more apparent in collective behavior, in corporations and elsewhere. Kieran Egan writes of somatic understanding, sharing Gebser's view that before ever we "think" about our experience, weprehend it through our physical, organic sense of the world<sup>x</sup>. Collectively, we feel the rhythms of nature "in our bones" and respond to them without reflection. In the same way in our institutional memberships we tune in to the rhythms of a group we belong to. Edward Hall called attention to the evidence of synchrony in cohesive groups. It seems that people quite unconsciously act "in sync" with others in their group – in gesture, speech rhythms, biological cycles and so on, so that the group as a whole may be performing a dance of which the individuals are unaware. The capacity for synchrony is rooted in the biology of our archaic consciousness. When it is frustrated, as it is by corporate routines or assembly lines that are "out of sync" with the human rhythms of the group, both satisfaction and productivity are impaired.<sup>xi</sup>

The archaic structure of consciousness is the basis of our "togetherness" in groups and organizations. Our very capacity to understand each other, feel for each other and identify with each other is grounded in archaic consciousness, which knows nothing of authority structures, goals, roles, reason, ethics, personal boundaries or even verbal language. However, if the culture of an organization is such that the need for belonging goes unacknowledged it becomes vulnerable to a takeover by a regressive, pathological, archaic consciousness, where the organization collectively behaves in infantile, pre-rational ways, driven by fear, greed, or vengeance, and the individuals find themselves caught up in an energy that they cannot control. We may not often see corporations engaged in spectacularly destructive "mob" behavior, but we do hear their executives and directors sincerely talking the rhetoric of environmental responsibility, social obligation and cultural sensitivity even as the corporate body occupies itself in environmental destruction, social brigandage and cultural oppression which these same executives and many of their employees are simply unable to see.

The archaic structure of consciousness is profoundly passive. The world of archaic consciousness is a world where “things happen” without any understanding or control by human beings. Where an organization is stuck in the inertia of collective habit and fixed ideas we can detect the drag of the primordial archaic consciousness. We find it in the urge to satisfy our need to belong by dissolving our ego boundaries. We find it in the power that the group's collective habits and rituals have over the individual's ability to think, in the way the organization's unquestioned assumptions can suck in the individual, in the group member's loss of the ability to discriminate between right and wrong, sane and silly, and in the stress experienced by those members who begin to doubt.

In our experience of groups, the archaic structure of consciousness is overlaid by the magical, mythical and mental structures. The essence of the kind of group we generally call a “corporation” is the attempt to establish a level of abstract structure that transcends the instinctual collectivity of the clan. We don't see “pure” archaic consciousness in contemporary organizations. Yet, following Gebser, we might argue that the natural basis of organizational life is our “oneness” not only with each other but with the earth itself

### **The Magical Organization**

Gebser argues that, in spite of our illusion that we are totally rational individuals, the older structures of consciousness still continue to function in us, and that part of our brain knows nothing about either individual identity or rationality and inhabits a magical–mythical world. If we accept this argument we will expect to find evidence for it in contemporary organizations.

Magical consciousness as Gebser describes it has no sense of personal self at all. The individual has no existence except as member of a clan. Not *I doubt, therefore I am*, or even *I think, therefore I am*, but *I belong, therefore I am*. The clan exists in a world where everything is connected to everything else, where there is no notion of logical cause and effect. The clan participates in the life of this world and deals with its dangers through magic and ritual. In our contemporary clans we are still doing this, though we generally cover it up with all sorts of rationalisations, because we believe ourselves to be rational people. Underneath the contemporary organization's rationally stated policies and strategies and decisions there is a “group think” that tends to respond to the world in the same way our stone age ancestors did – through magic.

In primitive magical consciousness, human beings did not experience themselves as psychically separate from the tribe. They felt an identity with the community and an emotional bonding to it. This was constantly reinforced by the “closedness” of the clan and the repetition of its rituals. We find a similar phenomenon manifest in organizations in times of crisis. There is often a marked increase in the frequency of allusions to “the way we do things around here” or the “way we in Company X

behave” or “the Company S style”. At such times there seems to be a huge propensity for the sentiment surrounding and imbuing the organizational entity to seep very deeply into the emotional experience of individual members.

In a culture where primary groups have largely disappeared (except for the family, which is itself under the threat of disintegration) people still seek group membership, and largely find it in organizations that have been designed for quite other purposes than for simply giving people a group to belong to. In organizations, no matter how “rationally” structured, we find responses to people’s need to be bound emotionally to a group and participate in its rituals. The “closedness” of an organization, the development of clear distinctions between those who belong and those who do not, the distrust of or antagonism towards strangers, the strong notions of correct behavior, the taboos, the punishments meted out to those who offend against usage and custom, are as manifest here as in the stone age clan or the mediaeval village.

In magical consciousness, if two objects are similar in some way they are taken to be identical. Likewise a part of an object is taken to be the whole. So it is that I can harm my enemy by sticking pins in a doll that looks like him or contains some of his hair. I can turn myself into a buffalo by wearing the buffalo mask, or into a woman by wearing woman’s clothing. When it is time for the rains to come we dance the rain dance, and it rains. We always do the dance at this season and it always rains. If it does not rain this time, it is because we are not doing the dance correctly. We will have to keep doing it until we get it right. In our experience many organizational practices have these characteristics, particularly and especially in the area of organizational advancement – a more recent coinage for what used to be called organization development. They are amply described in an article by Robert Schaffer and Harvey Thomson who speak of activity-centered interventions: they speak of such rain dances as the ardent pursuit of activities that sound good, look good and allow managers to feel good, but in fact contribute little or nothing to fundamental corporate performance.<sup>xiii</sup>

We do not have to look very far to see this magical consciousness at work in some curious and often poignant ways. The chairman of the board gets frightfully agitated when some lesser mortal sits in his chair, as though power will leak out of the chair into the interloper. The bureaucrat gets a larger desk and a more imposing office and immediately feels (and becomes) more powerful. The department spends a million dollars on the latest in information technology and expects this ritual act to shift it from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century. Last time the firm was in crisis we sacked our chief executive (or we did a major re-structure, or we called in the consultants, or we got a new logo) and the crisis ended. The firm is once again in crisis, so we repeat the ritual. If it doesn’t work we know we’ve got it wrong somehow, so we repeat the ritual, hoping to get it right this time. In some ancient cultures the king had to be

sacrificed at the end of winter to make land fertile again. It worked! It is fortunate for chief executives (or other available scapegoats) that human sacrifice is no longer fashionable as a ritual of renewal.

Of course, being intellectually sophisticated people, we can have perfectly good and logical explanations for taking our course of action, no matter how irrational or superstitious it may actually be.

In our magical consciousness we are not initiators of our behavior, but controlled by external forces that we must use magic to keep in check. If something terrible happens in a magical community it is because someone has broken a taboo, and it is of no significance whether the infringement was conscious or deliberate. Magic tends to be used to keep things the way they have always been, rather than to change things.

Many of the artifacts taken for granted in an organization are maintained simply because *This is the way we've always done it.*

Sometimes the situation that the procedure was designed to deal with has long ago changed, but the procedure is still followed because it provides the security of magical ritual. The organization is unconsciously engaged in magical thinking: *We've done it this way for thirty years and we've always been OK; if we stop doing it, something terrible will happen!*

Geert Hofstede argues that rituals are employed in organizations to avoid uncertainty.<sup>xiii</sup> The more anxious we are about the uncertainties of our situation the more we depend on rituals to give us a sense of security. These rituals may be dressed up as rational exercises, such as establishing more appropriate rules and regulations, but they are often not rational at all. Among the uncertainty-avoiding rituals to be observed in organizations in times of stress he counts meetings, memos and reports, elements of the accounting, planning and control systems, and the employment of consultants. These rituals do not actually make the future more predictable or less dangerous, but they relieve stress by giving people a sense of certainty in which they can keep functioning as a group.

In times of external threat and crisis, those that lead and manage organizations are particularly susceptible to the seduction of the magical consciousness. At first glance they do not appear caught in the trap of conservatism and oft-repeated ritualistic behavior; their language, decisions and behavior speak of change, development and transformation. However, this lexicon is a mask, a distraction. Often such leaders will have by their side a magician to weave the magic for them. The magician will be a consultant or group of consultants in whom the senior management have invested their own hope for the future as a way of resolving a much deeper and unconscious impotence, doubt or anxiety. The consultants can come in many forms and guises: they can range the full gamut, from rational, systematic, advice-givers to skills providers, systems analysts and strategic problem solvers, to those with a more facilitative, value-based and relational focus. The cloak, potions, and spells of the magician are less important than the fact that, at some

level, the leader has cast the consultant in the mould of a magician. CEOs, newly appointed to organizations in crisis or under threat, are especially vulnerable to this seduction, often presented to them by their assistants and trusted lieutenants.

We have an advantage over early humans in that we do have the ability to reflect on our own behavior, to detach ourselves from the group and the world and look at what is going on, so that our magical behavior can be recognised and modified, if it serves no useful purpose. But it is always easier to do such reflecting from outside an organization rather than from within it. It is easier for an outsider to see the ritualised hatred, self-destruction or scapegoating within a nation, a corporation or a club and declare that on any rational ground it ought to stop. Those who are enmeshed in the situation are likely to be caught up in the “group think”, taken over by something “bigger than themselves”, and unable to see clearly or act rationally. The magical structure acts out of impulse and emotion. Reasons and justifications are constructed later by the rational structure.

Jung has a great deal to say about unconscious processes, but he makes very little direct contribution to a discussion of group behavior. His observation of group behavior, especially his observation of the rise of Nazism, convinced him that group behavior is generally stupid, and often immensely dangerous. He declared that the larger a group becomes, the less intelligence it has. In referring to the same mass movement Theodor Abt talks about “the headless regression into archaic *participation mystique*” where “one has handed oneself over to the world of drives”, and contrasts it with the magical-mythical consciousness of the “real folk person” of the traditional Swiss village.

....the real folk person is anything but a creature of drives lacking a head. Having a precise knowledge of the dangers of humanity’s chaotic drive nature, the primordial folk person is continually alert to living correctly in harmony with the whole.<sup>xiv</sup>

The folk community controls instinct and impulse by developing rituals and taboos, for this is essential to keeping “harmony with the whole”.

It is a frequent source of wonder that people who are capable of sane and intelligent behavior as individuals can become completely irrational as members of a group. Each time they emerge from the group and reflect on their behavior they may express amazement that they could have behaved so strangely. Then they re-enter the group and behave exactly as before. The group identity and emotionality have swallowed them. As individuals, we think of emotion as something we have. It may be difficult to control at times, but it is ours. However, at the level of our magical consciousness it is the emotion that “has” us. Our rage, or lust, or depression, or exhilaration are not initiated by us or owned by us. Rather, they are energies that take possession of us, dominate us for a while, and leave us if and when it suits them. For our pre-scientific ancestors it was natural to think of them as gods.

Being immersed in group emotionality is not necessarily a negative experience. As individuals we often regress to infantile (magical) or childish (mythical) behavior. Sometimes it is just a matter of being playful. Sometimes it “happens” to us in reaction to a shock or a crisis. We sometimes deliberately join a group in order to regress in this sort of way. We may go to a football match and allow ourselves to become emotional and irrational participants in a quasi-religious ritual. Or we may let ourselves get totally caught up in dancing or drinking, gladly abandoning our self-conscious, reasonable and respectable selves for the time being. We can participate in a political demonstration, a religious celebration or a rock festival and experience a powerful sense of being one in heart and mind with our companions. There is a certain intoxication in the dissolving of boundaries between ourselves and others. After the event we return to our rational consciousness, either refreshed or embarrassed by the experience.

Magical behavior was a quite adequate way of dealing with the world in well-functioning tribal communities, and there are still aspects of our experience that we deal with through our magical consciousness. Our ability to heal ourselves by means of placebos and the power of group religious ritual to heal and transform attest to magical consciousness being a valid response to the world. And because we can bring our rational consciousness to bear on our magical ways of behaving we can have some control over them. We can create rituals to express the organization's commitment to a common enterprise or to shared values, and this ritualizing can create or transmute energy for a specific end. We can invest particular icons with the power to express our identity and the meaning of our group activity. This process can be malicious and destructive (as in the Nazi use of the Nuremburg rallies to transform German consciousness). But it can also be transformative in a positive sense (as in the ritual singing of *We Shall Overcome* in the American Civil Rights movement). On the other hand, sometimes the attempt to create a ritual is simply ineffective.

While Jung did not have much to say to us about working with groups, what he says about individual psychology is relevant here because, in the magical structure, groups behave very much like persons.

For instance, Jung says a good deal about the connected phenomena of *projection* and *transference*. By projection, Jung meant our tendency to attribute to others aspects of ourselves that we are unable to acknowledge. Robert cannot acknowledge his hostility to women, but constantly perceives women as hostile to him. Robyn fails to recognise her own wisdom but has an obsessive admiration for a consultant or supervisor who puts words to Robyn's half-articulated thoughts. By transference Jung means the projection on to another person that part of our personality that is still embedded in relationship with some one else, particularly with one of our parents. Charles is always transformed into a submissive and dependent child (or a defiant adolescent) the moment



he enters the boss's office. In such cases the recipient of our projection or transference has presented us with a "hook", something in their appearance, behavior or role that immediately stimulates the projection or transference. If we were purely rational we could say "This person has some similarity to so and so. I should be careful not to confuse them." In practice, our magical consciousness usually gets in first, so that we unconsciously mistake the part for the whole or the similar for the identical, and react to this person as though they were really some one else. In magical consciousness there are no impermeable ego-boundaries, no clear distinction between what is *me* and what is *you*.

Power relations in organizations are deeply embedded in magical consciousness. Often this is by way of transference, as we invest a leader with the qualities of the omnipotent parent who dominated our infantile consciousness. Investing another person with power over our emotional life, finding divinity in our guru or satanic evil in a hated superior is not a rational act. The notion and experience of authority belongs to our rational consciousness; our experience of power belongs to the magical. It is something that happens to us, rather than something we choose and do reflectively.

Organizations are very prone to project their pathology on to other organizations. Organizations that close their collective eyes to their own lack of ethical principles can be loud in their criticisms of the low ethical standards of other organizations. Corporations that perceive themselves as providing a humane working environment while actually oppressing their employees will stridently condemn other firms for their poor treatment of their workers. Of course, this may be conscious and manipulative, but it can happen without any awareness at all. In his study of International Telephone and Telegraph, Sampson describes how the company's self-image and rhetoric of enabling and supporting democracy (and the slogan *Freedom dying everywhere*) proved to be quite compatible with its collusion with the CIA in undermining the democratically elected government of Chile. He suggests that the reality of a brutal and coercive management style, combined with the rhetoric of a moral crusade against totalitarianism, had the predictable effect of projecting on to Allende all the anti-democratic prejudices of ITT and its chief executive.<sup>xv</sup>

Sampson uses the Jungian term *shadow* to refer to the unacknowledged totalitarianism of the company in this instance. At the personal level, the Jungian shadow contains all the aspects of our personality that do not fit in with our self-image. Jung means this to include the positive aspects (such as creativity and altruism) that we are not able to acknowledge in ourselves, as well as the negative aspects, but in popular usage the shadow is often identified with the negative. The shadow is experienced collectively as well as personally. In pre-scientific societies, the shadow is dealt with both magically and mythically. Rituals are performed for allowing the shadow expression and, in some cultures, for exorcising it.

Sometimes, an individual is delegated to ritually perform actions that violate the standards of the group. Sometimes an individual is made to carry the clan's pathology and is really or symbolically killed or driven out of the clan. Sometimes an animal (scapegoat) stands in for a clan member in this role.

Corporations still use such methods to deal with the shadow. The phenomenon of scapegoating is too common to require much comment. The delegation of particular individuals or sub-groups to act out the shadow-dynamic of the organization is likewise readily recognised. An organization that cultivates a self-image of order, rationality and propriety may tolerate within its ranks an individual or a group of individuals who behave in disordered, irrational and disordered ways. Or it may ritualise a regular celebration of the shadow, for example an annual "retreat" or an "office party", which allows the shadow suitable expression and then shoves it back into the corporate unconscious for a year. The more the shadow energy is repressed in the conventional activities of the corporation, the more outlandish this officially sanctioned "carnival" behavior is likely to be.

Another sign of magical consciousness at work is the unreflective identification of an organization with its leader or, even more bizarrely, with an external consultant or proponent of a particular ideology. This is most striking in religious cults, but the phenomenon can be widely observed in all sorts of corporate organizations. The tendency of groups to identify sympathetically with individuals or representative groups is well attested as the economic fortunes of nations or cities rise and fall with the success or failure of a national or local football team.

Even in organizations structured in rational ways morale can be dependent on the fortunes of a powerful leader. When the organization is organically structured around the personality of a charismatic leader, the leader's failure can have a catastrophic effect on the group. In a magical culture, the most effective way to defeat the tribe is to kill the chief.

### **The Mythical Organization**

Magical consciousness functions through shared emotionality and ritual behaviors. The mythical structure functions through shared image and story. Though it is more "evolved" than magical consciousness it still has no clear sense of individual selfhood. To be in mythical consciousness is to be enmeshed in story, and the stories we are enmeshed in are the collective stories, the "big" stories, of our tribe. From the standpoint of our rational consciousness we are inclined to see story and images as something we have, something that is in us. In our mythical consciousness it is we who are in the story.<sup>xvi</sup>

Our late Stone Age and Bronze Age ancestors lived in a world that was alive with gods, and whatever happened in this world was a manifestation of these gods and their interaction with each other and with humanity. The stories they told were simply stories of how the

world is, not of how it once was or how it ought to be. Mythical consciousness, as Gebser describes it, has no sense of measured, sequential time. Time is rhythmical, always returning to its beginning. Everything has already happened in the time of the gods. It was only with the development of mental consciousness that history was invented. As far as our mythical consciousness is concerned, the old stories are still true, and we are still in them. From the perspective of archetypal psychology we are always in one archetypal fantasy or another. In this way of thinking, even the notion that we are reasonable beings able to observe the world objectively, reflect on it rationally and deal with it scientifically is simply one story among many. This is a way of imagining the world, a story, a myth. It has been a dominant story in European culture for some time, and it is certainly a powerfully dominant story in corporate culture but, as stories go, it is relatively new. It is less than three thousand years old. It started to really take hold of Western thought with the advent of Rene Descartes and Isaac Newton and the subsequent age of rational enlightenment, a mere three hundred or so years ago.

We can thank Freud and Jung for calling our attention to the stories we act out in our lives. Freud documented a couple of stories in particular that he claimed we are scripted to re-enact. Jung, when he looked at the common patterns in human lives, claimed that there are a number of different stories that we find ourselves enmeshed in. Jung and Freud were most interested in the way we live out the myths without any awareness that we are doing so. We live out the old stories both personally (the *Oedipus* story, the *Hero* story, the *Cinderella* story) and collectively (the *Oppressed Minority* story, the *Master Race* story, the *God's Special People* story).

Even our personal stories are variations on the collective ones. Our stories still belong to the tribe. When Jung listened to the stories his patients told him about themselves, and the images they reported from their dreams, he was impressed by the way the same images and patterns kept turning up. It was his attempt to find an explanation for the way his patients' intensely private experience was expressed in specific, apparently universal, images and narratives that led him to the notion of archetypes. He saw myths as the ancient narrative expression of these patterns or energies.

There has been increasing recognition of the narrative level of human experience in recent years, even among people who have little time for Freud or Jung. It is increasingly fashionable to talk about culture and personality in terms of dominant narratives and discourse rather than in terms of dominant ideas or values. The tendency of human beings not only to tell and listen to stories but also to live out collectively held "scripts" is being acknowledged and studied.

Myths are powerful in shaping individual behavior. We can argue that they are even more powerful in shaping group behavior. Gebser argued that it was in the very nature of pre-rational mythical consciousness to be a group consciousness. We can now see readily enough that it is a shared story that shapes behavior in areas of inter-cultural or inter-ethnic conflict: in Northern Ireland, in Kosovo, in Ruanda, in Kashmir, in Palestine. We can see how a shared story gives identity and meaning to a group of people, and how the conflict between two stories resists rational analysis and rational solutions. We can see former imperial nations, whose story of cultural and racial superiority no longer “works” for them, clinging to the story that once gave them identity, or trying to write themselves a new one. Likewise we can see corporations clinging to a story of who they are and what they exist for, long after changed social and economic conditions have created a world different from the world of their story.

To return to Sampson’s account of ITT’s operations in Chile, it is apparent that the promulgation and acceptance of a myth of moral and political superiority allowed the company to behave in utterly immoral ways without any sense of dissonance. The facts were overwhelmed by the power of the shared narrative.

There is an attempt in many organizations to articulate the organizational myths in a “mission statement” of some kind. When this statement actually articulates the shared narrative in which members of the organization declare where they have come from, what they are about and where they are going, it can be an effective device for building cohesion and a sense of purpose. Where it is thrust upon the organization from outside or represents the fantasy of a non-representative managerial subculture, it is not likely to have much impact.

One of Jung’s most useful ideas was the notion of inflation. He used the word to refer to the state of an individual who is “taken over” by a specific archetypal energy and image, so that it entirely shapes their thinking, valuing, feeling and behavior. We sometimes describe a person as having a “power complex”, meaning that the drive to power dominates their way of being in the world. All other values have become insignificant. Their view of life is narrowed to a single dimension. In their obsession with power we see them acting irrationally and obsessively, and they don’t seem to have any control over this. Such an inflation may suddenly come and suddenly go. It something that happens to us, rather than something we do. Sane and rational people fall obsessively in love, become overwhelmingly doting parents, become paralysed by stress or depression or become consumed by a thirst for vengeance or a conviction that they must save the world, and they forget everything else in their lives. Their sanity and rationality seem to be set aside until this condition decides to let them alone.

Jung pointed out how such a “complex” seems to behave like an autonomous agent. It was natural for pre-scientific cultures to see in it

the work of a god. Jung and later archetypal theorists have found it useful to follow this lead and use the language of polytheistic religion to label such phenomena, so we can talk of a Zeus (patriarchal power) inflation, a Demeter (mothering) inflation, an Ares (rage) inflation, and Eros (love) inflation.

In Gebser's way of thinking, we would say that an "inflated" person has regressed to a simpler (magical–mythical) structure of consciousness, and has lost their individual identity in a collective image and narrative (mythical) or in the impersonality of fixed ideas and compulsive behaviors (magical). They have also lost their capacity to detach themselves from their experience and reflect on it. Magical–mythical consciousness does not have such a capacity, which belongs to rational consciousness.

Inflation and regression occur in organizations just as they in individuals. For Jung, being taken over by a single archetypal energy was pathological, whether at the individual or group level, and the most obvious example of a group inflation was the experience of Nazi Germany, which he saw as an inflation by the Wotan archetype. The German nation let itself be caught up in the energy and imagery of the myth of Wotan. At one level there were individuals made opportunistic choices, and a conscious manipulation of images and ideology, but this rational activity was soon swept up in the irruption of a collective emotion and a collective myth.

In a similar vein, organizations can become inflated with a dominant archetypal energy represented in a dominant organizational narrative. This collective obsession blinds the people within the organization to a more detached and multi–perspectival assessment of their experience. In the first place they are caught in a collective emotion sustained by ritual ways of behaving (magical structure); in the second place, they are caught up in a particular story that gives meaning to their behavior. They may consider that they are acting reasonably, according to a theory of good organizational practice, but it is theory swallowed whole without opportunity, or even desire, for critical reflection. For example, we saw a rise through the sixties, seventies and into the late eighties of training and organization development activities premised on the belief that more effective and healthier relationships among people in the workplace would lead to more effective organizational performance and a better quality of work life for employees. It was associated in some fields with a rise in emphasis on values as key drivers in relational activities. This became a quite seductive and powerful movement, which is still strongly represented in some places.

During this period many organizations invested heavily in human relations training of one form or another. The movement provided a deeply entrancing alternative to the linear, mechanistic, male, dominating, power–oriented environment that it was set against in such sharp relief. We might say it represented an Eros narrative. Those in its

grip became blinded both to its negative aspects and to existence of other, and equally legitimate, value systems. They ignored any evidence that a strong relational orientation does not necessarily translate to corporate performance and environmental relevance. At the core of this narrative as it is lived out in organizations are images of total inclusion and mutuality; separation and contained roles are frowned upon. The Eros myth is very seductive, especially when seen against a background of barren and life-inhibiting corporate environments. But the myth can blind people to the hard decisions they have to make in the marketplace and to the realities of how people actually behave, rather than how we would like them to behave. We need more than love to make the world go round.

In the same period, we saw the rise of a "human potential" orientation, enacting the myth of Dionysos, the god of new life and growth. It took a number of different forms, and derived from a number of sources (among them humanistic psychology, Scientology and the EST movement of Werner Erhard). It is currently offered in many different guises and from a wide range of consulting and training providers who offer personal and corporate transformation. The focus is on the psychology and philosophy of a person's experience – past, present and future; individuals are asked to bring into existence new realities both individually and collectively, as they become part of a shared narrative of emergence. Like any myth it has the power to blind those gripped by it to other ways of thinking and feeling about the world.

The seventies and eighties saw the rise on a global scale of another narrative, that of economic rationalism. Once again we found a story about the world presented as a universal truth. The self-evident truth this time was the centrality of the unregulated marketplace as the final arbiter of values. We saw an economic theory being turned into an unchallengeable truth that was applicable in every field, including human relationships, health, education and welfare. Where organizations adopted this view of the world or had it forced on them we saw market value taking the place of all other ways of valuing, not only in the organization's relation to its products and processes but also in its relation to its people. Market value in a particular marketplace gave many CEOs salaries out of proportion to their contribution to the company, and led to the sacking of many employees whose actual contribution to the company was not matched by their monetary value in the same marketplace. Where this narrative was so powerfully dominant that it overwhelmed all other voices and drowned out all critical reflection, we can call it an inflation, this time associated with Hermes, god of the marketplace.

So in the early 90s, we saw the Eros, Dionysos and Hermes myths being accepted as "the way things are", in clear contrast to Zeus archetype that had preceded them. The November 1994 US elections saw a more conservative element assume the high political ground. The moral

majority took control and it was no longer seen as fashionable or ideologically legitimate to engage in deep psychological inquiry or to abandon traditional values. About the same time we saw the return of a reductionist and rationalist approach to human influence in organizations. No more vivid expression of this trend can be found than in the fields of competency modeling and performance management. Michael Grinder described this shift as a movement from a psychological model to a professional model<sup>xvii</sup>. It is probably better described as a trend away from interventions that focused on changing the interior experience of individuals to those that focused more on their external reality. Grinder describes this latter form as change from the “outside in” rather than “inside out”. Underlying this shift is the rise of (or perhaps more properly, a return to) different myths: Apollo (the world should be rational and systematic) and Prometheus (if we become more technically skilled we can use our tools to create a new and better world).

It is ironic that the image of the universe as machine hangs on in myth, while the idea of the universe as machine has been long ago abandoned by science, through the development of Einstein's relativity theory, quantum theory and nonlinear dynamics. Science is currently replacing the idea and image of the universe as machine with a different idea and image, that of the universe as a self-organizing system, resembling a living organism rather more than it resembles a machine. We find this image in Lovelock and Margulis' Gaia hypothesis and Maturana and Varela's notion of autopoiesis, in complexity theory and in the writings of many deep ecologists, not to mention the New Age literature.<sup>xviii</sup> Over the past few years the image has come to be applied in organization and management literature also.<sup>xix</sup> However, we must be careful not to confuse image with fact. If this way of thinking represents our own taken-for-granted, uncontestable assumptions about organizations, so that we are simply unable to examine the theory critically and look at evidence that contradicts it, we are ourselves being constrained by the images of a specific myth—this time the myth of Gaia, the ancient mother-goddess whom the Greeks identified with the earth.

Those who promote a particular way of imagining organizations and organizational change do not generally perceive themselves to be promoting a myth. They believe that they are constructing a theory and applying it in practice. Yet if the theory does not critically reflect on its own assumptions, if it will brook no contradiction, it is likely to be the rationalization of a myth. People stuck in a particular narrative don't cease to think rationally; it is just that their rational thinking takes place within a framework of taken – for – granted assumptions that determine what the truth is in their tribe or organization. Myth doesn't allow for contingency. It asserts that "the way things are" is inevitable and natural. Corporations stuck in a particular myth have no desire to change and no understanding of why they might need to do so. Their members are engaged in what developmental psychologist Robert Kegan

calls "third order" thinking, where "truth" is something given to the individual by the inheritance of a tradition or the consensus of their cultural group, rather than something arrived at through their own objective observations and reflections. <sup>xx</sup>

Being stuck in a single story, being able to imagine the world in one way only, prevents us from responding flexibly and appropriately to the world as it is. Fortunately most of us in our personal lives experience the archetypes (or gods) as interacting energies and interacting fantasies without giving ourselves over entirely to one of them alone. The same thing happens in a psychologically healthy organization. Many corporations have a dominant narrative, a dominant fantasy, but it is balanced by other complementary narratives. In earlier, simpler societies individuals and organizations could conduct their lives within a single narrative. That option no longer seems to be available. When leaders or their magicians try to impose a single story and image on an organization, they are more likely to generate confusion and demoralisation than constructive energy.

### **The Mental/Rational Organization**

In writing about the evolution of consciousness, Gebser distinguishes between the mental structure of consciousness that characterized the high culture of the classical world and the Renaissance and the rational structure that has been dominant more recently. Mental consciousness develops out of mythical consciousness and retains an awareness and appreciation of non-rational (e.g. religious and poetic) ways of understanding the world. Rational consciousness cuts itself off from its non-rational roots, and attempts to deal with the world only within its own terms, that is, in terms of science. It denies that any other ways of experiencing the world are valid. In Gebser's language, it is the "deficient" form of the mental structure.

European scientific culture between the sixteenth and twentieth century assumed that we could get rid of magic, myth and gods. Human beings, it was believed, only needed to exercise their powers of reason and they would be able to understand exactly how the world works. They would eventually know everything there was to know. They would be able to control the chaos of nature and, if they cared to, fashion a world in which everyone would be happy and prosperous. Light would replace darkness; objective, scientific truth would replace myth and superstition. Nobody doubted that man was the center of the universe, a notion that was reinforced by conventional religion as well as by science. With the development of technology, the earth itself came to be seen as a vast machine operating on precise laws of cause and effect in quantifiable time and space. Human beings themselves came to be viewed as machines. Just as man should, could and would control the "forces of Nature", so the ego, the individual's rational self, should, could and would control instinct, imagination and emotion.



The development of organizations during this time has been based in the same assumptions. It came to be accepted without argument that the ideal organization is one based on scientific principles, that is, an organization that is rational, objective and impersonal. The success of technology in the nineteenth century made it inevitable that organizations would be viewed as machines, designed to deliver designated products. Richard Denhardt<sup>xxi</sup> points to the way both science and organization took on greater and greater significance. They became important for their own sake, not simply as instruments to accomplish something. The rational organization came to be an end in itself, and a model of how society ought to function.

The mental/rational organization is built on the premise that its members are essentially individuals who join, by choice or necessity, in a common task. Commitment to the organization is only understood as an expression of self-interest. Whereas the members of the magical organization are connected in a common emotionality expressed in ritual, and the members of the mythical organization are linked in a common narrative, connections in the mental/rational organization are abstract and bureaucratic. Because the mental/rational organization is a collection of individuals, the roles and functions of these individuals are differentiated. Moreover, the roles and functions are not confused with the individuals who perform them, but are reified abstractions, independent of changes in personnel.

It is significant that the thinking behind both modern science and the modern corporation is blatantly elitist. Both the scientist and the manager of the rational organization distinguish themselves from the objects of science and the objects of management. The scientist/manager does the thinking and controlling; the objects, human or otherwise, are thought about and controlled. The rational organization operates out of the rationality of the chief executive and the elite leadership team which looks at the facts, develop strategies and systems, and put them into operation. Individuals at other levels of the organization may be invited to contribute information and ideas from time to time, but the “thinking” is done at the top.

This is not surprising. Organizations cannot “think” at all. By “thinking” we detach ourselves from the group consciousness and assert our separateness. As a member of a group we express the group identity by sharing the established ideas and values of the group, but as soon as we “think”, in the sense of applying our logic, our capacity for critical analysis and our ability to construct new ideas, we are acting as individuals. Our individuality and our capacity to manipulate ideas are inextricably tied together in our mental/rational structure of consciousness. The mental structure of consciousness enables us to reflect critically on the myths in which our organization is enmeshed, the taken – for – granted assumptions out of which the organization’s dominant narrative is constructed. It enables us to test a corporation's

propaganda against the available evidence. In mental consciousness we look at the past through the lens of history, not myth. History is a tool we have invented to allow us to make sense of changing conditions, and to accept the information about changing conditions for what it is instead of distorting it to make it compatible with our particular narrative.

The mental/rational organization self-consciously distinguishes itself from organizations that are trapped in a deficient magical or mythical structure. Murray Stein suggests “one of the essential functions of a good organization is to contain the spirit of the organization’s unconscious and to keep it from devouring its members.”<sup>xxii</sup> The latent archaic structure pre-disposes the individual to lapse into an instinctual and unreflective oneness with the corporation. The magical structure pre-disposes them to be caught up in collective impulse and emotionality. The mythical structure tends to keep them uncritically embedded in a narrative. The mental/rational structure makes them individuals and sets them free from the “diminished responsibility” attendant on the other structures. In so far as the mental/rational structure can carry over into the collective behavior of the corporation, it can inhibit a takeover by collective instinct, emotion and image.

However, there is a twin paradox here. The mental/rational structure of consciousness gives individuals the capacity and inclination for reflection. It is a capacity that has been cherished by the science-dominated culture of the modern European era. However, this capacity is acknowledged only in the context of a single reality that is ultimately discoverable by science. Not only modern science, but modern organizations—religious, political and cultural—have been built upon the assumption that there is “one truth”. The nature of this “one truth” varies enormously, but the assumption is constant. Modern, rational organizations are, in Gebser’s words, *perspectival*, that is, they see the world from one direction only.

The deficient rational, *perspectival* consciousness of the modern era leads us to assume that the maintenance of order depends on the acknowledgment of a single reality. This assumption has been used to justify political and intellectual oppression for centuries. The assumption still lurks behind the rational corporation’s fantasy of a unitary corporate culture. In such an organization, difference is feared as a threat to order. If people “think right” they will accept the truth as given to them and enjoy the order that depends on it; the alternative is chaos and disintegration.

The other part of this paradox is that unthinking acceptance of the corporation’s narrative of what is true and what is worthwhile is a function of the mythical structure; our unthinking participation in its rituals and our immersion in its emotionality belong to the magical structure. And in both of these structures the group consciousness is more powerful than the individual. Reflection, in the fantasy of rational

corporation, as in the fantasy of scientific culture, is reserved for the elite.

A peculiar irony in this is that the group consciousness of the “rational” corporation is itself a mythical one. The corporation's consensus reality is the experience of a shared, ongoing story. When James Hillman declares that we are always in one archetypal fantasy or another he is making the point that we cannot get away from our mythical consciousness. Even when we are self-consciously being modern, rational, logical, objective human beings, exercising our extraordinary capacity for abstraction and our ability to find the truth by looking objectively at the evidence, we are in the midst of a fantasy that this is the way the world is. We are telling ourselves a story. This happens to be a story that has dominated European consciousness for some time, but it has no absolute grip on the truth. It represents a partial truth, like the story that it is love that makes the world go round, the story that the earth is our mother and we her children, the story that might is right, the story that beauty is truth and truth beauty or the story that “globalization made me do it”.

In the “rational” corporation there is an official story promulgated, reinforced by rituals of status and procedure, and individuals “belong” to the organization to the degree that they accept this story. The problem with this particular story is that those who tell it and live it are inclined to assume that it is the only story. They will cling to this story even when they see their corporation behaving irrationally, as when it spends a great deal of energy and expense on getting objective data to assist decision-making and then actually makes its decisions according to prejudice or whim.

What passes for a “rational” corporation, then, is not necessarily rational at all. It may be a mythical organization enacting its particular myth of rationality. The more genuinely rational an organization is, the more it will allow for individual reflection, for critical analysis of its own processes, for truly objective appraisal of its situation. However, even in our individual lives we are not able to act out of pure rationality without being affected by of the irrational elements in our nature. In our group membership this is even more so. Ironically, a genuinely rational-scientific view of corporations will acknowledge and assess all the aspects of human behavior, unconscious as well as conscious, magical and mythical as well as rational.

This brings us back to Gebser's argument that the rational structure of consciousness that has characterised the modern, industrial world is a deficient mental structure. Rational consciousness has so narrowly defined reality that it cannot see what is there. The only way rational consciousness can be an effective instrument for dealing with the world is by re-admitting aspects of reality that it has defined out of existence, aspects that were admitted in an efficient mental structure.

A corporation functioning within the efficient mental structure of consciousness is able to utilize the rational thinking of its members without denying the magical and mythical dimensions of group life. The reflection and dialogue of the organization's members enable it to function in the way most appropriate to its situation. Recognition of the corporation's collective myths enables meaningful and purposive common action. Group ritual is acknowledged and honored for its effectiveness in developing a common identity. The mental organization cherishes soul as well as mind. However, such corporations may be hard to find. Many are stuck in a deficient and exhausted rational structure of consciousness.

### **The Integral Organization**

Gebser's suggested that the rational consciousness that has characterized European scientific-industrial culture for the past few was something of a dead end. However, he pointed to evidence that there was a significant change in consciousness taking place in the twentieth century. Gebser noted some dimensions of this change when he examined the arts and sciences in the middle of the century, and he tried to determine the kind of change that was taking place. His conclusions are compatible with more recent observations of the change in intellectual sensibility associated with late capitalism.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Gebser suggests, logically enough, that just as archaic humanity could not feel what the experience of magical consciousness might be, and just as mythical humanity could not imagine what mental consciousness might be like, rational humanity cannot conceptualise the experience of the structure of consciousness that is at present emerging. Gebser himself claims only to have observed the past and present trajectory of consciousness and on this basis to have guessed at its future direction. The nature of his guess is implied in the label he gave this structure: *integral* consciousness.

When Gebser was developing his theory in Europe in the thirties and forties he was confronted with some evidence that humanity was regressing to an older and more collective form of consciousness. As he studied the evidence, he became somewhat less pessimistic. Alongside the regression, there seemed to be a movement to a more complex, rather than a less complex form of consciousness. His interest was originally sparked by his observation that European poets were using language in quite new ways, but he soon turned his attention to the other arts and to economics and science.

His conclusion was that not only were the magical and mythical modes of perceiving the world being once again taken seriously, but that the magical and mythical structures of consciousness were being integrated with mental consciousness to produce a totally new way of perceiving and thinking.

Certain elements stand out in Gebser's analysis of what he calls the *integral* structure of consciousness: a freedom from the constraints of linear time and space, and a freedom from the constraints of ego.

There is rather more to Gebser's speculations about the nature of the emerging structure of consciousness than this, but this is sufficient basis for some speculation on the emerging nature of organizations. However, there is no sense in here trying to describe fully integral organizations. We have neither the experience nor the language that would enable us to do so. What we can now observe is the confusion of corporations inhabiting a world where there is a growing sense that the political, environmental, social, economic and health problems that the late modern-industrial age was so confident of solving are not only too complex to solve but too complex even to think about. It is in this state of confusion and instability that Gebser sought for signs that a new way of experiencing and dealing with the world might be evolving.

The world as we generally perceive it follows certain rules regarding time and space, yet when we get beyond the range of our naked senses and look at the macro-world of outer space or the micro-world of the sub-atomic realm, the rules don't seem to hold any more. Time goes backwards as well as forwards. Space is curved. Matter becomes so dense it disappears. Particle can act on particle instantaneously at a distance. We can no longer think of time and space as quantifiable, for their dimensions are constantly changing. Like everything else in a postmodern world science has lost the steady ground it used to stand on. The reality we can observe with our senses is a very partial reality indeed. The universe, as Schrodinger observed, is not only stranger than we think, but stranger than we *can* think. The high technology of our civilisation is based on sciences and mathematics that have long ago left behind the assumptions of the machine age, yet the ways most of us think about technology and use it are still the ways of a hundred years ago. Moreover, many of the organizations by which we try to manage this high-tech world are extremely low-tech in their structures and ways of operating.

However, there are signs that we are learning to think in new ways. In the first place we are prepared to challenge some of the assumptions on which the "old science" of the past four hundred years has been based. We are prepared to acknowledge that the rules of rational thinking that have been so useful for us in the past may not be universally applicable. Gebser warns us against assuming that the only alternative to rational thinking is irrationality. Integral consciousness is not irrational but arational<sup>xxiv</sup>.

What might this mean for organizations and those who belong to them? One of the features of integral consciousness as Gebser imagines it is the transcendence of the dualism that is at the core of rational thinking. In all sorts of fields we find that we no longer absolutely have to think in

terms of either/or. Either spirit or matter. Either true or false. Either male or female. Either human or divine. Either wave or particle. Either living or non-living. Thinkers in various fields have given us ways of thinking outside these limitations. In organization theory there is still a great deal of dualistic thinking going on, but it is under challenge. The emerging integral organization does not assume that there must be a choice between concern for product and concern for people, between tradition and progress, between authority and chaos, between self-interest and altruism, between technology and humanity, between company business and personal business.

Another feature of integral consciousness is the transcendence of a single perspective. The emerging integral organization is, to use one of Gebser's key expressions, *aperspectival*. It does not locate itself (physically or metaphorically) on a particular spot and see the world from there. It attempts to see the world from no spot in particular and from all possible spots at once. The integral organization is able to hold different perspectives and different value systems. The deficient rational, *perspectival* consciousness is unable to do this. The rational organization prefers the security of one truth to the freedom and limitless possibility of many. The assumption of a single reality still lurks behind the fantasy of a unitary corporate culture. Both contemporary science and postmodern social analysis have challenged the feasibility of assuming any longer that there is a single reality. Gebser and contemporary constructive postmodernists challenge the assumption that order depends on believing in it.

In the integral corporation, difference is valued. There is no fantasy about "objective truth" to determine what the organization believes about itself. The world is as it is experienced and interpreted by the members of the organization, each from their own perspective. Reality is conceived to be not *one* of these things but *all* of these things.

The emerging integral corporation is also *time-free*. It is not locked into a particular spot in history, a particular mark on a time line. In the integral corporation the past and the future are simultaneously experienced with the present. Time can now be stretched or compressed, and it has become possible to talk of the *quality* and *intensity* of time as well as its extent. The organization is not locked into its history or its traditional ways of categorising people and events, which are a product of both mythical consciousness (through shared narratives and rational consciousness (through history). Among the products of myth and history are essentialist views of race, gender, class and cultural difference, including an essentialist view of its own identity. The integral organization is no longer trapped in historically-based assumptions about people – assumptions that particular groups of people have particular traits and accordingly are suitable only to fill particular roles. It does not have to limit its members' activities on the basis that they are essentially such and such because of race or gender or geography and

cannot change. It does not have to limit its collective activity because of an essentialist view of what it is and what it does. It does not have to protect itself from incorporating people who will not “fit in” because of cultural difference. It is difference that gives the organization the capacity to “go with the flow” through ongoing self-organization. Where the rational corporation seeks conformity, stability and planned change, the integral corporation values the multiplicity, creativity and spontaneity that come with *time-freedom*.<sup>xxv</sup>

Jung made an intense study of magical and mythical phenomena, and gave us a psychological language for talking about them. He also perceived, like Gebser, that rational thought alone could not deal with the kind of universe that his studies were revealing. He did not accept that dualistic thinking could say the last word about the world. While Einstein was proposing that the physical universe is four-dimensional, Jung was saying the same of the psychic universe.<sup>xxvi</sup> With his notion of archetype he challenged conventional psychology by positing a psychological structure that is “eternally present”, that is time-free.

The emerging integral corporation is also “ego-free”. It does not have a narrowly defined sense of self, analogous to the ego in the individual psyche. It does not separate out a particular person or group of persons as the decision-making, controlling centre of the organism (or machine). Jung argued that the development in the individual of a strong ego is only a stage in psychological growth (a particular task of adolescence and young adulthood) rather than the goal of it. A strong ego enables us to have a strong sense of who we are and what we value, but this is at the cost of one-sidedness. It ignores or suppresses a great deal of who we are and what we are capable of. To live to our full potential we have to admit into our consciousness all the suppressed and underdeveloped parts of our personality, a process that he called *individuation*. Archetypal psychologists emphasise that we have many selves, actual and potential. To concentrate on a single identity and self image is a denial of most of what we can be. The integral, or individuated, corporation likewise owns up to all of its potential, giving all of its selves expression.

There is another aspect to this transcendence of ego. Not only do we seem to be abandoning the notion that the ego is the centre of the personality, but there is also doubt about whether human beings are the center of the universe. The spread of Buddhism in the West has clearly been dependent on the psychological readiness to abandon the fantasy that we are essentially separate encapsulated egos, and to imagine us rather as distinct manifestations of a greater reality. The current popularity of Jungian psychology, with its notion that the personal ego is merely a secondary phenomenon, that our personal consciousness is just a momentary expression, at a point in space and time, of what Jung calls the *objective psyche*, has also been dependent on this. It is becoming increasingly difficult to place human beings at the center of the universe, or even to maintain that they are at the center of the planet. The

anthropocentric fantasy is under attack from Gaia consciousness in one direction and from selfish genes in the other. It is becoming incumbent on us to relativize ourselves, to imagine ourselves not only as choosing and acting individuals in our own right but also both as an environment for smaller organisms and as cells of a larger organism. We are part of something bigger than ourselves, and the boundaries of our selves are not as fixed and impermeable as they used to be.

This kind of thinking about our place in the universe, even when it does not reach conscious expression, affects the way we think about corporations. It demands that corporations see themselves and structure themselves in ways that are consistent with a sense of themselves as open systems in a web of relationships that blur the boundaries between inside and *outside*. The boundary between the postmodern integral corporation and its human and nonhuman environment is exceedingly permeable.

Gebser developed his notions of what integral consciousness might be like without being witness to the developments in communications and information technology that are peculiar to the present time. Yet these are highly significant for the intellectual sensibility of a postmodern world and the functioning of postmodern organizations.

The shift in our modes of thought that Gebser was documenting in the forties has been reinforced by an information technology that operates outside our conventional notions of space and time. The idea of exploring ‘cyberspace’ and of handling complex transactions in this place that is not a place, may be difficult for conventionally rational minds to handle, but increasing numbers of people are doing it. It is possible now for an entire corporation to exist outside the conventions of time and place that we have taken for granted for nearly three thousand years. It seems to be becoming possible to transcend not only time and space but ego, as communication scientists pursue the fantasy of enabling a hundred minds (or ten thousand) in instantaneous communication to function as a single great mind. This transcendence of the limitations of the individual’s mental powers is a very different thing from the submergence of the individual in the group that characterizes magical–mythical consciousness. It has enormous implications for the ways corporations operate. Corporations may at last be able to “think”.

However the integral corporation's potential for thinking is different from that of magic, mythical or mental–rational organization. Magical thinking in the organization is dominated by emotion and fixed ideas. Magic and ritual are used in a constant attempt to keep the organization safe in a world where unexplainable things happen. Mythical thinking in the organization operates within a narrative that it is assumed that everyone accepts and that cannot be questioned. Rational thinking in the organization looks at the evidence in an objective way and comes to conclusions about what is true and not true. It can even critically examine the organization’s myths to judge whether they correspond to



reality. Integral thinking, as Gebser understands it, is more than the aggregation of these simpler ways of thinking. It is a new kind of thinking in which the emotion (magic), imagination (myth) and objectivity of the other structures are integrated in an understanding of the world that is complex, fluid and ironic. Information and communication technology has the capacity to flood us not only with information but with information about the information about the information. This only reinforces the need for corporations to develop a fluid and ironic appreciation of the world in which they operate.

We increasingly find corporations, which through the application of information technology and the abandonment of the mechanistic model of organization, appear able to transcend the limitations of ego, sequential time and linear space. However, we find ourselves in the same messy paradox as we were when discussing the rational organization. The structures of consciousness are in constant interaction, and the integral corporation cannot escape from myth any more than the rational corporation can. The rational corporation says "This is the way the world is and the way it has to be" and goes on to relate Apollo's myth of abstract rational structure, role definition and the importance of hierarchy, Athena's myth of shared expertise and participative decision-making or Prometheus myth of salvation through technology. If the integral corporation makes a similar statement, it demonstrates that it is also caught in a myth—Hermes myth of multi-perspectivism, fluidity, relativism and transformation.

### **Life at the Crossroads**

In the condition of liminality and doubt in which we find ourselves, we have a tendency to reach for old certainties, old solutions.

Fundamentalists of all kinds proclaim that they possess the only truth. Managers cling to old ways of managing, based on the rational-mechanistic principles that enabled the achievements of the industrial age. Unfortunately, it is the old certainties and old solutions that have got us into the position we are in. We have to accept that we are living on an edge, that liminality and doubt is where we have to be right now, to accept that perhaps our experience of the world in the times that are coming will be an experience of ambiguity and paradox.

Many individuals and many organizations have arrived at their present state by following a particular narrative path that took them from a known past to a predictable future. Now we find ourselves at a crossroads where we are conscious of other paths crossing the one we have been following. Nationally we have become increasingly aware that the dominant national narrative is only one narrative among many, that our nation has a "herstory" as well as a history, and that there are indigenous and ethnic stories that have been left out of the conventional account of our past. In our personal lives we are conscious that we are entangled in more than one story and that our actions have more than

one meaning. Our corporations are in the same situation, as they are challenged to abandon the illusion that they have a simple definable identity and a simple definable script to follow. They can't even look around the crossroads, choose a clear path and confidently follow it. At the present time, the crossroads is where we are and where we have to be. This need not stop us traveling, but choosing a path no longer sets us on the way to a predictable future. We take the crossroads with us.

Some people view the changes in consciousness signaled by Gebser and by postmodern philosophers such as Lyotard with alarm or despair. Others view them with excitement. Gebser warns us not to view integral consciousness as either innately positive or innately negative. It has, or will have, deficient as well as efficient forms. We might plausibly argue that we can find such deficiency in the groundlessness, radical relativism, fragmentation, cynicism and nihilism commonly associated with postmodernity. Gebser also warns us that we will survive only if we achieve the new integral structure without forfeiting the efficient forms of the previous structures. Archaic, magical, mythical and mental structures of consciousness all experience the world in different ways, but they are all legitimate ways of experiencing it, and we need to experience it in all of these ways. Our present cultural and ecological dilemmas may be a consequence of too long a neglect of them.

Gebser was adamant that his model was not developed within a fantasy of progress. We can, if we like, take Gebser's evidence to support a romantic notion that everything will be all right in the long run, or even that things will get better and better, but that was certainly not Gebser's intention. He was certainly interested in the possibilities of integral consciousness, but he was not making a statement about how things ought to be or how things have to be. He was just looking hard at the complexity of contemporary culture and announcing that he had found a pattern in it.

When we approach a "big" theory like Gebser's, we may find ourselves engaging in a debate with others or ourselves about whether it is objectively "true" or not. We need to remind ourselves with James Hillman that "we are always in one archetypal fantasy or another." We might just as legitimately debate about whether the theory is beautiful, whether it is ethical, whether it is socially responsible, whether it is ecologically or culturally sensitive. All of these different perspectives are grounded in different narratives, different myths, and different "archetypal fantasies".

When Gebser suggests that we are standing uneasily on the borderline between an unsatisfactory past and a threatening future, as rational consciousness disintegrates and a "new factor" emerges which may enable us to avoid disaster, it sounds as though he is just telling us another story. In a sense he is. We cannot avoid being in one fantasy or another. Gebser's theory has its own mythical grounding; it is a way of imagining the universe – what it is, how it works, where we fit in it. Yet

Gebser's story is about transcending the ways we imagine the world through our mythical consciousness and the incomplete truths we construct through our rational consciousness.

The "new factor" he writes about is the capacity to experience reality integrally, not framed in a particular story in the manner of Apollo and the other gods, but in all the stories, in the manner of Hermes. Gebser was very much aware of the limitations of the perspectival thinking which marks our various theories and histories of the future. What he claimed to detect is an emerging capacity to experience the universe as whole, rather than through its the various fragments.

Whether or not Gebser is credible in his observations of the particular direction our consciousness evolution is going, some sort of transformation of our consciousness at the individual and collective level appears to be urgently necessary if we are to survive. Our corporations are key sites for such change.

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Gebser himself avoided referring to “layers” or “levels” of consciousness, on the grounds that the terms were embedded in a spatial, hierarchical metaphor. He argued that his model was not a developmental one, that it was not based on a notion of progress. More recently emerging structures should not be valued as “superior” to earlier ones. Nor should they be regarded as determined by the earlier ones

<sup>ii</sup> Bion, W. (1969) *Experiences in groups*, New York: Tavistock

<sup>iii</sup> The archaic, undifferentiated union of human and environment was first called “participation mystique” by Levy–Bruhl in *La mentalite primitive* (1922). In the face of adverse criticism he later modified his theory, but the phrase has been adopted by many later theorists, to refer to the consciousness both of primal human beings and of newborn infants.

<sup>iv</sup> Neumann, E. (1973 [1954]) *The origins and history of consciousness* Princeton University Press. p. 16. Gebser does not talk about the unconscious, but rather refers to different degrees of consciousness.

<sup>v</sup> Donald, M. (1991) *The origins of the modern mind*. Cambridge: Harvard University press.

<sup>vi</sup> *Ibid.* p. 163.

<sup>vii</sup> Wheatley, M. (1999) *Leadership and the new science*. San Francisco: Berrett–Koehler. p. 128.

<sup>viii</sup> Donald is careful to distinguish between mimesis on the one hand and mimicry and imitation on the other. Mimesis is not mere duplication of another's behaviour as externally observed. It involves intentional representation. When an infant waves her hand or shakes her head she is expressing meaning and feeling, not merely copying an action she has seen. And she performs this action before ever she has the words (or thoughts) to be aware that she is integrating action, meaning and feeling in this way. See Donald. *Ibid.* p.169.

<sup>ix</sup> See J. Jaynes (1979) *The origin of consciousness in the breakdown of the bicameral mind*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

<sup>x</sup> See Egan, K. (1997) *The Educated Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

<sup>xi</sup> E. T. Hall (1976) *Beyond Culture*. New York: Anchor Books. p.72ff. See also (1984) *The dance of life* New York: Anchor Books.

<sup>xii</sup> Schaffer, R. and Thomson, H. (1992): Successful change programs begin with results. *Harvard Business Review*. Jan – Feb 1992.

<sup>xiii</sup> Hofstede, G. (1980) *Culture's consequences*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. pp.114 – 118.

<sup>xiv</sup> Abt, T (1989) *Progress without loss of soul: towards a wholistic approach to modernisation planning*. Willmette, Ohio: Chiron. Publications. p. 264.

<sup>xv</sup> Sampson, I. S (1973) *The sovereign state: the secret history of International Telephone and Telegraph*. NY: Stein and Day.

<sup>xvi</sup> Magic is conventionally distinguished from religion on the basis that whereas magic attempts to change the world directly by the performance of ritual actions, religion appeals to higher beings through prayer and ritual to change the world on our behalf. Religion in this sense is the product of mythical consciousness.

xvii Presentation at Group Dynamics workshop, Clear Mountain, Brisbane Australia, in Sept 1997

xviii See Lovelock, J (2000) *Gaia: a new look at life on earth*. Oxford University Press; Margulis, L., Sagan, D. & Morrison, P. (1997) *Slanted truths: essays on Gaia, symbiosis and evolution*. Copernicus Books; Volk, T. (1997) *Gaia's body: towards a physiology of earth*. Copernicus Books; Maturana, H. & Varela, F. (rev. 1998) *The tree of knowledge: the biological roots of human understanding*. Shambhala Publications; Thompson, W. I. (1991) *Gaia 2: emergence: the new science of becoming*. Lindisfarne Books; Waldrop, M. (1992) *Complexity: the new science at the edge of order and chaos*. Touchstone Books; Kauffman, S. (1995) *At home in the universe: the search for laws of self-organization and complexity*. NY: Oxford University Press.

xix See, for instance, Wheatley, M. (1992) *Leadership and the new science: discovering order in a chaotic world*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler; Zohar, D. *Rewiring the corporate brain: using the new science to rethink how we structure and lead organizations*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler; Sracey, R. (1996) *Complexity and creativity in organizations*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.; Goldstein, J. (1994). *The unshackled organization: facing the challenge of unpredictability through spontaneous reorganization*. Portland, Oregon: Productivity Press.

xx See Kegan, R. (1994) *In over our heads: the mental demands of modern life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,

xxi . Denhardt, R. (1981): *In the shadow of the organization*. Kansas, Regent, p. 38ff.

xxii Stein, M (1992) *Organizational life as spiritual practice*. in M. Stein & J. Hollwitz. *Psyche at work*. Wilmette, OH: Chiron Publications

xxiii Gebser's analysis of the emerging integral structure in the 1940s is in many respects parallel in many respects to the more recent analyses of postmodernity by such commentators as Lyotard and Baudrillard. Like them, he focuses on diversity, multiperspectivism, relativism and process, and the apparent abandonment of dualism, rationalism, hierarchical structures, and all the "grand narratives". However, where the postmodernist thinking leads to fragmentation through the "deconstruction" what has so far passed for reality, Gebser's interest was in integration – in gaining a new, intuitive grasp of the whole.

xxiv "It is of fundamental importance that we clearly distinguish between 'irrational' and 'arational', for this distinction lies at the very heart of our deliberations.... There is a fundamental distinction between the attempt to go beyond the merely measurable, knowing and respecting it while striving to be free from it, and rejecting and disregarding the measurable by regressing to the immoderate and unfathomable chaos of the ambivalent and even fragmented polyvalence of psychic and natural interrelation." *Ibid*. p.147

xxv For a discussion of the implications of time freedom for our experience of difference see J.W. Murphy, and M.C. Jung (1992), Jean Gebser, the commonweal and the politics of difference. In Kramer, *Ibid*. p. 201 – 216.

xxvi Dimensionality is one characteristic by which Gebser distinguishes the structures. The archaic consciousness is zero-dimensional, magical consciousness is one-dimensional, mythical consciousness is two-dimensional, mental/rational consciousness is three-dimensional and integral consciousness is four-dimensional. Jung also, in a number of different ways, insists that the psyche is four-dimensional: e.g. in his discussion of the trinity-quaternity and his discussion of the superior and inferior functions of the psyche.