

# INTEGRAL REVIEW

A Transdisciplinary and Transcultural Journal For New Thought, Research, and Praxis

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*IR Editors*



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# Editorial

## A Time of Transition

As we welcome you to the fifth semi-annual issue of *Integral Review* (IR), I would like to point to signs that mark a time of transition for this journal. Some are small, like shifting our table of contents headings to more clearly identify which works are peer reviewed, and changing the spacing between articles' paragraphs. Others are more obvious, like the ability and willingness to publish even longer works than previously, in addition to the ongoing array of works published. Some transitions are in process and less visible. For example, we are working to evolve IR's structure to reflect its degree of engagement from others, and making behind the scene shifts in our ability to better understand and realize the goals we set out to accomplish. We believe we are also becoming more effective in articulating for ourselves and to authors what is required for their work to make significant contributions to the discourse we are supporting (resulting in the publication of fewer peer reviewed articles in this issue). My naming this as a time of transition also reflects a sense of growth in the community of conversation which we are a part of, and how I perceive what lies beyond the horizon.

This feeling of transition arises from several sources. One is seeing the growth in the number of submissions over a broader range of topics that reflect an evolving quality of discourse. Another is seeing submissions begin to draw on and integrate work from past IR articles, furthering the cohesion and coherence of formal discourse within the journal. In essence, there is a feeling of maturation, and there are many signs of growth for the future.

We at IR like to see our mission, (to publish material that applies developmental approaches and employs metasystematic or other stages of integral thinking in the process of doing so), shared by others. One such instance that we are aware of is forthcoming in IR Advisory Board member Ervin Laszlo's journal, *World Futures: The Journal of General Evolution*. With Michael Commons, IR editor Sara Ross is co-editing a special issue invited by *World Futures* on postformal thought and the Model of Hierarchical Complexity, a general theory of development. We look forward to seeing the issue come out in 2008.

Another effort with a mission that resonates with IR's is the emerging field of Integral Studies, which is showing important signs of maturing. I want to congratulate Sean Esbjorn-Hargens and his crew at John F. Kennedy University (JFKU) for gaining formal WASC accreditation (the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the formal peer review accrediting body for higher education in California) for their new Masters in Integral Studies program. It would be hard to overstate the significance of this accomplishment, and it establishes a basis for bringing greater degrees of academic credibility to Integral Studies.

Another outgrowth of this work is the hosting of a conference, next summer, on Integral Theory by JFKU and Integrate Institute – <http://www.holons-news.com/node/86>. I know that some of us from IR are planning to participate, and we look forward to meeting some of our

readers at the conference. These events signal transitions in this community, which is one of those served by IR.

While there is transition and maturation in the air, there is also continuity. Our readership continues to grow steadily, and we are heartened by supportive feedback from many quarters. We are also having a very active discussion in our online forum of Gary Hampson's article from the last issue. While it is an invited forum, visitors can look through the postings here - <http://global-arina.org/phpBB/index.php>. These forums provide an opportunity to explore topics from IR articles in more depth and engage authors about their work. We are happy to be supporting an active and ongoing community of conversation in this way.

As before, part of our goal is to foster transdisciplinary discourse and critical public dialogue on issues of relevance to our mission. Thus IR invites responses to and reviews of articles, books or other works published in IR and other journals, including AQAL. We hope this contributes to cross-fertilizing new thought, research, and praxis for healthy change and development in our societies and relations.

## On the Contents of Issue 5

We begin this issue with what is in many respects a groundbreaking contribution to our understanding of the evolution of consciousness. Jennifer Gidley's *The Evolution of Consciousness as a Planetary Imperative: An Integration of Integral Perspectives* is both a panoramic and an in-depth examination of the evolution of human consciousness drawn primarily from the perspectives of Rudolph Steiner, Jean Gebser and Ken Wilber. Her hermeneutical analysis and integration of their writings on this subject weave a rich and rigorous picture. The scope of this work also covers a range of related fields. We think it sets some strong foundations for moving academic discourse on the evolution of consciousness. Further, the conclusions emerging from this "integration of integrals" offer a tremendous sense of the opportunities for transformation that integral consciousness offers. We are very pleased to publish this monograph and its three equally rich appendices.

Next, Martin Matušík offers an essay on *Towards an Integral Critical Theory of the Present Age*. This piece builds on work done by past philosophers such as Habermas to identify a three-pronged model of material, socio-political, and spiritual critique of the present age. His model of an integral critical theory offers a way to transcend views that would limit discourse in these domains: he shows how appropriate critiques can be brought to each domain of human needs. This results in showing alternatives to current attitudes that can enable us to address current issues better.

My contribution to this issue of IR is in the form of a lengthy overview and response to Otto Scharmer's book, *Theory U. Leading from the Future as It Emerges. The Social Technology of Presencing*. The overview is intended as a sort of a "Cliff Notes," or highlight version of the book, as well as to entice readers to experience it for themselves.

This is followed by a short reflective essay from Josef San Dou, *Sent to Play on the Other Team*. This piece illustrates how a developmental view along with a different philosophy can

make a difference in the lives of children engaged in youth sports. The lessons drawn from the experience are also shown to apply to a wider set of situations in life.

*Art and the Future: An Interview with Suzi Gablik by Russ Volckmann* continues his series of unique interviews for IR. This conversation covers a wide range of topics related to Gablik's art and art critic career, venturing into the area of integral theory and its potential to help us understand the current world situation. Gablik also challenges us to be realists and walk the fine line between unwarranted optimism about the future and cynical pessimism.

Jan Inglis presents a brief examination of how one area of public discourse is struggling to evolve. In *Reactivity to Climate Change*, she demonstrates that while the content of conversation around climate change appears to have shifted, the underlying structure of the conversation has not. Her examples clearly illustrate how this phenomenon is stuck in a dualistic dynamic, and Inglis offers a possible way forward.

The issue concludes with a collection of short contributions from IR editors. Over the past three years we have learned a great deal about our craft and our roles in helping shape public discourse related to transdisciplinary and integral approaches to theory and practice. Various conversations among us led to realizing that readers, authors and potential authors might find it interesting to hear some of things we individually think about as we reflect on our work with IR.

As *Integral Review* continues through this time of transition, we invite you to engage with us in all the venues we provide: reading and sharing the journal with friends and colleagues, providing feedback and/or participating in our online forums, volunteering as external reviewers, and of course submitting your contributions for publication. We appreciate the continued support that we have had, and look forward to the future.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Reams  
Editor-in Chief  
*Integral Review*

# The Evolution of Consciousness as a Planetary Imperative: An *Integration* of Integral Views

Jennifer Gidley

**Abstract:** In this article I aim to broaden and deepen the evolution of consciousness discourse by integrating the integral theoretic narratives of Rudolf Steiner, Jean Gebser, and Ken Wilber, who each point to the emergence of new ways of thinking that could address the complex, critical challenges of our planetary moment. I undertake a wide scan of the evolution discourse, noting it is dominantly limited to biology-based notions of human origins that are grounded in scientific materialism. I then *broaden* the discourse by introducing integral evolutionary theories using a transdisciplinary epistemology to work between, across and beyond diverse disciplines. I note the conceptual breadth of Wilber's integral evolutionary narrative in transcending both scientism and epistemological isolationism. I also draw attention to some limitations of Wilber's integral project, notably his undervaluing of Gebser's actual text, and the substantial omission of the pioneering contribution of Steiner, who, as early as 1904 wrote extensively about the evolution of consciousness, including the imminent emergence of a new stage. I enact a *deepening* of integral evolutionary theory by honoring the significant yet undervalued theoretic components of participation/enactment and aesthetics/artistry via Steiner and Gebser, as a complement to Wilber. To this end, I undertake an in-depth hermeneutic dialogue between their writings utilizing *theoretic bricolage*, a multi-mode methodology that weaves between and within diverse and overlapping perspectives. The hermeneutic methodology emphasizes interpretive textual analysis with the aim of deepening understanding of the individual works and the relationships among them. This analysis is embedded in an epic but pluralistic narrative that spans the entire human story through various previous movements of consciousness, arriving at a new emergence at the present time. I also discuss the relationship between these narratives and contemporary academic literature, culminating in a substantial consideration of research that identifies and/or enacts new stage(s) or movements of consciousness. In particular, I highlight the extensive adult developmental psychology research that identifies several stages of *postformal thinking*, and recent critical, ecological and philosophical literature that identifies an emerging *planetary consciousness*. In summary, my research reveals an interpretation of scientific and other evidence that points beyond the formal, modernist worldview to an emerging *postformal-integral-planetary* consciousness. I posit that a broader academic consideration of such an *integration* of integral theoretic narratives could potentially broaden the general evolution discourse beyond its current biological bias. The article concludes with a rewinding of narrative threads, reflecting on the narrators, the journey, and the language of the discourse. Appendixes A and B explore the theoretical implications of the emergence of postformal-integral-planetary consciousness for a reframing of modernist conceptions of time and space. Appendix C holds an aesthetic lens to the evolution of consciousness through examples from the genealogy of writing.

**Keywords:** Aesthetics, evolution of consciousness, futures, Gebser, integral theory, language, macrohistory, narrative, participation, planetary, postformal, Steiner, Wilber, space, time, writing.

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## Preface

*Before introducing my research, I wish to provide a brief context regarding myself, my interests, and my passion for this research. Although I have been a lifelong, activist-optimist at heart, I am stirred by the urgency of our times and the challenges we currently face as a species. We live in critical times—times of apparently human-created complexities, challenges and unprecedented change. In all the major domains of our lives the seams are beginning to fray.*

**Environmentally:** *We have altered the biosphere to the extent that our planetary homeland<sup>1</sup> may in the foreseeable future become increasingly inhospitable for human habitation. The Fourth Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has this to say in its November 2007 Report, just released in Valencia, Spain.*

Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea level. (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007, p. 1)

**Economically:** *We have a growing inequity of wealth distribution both between and within nations. Ervin László (2006) refers to the unsustainability of affluent consumption and the unsustainability of wealth distribution. Referring to relevant global statistics, he summarizes the interrelationships.*

The richest 20 per cent earn 90 times the income of the poorest 20 per cent, consume 11 times as much energy, eat 11 times as much meat, have 49 times the number of telephones, and own 145 times the number of cars. The net worth of 500 billionaires equals the net worth of half the world population. (p. 16)

**Psycho-socially:** *With regard to the psycho-social climate, my own research (Gidley, 2005a) in the area of youth futures has uncovered disturbing trends in the mental health and well-being of young people. I ask myself: What is the value of a society if it is making its children and young people sick?*

Comparative studies (OECD [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development] countries) indicate that when the figures for all mental health disorders are combined (including ADHD, [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder], Conduct Disorder, Depression, Anxiety, etc), as many as 18-22% of children and adolescents suffer from one or more of these disorders. (p. 19)

*Several contemporary ecologists, educators, philosophers and scientists point to an epistemological crisis—or crisis of consciousness—at the heart of our planetary dilemma (Earley, 1997; Gangadean, 2006a; László, 2006; Miller, 1993; Montuori, 1999; Morin, 2001a; Morin & Kern, 1999; Slaughter & Inayatullah, 2000; Swimme & Tucker, 2006; Wilber, 2001a). Many researchers from a range of interests—such as macrohistory, philosophy, physics and developmental psychology—call on the notion of the evolution of consciousness as a concept*

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<sup>1</sup> See Edgar Morin's planetary manifesto *Homeland Earth* (Morin & Kern, 1999).

*from which to explore possible ways through our epistemological crisis. At the outset, I wish to situate myself as researcher<sup>2</sup> within this global systemic shift<sup>3</sup> and to dedicate my research to the planetary effort currently underway among critical-scholar-activists—or transformative intellectuals<sup>4</sup>—to consciously shift the global epistemic paradigm from one of fear and fragmentation to one of hope and integration. This paper comprises the central analysis section of a larger research project. The larger project begins with the youth problematique—the voices of youth who sense a spiritual vacuum in our society—and the inadequacy of the modernist model of formal education to address our planetary crisis. My research journey then takes me to other, more idealistic, more integral philosophical worlds where I dive into the origins of our human story. It is here that I ask the Foucaultian question.<sup>5</sup> Why did Western thought, science and philosophy separate the idea of spirit from humanity in its reconstruction of its own history? This central question inspires and drives my research as presented in this paper. The final part of my larger project returns to my pragmatic ground of action—educational transformation—the educational imperative of postformal-integral-planetary consciousness (Gidley, 2007a).*

## 1. Introduction

There are periods in human and cultural evolution when humanity passes through such fundamental transformations that our reality shifts and new patterns of thought are required to make sense of the unfolding human drama . . . The profound transformation we are now witnessing has been emerging on a global scale over millennia and has matured to a tipping point and rate of acceleration that has radically altered and will continue to alter our human condition in every aspect. We must therefore expand our perspective and call forth unprecedented narrative powers to name, diagnose, and articulate this shift. (Gangadean, 2006b, p. 382)

This paper foregrounds the *evolution of consciousness* as a planetary imperative if we are to survive and thrive as a species on our earthly home. The notion that human consciousness *has* evolved is a largely undisputed claim.<sup>6</sup> However, the notion that human consciousness *is currently evolving*, in such a way that we can *consciously participate* in this process, is an emergent theme in academic research. Integral philosopher Ashok Gangadean in the opening quotation encapsulates what many integral theorists have been voicing over the past decade. It is this integral research on emergent movement(s)<sup>7</sup> of consciousness that I am referring to as the

<sup>2</sup> My complex interests in this research arise from my various roles and experience as a psychologist, educator at both school and university levels, futures researcher and mother.

<sup>3</sup> Philosopher Roland Benedikter uses the term *Global Systemic Shift* to cohere the complex interplay between the different—but coalescing—roots and streams of change reflected in the current political, cultural, religious and economic symptoms (Benedikter, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> See Giroux's critical pedagogical approach: teacher as transformative intellectual (Giroux, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> Based on Foucault's question asked in relation to the Greek, *Gnothi Seauton*, discussed below.

<sup>6</sup> Notwithstanding the evolution vs. creationism debate, still ongoing in education in the USA.

<sup>7</sup> Gebser uses the term *structure* to clearly distinguish from the controversial use in his times of terms such as *stage* or *level*. Wilber, also drawing on the adult developmental psychology research, uses the terms *stage* and *level* to stress the developmental nature of consciousness. Steiner uses similar terms to Wilber. Given the contemporary discussion within integral and transpersonal theory surrounding structuralism and post-structuralism (Ferrer, 2002; Wilber, 2005a)—which space does not allow me to

*evolution of consciousness discourse*.<sup>8</sup> This research points to the emergence of a new structure, stage(s)<sup>9</sup> or movement of consciousness that has been referred to by various terms, most notably, *postformal*, *integral* and *planetary*.<sup>10</sup>

The major focus of the research reported here is to facilitate a broadening and deepening of the evolution of consciousness discourse, particularly within integral theory. My aim is to contribute to the development and enactment of integral theory, by emphasizing the integration of the whole person through identifying the significance of *participatory* and *aesthetic*—in addition to *conceptual*—theoretic components. This is approached by an interpretive analysis and integration of three significant integral theorists, Rudolf Steiner, Jean Gebser and Ken Wilber.

The research reported here is part of a larger research project,<sup>11</sup> which in itself is part of my broader life-work-passion<sup>12</sup>—within which I have identified a number of complex theoretical and methodological issues and challenges in comprehensively researching the evolution of consciousness. These issues and challenges will be summarized later in this introduction. Briefly, this research began with a broad scan of the evolution of consciousness literature to contextualize it within the broader evolution discourse. This preliminary review exposed several gaps and biases in the discourse to date—as will be discussed further below. This paper seeks to expose some of these gaps and to open new questions in relation to how they might be addressed. Rather

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enter into—I have chosen to use the term *movement(s) of consciousness* as a contribution to this terminological dilemma, when I am not referring directly to the terms of the others. *Movement of consciousness* is a poetic-conceptual phrase that was used by Hegel, Goethe and Sri Aurobindo, to express something of the complexity I am trying to elucidate in *my* contribution to evolution-of-consciousness theory.

<sup>8</sup> By the term *evolution of consciousness discourse*, I am primarily referring to the growing literature from various domains that posit a movement—or movements—or consciousness. A distinction can be made between literature that discuss the evolution of consciousness *per se* and literature that enacts a new type of consciousness without conceptualizing it as such (Gidley, 2007a). This distinction is discussed more fully towards the end of this paper.

<sup>9</sup> Issues surrounding the debate over whether there is one—or several—stage(s) beyond Piaget’s formal operations, will be addressed to some degree later in this paper. This is a matter primarily concerning individual psychological development and although there are parallels with cultural evolution, it is also important not to conflate the two domains.

<sup>10</sup> These terms and others will be discussed in due course.

<sup>11</sup> Although the research presented in this paper has been initially undertaken as part of Doctoral research, it became evident that its potential scope will extend far beyond this and several additional post-doctoral papers are already in preparation. (See also Preface).

<sup>12</sup> After two decades of academic and professional experience in psychology and education, I began to engage over the last decade, in futures research in education—mainstream, Steiner and integral (Gidley, 1998b, 1998c, 2002b, 2004a; Gidley & Hampson, 2005, In Press); evolution of consciousness (Gidley, 2002c, 2005b, 2006, 2007b); and the planet-wide impact on young people of globalization (Gidley, 2000a, 2001c, 2001d, 2002a, 2004c). My research uncovered both a *youth problematic*—linked to fragmented and limited worldviews underpinning modernist education models, and the dominant media culture of fear and negative future scenarios—and also ways forward towards futures of active hope and reintegration (Gidley, 1998a, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2001a, 2001e, 2003, 2004b, 2005a, In Press; Gidley & Hampson, In Press).

than attempting an expanded overview of the entire evolution of consciousness discourse, my research engages in an in-depth focus on Steiner,<sup>13</sup> Gebser and Wilber. Based on the theoretic narratives of these three, and much of the evolution of consciousness discourse that will be discussed more fully later, my research takes as its provisional starting point the notion that a new movement of consciousness *is* emerging at the species level, and that it is a planetary phenomenon. However, my research also seeks to broaden the general evolutionary narrative surrounding our human journey, through introducing and integrating the integral theoretic narratives of Steiner, Wilber and Gebser. This reflects a circularity of methodology—referred to as a hermeneutic circle—which does not set out to empirically prove a point, but to deepen understanding. This requires the reader to hold certain questions in mind until the completion of the paper when a deeper understanding is expected to arise. In the penultimate section of the paper, which deals more concretely with the evidence for the emergence of a new movement of consciousness, a more in-depth study of the relevant literature is undertaken.

The paper takes the form of a narrative that I, the researcher, weave from the theoretic narratives of the three authors. The narrative style I am using could be described in a similar way to Foucault's genealogy "as a unique and hybrid blend . . . incorporating accounts based on verifiable "facts" and documents as well as rhetorically-laden arrangement of this material" (Biebricher, 2005, p. 12). The increasing use of narrative in both qualitative research and also the sciences is a postmodern phenomenon, arising from the recognition of the contingent, contextual nature of all "truth claims" (Biebricher, 2005; Bocchi & Ceruti, 2002; Chase, 2005; de Beer, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Heikkinen, Huttunen, & Kakkori, 2000; Poletti, 2003).<sup>14</sup>

In brief, the topic needs to be approached in a transdisciplinary<sup>15</sup> manner, informed by a multitude of theoretical perspectives, yet this often does not occur. My theoretical approach is transdisciplinary, strongly informed by integral theory, futures studies and feminist perspectives. My methodological approach is informed by postformal *bricolage*,<sup>16</sup> a complex, multi-method

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<sup>13</sup> Steiner's work has been particularly undervalued in the integral academic community, perhaps partially related to Wilber's substantial non-inclusion of his work. This is a significant omission given that my research suggests that Steiner was the first researcher to begin writing, early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, about the emergence of a new movement of consciousness. This finding is further discussed later in the paper.

<sup>14</sup> As the writings of many postmodern philosophers have demonstrated, many of the claims that have been taken as *facts* in science are informed by multiple contextual factors (such as historicity, culture, gender, epistemological stance, etc) (Benedikter, 2005; Derrida, 1998; Foucault, 2005; Hampson, 2007; Lyotard, 2004). A postmodern search for truth—if there is such a thing—requires a continual hermeneutic dialogue between *truth claims* and contextual variables. My hermeneutic analysis endeavors to discern between *truth claims* and *contextual biases*—particularly where the narratives disagree with commonly-held, scientific *facts*. Potential contextual biases of the three authors and myself are discussed below.

<sup>15</sup> "As the prefix "trans" indicates, *transdisciplinarity* concerns that which *is* at once *between* the disciplines, *across* the different disciplines, and *beyond* all discipline. Its goal is *the understanding of the present world*, of which one of the imperatives is the unity of knowledge" (Nicolescu, 2002, p. 44). Leading researcher in transdisciplinarity, Basarab Nicolescu, posits three axioms of transdisciplinarity: "The existence of levels of reality; the logic of the included middle; the axiom of complexity" (as cited in Volckmann, 2007, p. 82).

<sup>16</sup> The term *bricolage*, is attributed to anthropologist, Claude Levi- Strauss by educational researchers seeking a postformal methodology to account for such factors as complexity, creativity, and multidimensionality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004). More recently, evolutionary

approach which allows for the organic incorporation of a range of methods and analysis tools at different stages of a research project (Kincheloe, 2001, 2005; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004; Kincheloe, Steinberg, & Hinchey, 1999). Within this, my primary analysis method in this paper is hermeneutics—an interpretive, qualitative research method, which originally developed out of interpretation of Biblical texts. Hermeneutics has been gradually refined during the last two hundred years to become a significant research method for the social sciences, as an alternative to empirical research, which in many cases—such as for this research—is inapplicable. A major feature of hermeneutics is that it involves a circling of understanding between the whole and the parts—and thus in my view is ideally suited to this research, honoring its holonic nature. The hermeneutic circle, also referred to by hermeneutic philosopher Richard Palmer (1969) as a “circle of contextual meaning,” (p. 17) is built up in the process of reading the work. As Palmer explains, “somehow, by a dialectical<sup>17</sup> process, a partial understanding is used to understand still further, like using pieces of a puzzle to figure out what is missing” (p. 25). In complex work of this nature, a second reading is always helpful in building the circle of contextual meaning. This material will be further discussed below under theoretical and methodological issues.

Because of the potential vastness of this research territory, it has been necessary to limit the focus in a number of ways. In brief, the meta-process of the first stage of the research—which in itself has involved some hermeneutic circling in my own interpretation and understanding—has involved an expansion and contraction through three major steps:

- An exploratory scan of the entire research territory that informs the evolution of consciousness to discern its overall theoretic shape;
- A preliminary evaluation of its scope and comprehensiveness, aimed at discerning gaps and biases;
- A focusing of attention on the gaps and biases that I discerned.

This paper is concerned primarily with the third point. The criteria I have used for exclusion and inclusion of other research are discussed below under methodological issues. As a result of this process, I have chosen to focus primarily on the theoretic narratives contributed to the evolution of consciousness discourse by Steiner, Gebser and Wilber.<sup>18</sup> In this way, I am enacting

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theorists have used *bricolage* as a metaphor for representing evolutionary processes that are beyond reductionism, and accident. The tinkering involved in evolutionary bricolage embraces biological principles of self-organization, emergence and creativity (Montuori, Combs, & Richards, 2004; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1993). Interestingly, from a post-structuralist perspective, Derrida also discusses the value of Levi-Strauss’s use of bricolage in critical analysis of all discourse (Derrida, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> The methodology of hermeneutics is of potential value to integral and postformal researchers in that it incorporates several features of postformal thinking—such as complexity, reflectivity, holon theory and dialectics.

<sup>18</sup> I wish to note here that my narrative is infused implicitly with the spirit of Sri Aurobindo’s integral project. I acknowledge the significant contribution of his philosophical and spiritual writings to my deeper understanding of the issues discussed in this paper. I have not formally included his work as a major thread however as I do not feel my grasp of his vast work is sufficiently advanced to put it into writing as yet. I believe though that there is strong alignment between his work and those of the other major thinkers presented here, particularly in terms of the emergence of a new structure of consciousness and the significance of our times in witnessing and participating in this. I am also inspired and encouraged

a conscious bias, by privileging narratives that have formerly been marginalized in the evolution discourse.

In brief, my decision to focus primarily on these three researchers resulted from the following considerations:

- All three have made major contributions to conceptualizations of the evolution of consciousness yet have been marginalized in the dominant—predominantly biology-based—discourse on evolution.
- As significant contributors to the integral theory<sup>19</sup> knowledge-base, both Gebser and Wilber are also well recognized in terms of their contributions to the evolution of consciousness, yet Gebser is often better “known” for what Wilber has said about him than in his own right.<sup>20</sup> My own study of Gebser has led to the perception that this is insufficient and that Gebser’s original writings have far more to contribute to the discourse than is generally acknowledged.
- Steiner’s substantial contribution to the conceptualization of the evolution of consciousness is an unfortunate omission in Wilber’s otherwise comprehensive work.<sup>21</sup> Notably, Gebser also overlooked Steiner’s work even though there are major convergences between them, as this research shows. Steiner’s work has also been

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by the diversity of other pioneering contributors, such as, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Henri Bergson and Erich Neumann, as well as contemporaries such as Ervin László, Edgar Morin, Ashok Gangadean, Robert MacDermott, Richard Tarnas, Basarab Nicolescu, Alfonso Montuori, Peter Russell, Brian Swimme and many others who will be included where relevant.

<sup>19</sup> After Hampson (2007), I am using the term *theory* broadly, to connote *theoretic narrative*. The emergent role of narrative as a qualitative methodology will be discussed below.

<sup>20</sup> A further difficulty with Wilber’s interpretation of Gebser is that most of his sourcing of Gebser has come from one minor article (Gebser, 1972), or from a secondary source, Feuerstein (1987). Wilber is quite open about this situation, however it does raise the issue of how thoroughly Gebser’s original work has been covered (Wilber, 1996a, p. viii; 2000a, p.606, notes 36,37).

<sup>21</sup> Apart from an occasional mention within a list of other people, the main two references to Steiner that I have been able to locate in Wilber’s writings include the following, both from *Integral Psychology* (Wilber, 2000b):

Steiner (1861-1925) was an extraordinary pioneer (during that ‘genesis period’ of Fechner, Jung, James, etc) and one of the most comprehensive psychological and philosophical visionaries of his time. The founder of anthroposophy, he authored over two hundred books on virtually every conceivable subject. (p. 43)

I am often asked what I think of Steiner’s writings. Although I have a great deal of respect for his pioneering contributions, I have not found the details of his presentations to be that useful. I believe recent orthodox research has offered better and more accurate maps of pre-personal to personal development, and I believe the meditative traditions offer more sophisticated maps of transpersonal development. Still, one can only marvel at the amount of visionary material he produced, and his overall vision is as moving as one could imagine. (Note 11, p. 228)

So, although Wilber appears to take a positive view of Steiner’s work, he has not embraced it in detail, which unfortunately adds to the marginalization of Steiner’s work in integral theory. I must also note that it is not easy to get a meaningful grasp of Steiner’s corpus without a great deal of immersion in large volumes of work. This is one of the dilemmas this research hopes to counter-balance.

overlooked by many contemporary integral theorists<sup>22</sup> and in my view deserves more consideration.

- No other substantial academic research has been undertaken that explores the relationships among the works of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber.<sup>23</sup> Although this may not in itself be significant, the richness and depth that is brought to the discourse by an in-depth inclusion of Steiner's and Gebser's original research, alongside Wilber's is highly significant, as demonstrated in this paper.<sup>24</sup> Through my hermeneutic translation efforts, my research creates conceptual *lines of flight*<sup>25</sup> between the three narratives.
- The major thrust of Wilber's writing is cognitive/conceptual.<sup>26</sup> By contrast, the narratives of Steiner and Gebser add important other dimensions to the enrichment of integral theory. Both Gebser and Steiner highlight the importance of participatory<sup>27</sup> enactment of integrality and of the artistic/aesthetic<sup>28</sup> domain in the development of new movements of consciousness. Gebser's approach is also self-reflectively participatory in that he enacts integrality in his very writing.
- My integrative intent is also to offer interlinking counterweights to the main critiques that have been offered to each. Critiques of both Steiner's and Gebser's work are that it is too dense and difficult to read, whereas Wilber's work is easily accessible to contemporary readers. By contrast the critique of cognicentrism in Wilber's work could be complemented by the participatory and aesthetic features of Steiner's and Gebser's narratives.
- From a critical-feminist-*relational*-perspective, I also note that many members of the interpretive communities<sup>29</sup> that are inspired by the works of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber have a tendency toward isolationism with an uncritical focus on what may be *superior* about one theory or another. My interest in this regard is to assist in the building of conceptual bridges between their approaches.

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<sup>22</sup> Several integral philosophers/theorists have indicated the potential value of Steiner's writings to integral theory, including Benedikter, Gangadean, Lachman, McDermott, Ron Miller, Tarnas, and Thompson to name a few.

<sup>23</sup> Comprehensive philosophical research has been undertaken on Steiner and Wilber by Benedikter but this is not yet available in English.

<sup>24</sup> This is part of my broad research interest in *integrating the integrals*.

<sup>25</sup> *Lines of flight* is a poetic Deleuzian term I am favoring, in preference to the more mechanistic notion of conceptual *bridges* (St. Pierre, 2004).

<sup>26</sup> Wilber's work has been critiqued as too cognicentric.

<sup>27</sup> This would extend recent work on the importance of participatory notions in integral theory (Ferrer, 2002; Ferrer, Romero, & Albareda, 2005; Hampson, 2007).

<sup>28</sup> This would also extend recent research on the significance of creative/artistic/aesthetic expression in integral theory (Goerner, 2004; Montuori, Combs, & Richards, 2004; Roy, 2006b).

<sup>29</sup> All three of these authors have large global communities who draw on their work with apparently little conversation between them, either academically or professionally. I do not believe that isolationist approaches any longer serve the planetary community, given that all these approaches have much to contribute to the challenges our planetary community faces.

- Finally, I am interested in introducing to a wider research community my tentative exploration of the relationship between Steiner's heterodox, spiritual-scientific research methods and László's *Akashic*, or *in*-formation, field.<sup>30</sup>

I wish to also make explicit my awareness that some of the heterodox methods and unorthodox findings of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber—from the perspective of a worldview of scientific materialism—may be quite challenging to some formal academic readers. However, my belief in the significance of my research, the support I have found in associated literature and the urgency I feel in relation to our times, leads me to pursue this project of privileging the marginal—regardless. Furthermore, I am confident that my methodology, particularly the hermeneutic contextualization, provides a means of buffering the bias I am deliberately enacting, by making it explicit.

The organization of this paper is structured such that it is a reflection of the theme that it addresses. It is organized with regard to Gebser's five structures of consciousness—archaic, magic, mythical, mental and integral—through which he characterized and enacted integral-aperspectival consciousness explicitly and artistically. My intention is to model Gebser's enactment of integral-aperspectival by using four dimensions of primary content—presented, for academic convenience, as the major narrative followed by three appendixes.<sup>31</sup> While the four dimensions of my article will each foreground one of Gebser's structures—excluding archaic<sup>32</sup>—all five structures will be explored hermeneutically and gradually elucidated throughout all aspects of this four-part article. Within the main paper, which takes the form of a narrative, there are several sections, one<sup>33</sup> for each structure of consciousness. Each of these major sections include the following sub-sections:

- An academic context,
- A discussion of terminology issues,
- A list of key features, some of which are discussed in detail, including some deficient<sup>34</sup> features,
- A summary of contemporary relevance, and
- A section on the transition to the next structure.

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<sup>30</sup> The fact that Laszlo's Akashic Field theory underpins his entire *integral theory of everything* makes this component of my research even more significant (László, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> These four interwoven pieces may, however, be read in the order of preference of the reader, as neither the content nor the style presupposes a linear sequence but rather a spherical counter-illumination.

<sup>32</sup> As will be demonstrated, what is referred to as archaic consciousness is pre-conscious and thus cannot be enacted in an academic paper at least in terms of content demarcation.

<sup>33</sup> In addition, there will be one additional section between the magic and mythical sections, because there are some complex differences between the three narratives in relation to the timing of this transition. Finally, there is a concluding section that evaluates the narratives and draws all the threads together.

<sup>34</sup> Gebser uses the terms *efficient* and *deficient* when discussing the structures of consciousness—beginning with the magic structure. I will discuss the issues surrounding these concepts at that point.

This systematic arrangement of the material reflects a postmodern presentation form creating a rhythmical pattern of repetition and difference (Deleuze, 1994). My writing is also multi-layered and can be read at a number of different levels of engagement.

Authentic integration requires a depth of understanding. This is unlikely to occur without a depth of engagement with the material. Because my aim is not a superficial syncretism but rather an authentic integration, I have included a substantial number of textual extracts from all three authors. Hence the paper is very lengthy. However, the concentration on textual analysis is also a fundamental aspect of the type of hermeneutic methodology that I am employing.

I am aware that this paper demands a great deal of the readers, because of its length, its complexity and the hermeneutic requirement that the reader hold a lot of information in mind before a resolution of understanding arises. However, the notion of evolution of consciousness is beginning to matter to many people as their self-reflective, criticality awakens. Surely it will also matter that we give to the discourse the broadest and deepest possible attention. As a woman, mother, psychologist, educator and futures researcher, I know there are very important threads in these marginalized theoretic narratives that the world as it stands would benefit from. My research passion is to find ways to bring to the attention of those who hold the power in the evolution of consciousness discourse the treasures hiding in this overlooked knowledge. Of course, the works I am drawing from—particularly the vast *opera*<sup>35</sup> of Steiner and Wilber—can be read from many perspectives and mine could be opposed or critiqued from any number of these. As a point of self-reflection, however, at the end of the day, this is *my* narrative; *my* hermeneutic interpretation; *my* tapestry—with all its beauty and its flaws; all its strengths and weaknesses.

In summary, this paper provides an in-depth hermeneutic analysis of the writings of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber. My intention is to broaden and deepen the scope of the evolution of consciousness discourse, particularly its development within integral theory. In addition to the conceptual breadth of Wilber's theories, the major dimensions of participation/enactment and aesthetics/artistry can be more fully included via the narratives of Steiner and Gebser. My intention is to contribute to the development of integral theory, by emphasizing the integration of the whole person through highlighting—in addition to integral *conceptualization*—the *participatory* and *aesthetic* features as significant integral theoretic components.

## **A Brief Background to the Evolution of Consciousness Discourse**

*The significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking with which we created them.* (Einstein)

Before proceeding, I will briefly characterize my usage of the key terms *consciousness* and *evolution*. However, a deeper sense of the meaning of the terms will only become clear as the paper unfolds. Additional key terms will be discussed in the next major section of this paper, *A*

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<sup>35</sup> Each of Steiner and Wilber has produced a vast *opus* of work. The plural of *opus* is *opera*. I rather like the semiotic hint in this term.

*Macrohistorical Planetary Tapestry: The Fascinating Integral Narratives of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber.*

By *consciousness*, I am referring to the type of complex consciousness that is expressed by human thinking as it develops through various expressions over time, both historico-culturally (phylogenesis) and within individual psycho-spiritual development (ontogenesis). This is referred to in the consciousness studies literature as *phenomenal consciousness* or *qualia*, which is understandably described by David Chalmers as the *hard problem*, as distinct from simple perceptual consciousness which Chalmers calls the *easy problem*<sup>36</sup> (1995, 1996). It includes, but is not limited to, cognition. My perspective on consciousness, which will be developed throughout this paper in the light of an elucidation of Steiner's, Gebser's and Wilber's views, departs from much of the current, neurobiology-based, consciousness studies literature which claims that consciousness is dependent primarily on the brain for its existence.<sup>37</sup>

My usage of the term *evolution* cannot be *nutshelled* here but will emerge throughout this paper. At the very least my meaning includes biological, socio-cultural and philosophical discourses. The notion of socio-cultural evolution has been contested since the abuses arising from 19<sup>th</sup> century socio-biological models—such as Social Darwinism—during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Anthropological critiques include claims that cultural evolution models are ethnocentric, unilineal, too oriented towards technological materialism, privileging progress rather than preservation and speculative rather than evidence based. How this narrative addresses these issues will be discussed under theoretical issues. A range of disciplines and discourses that can inform evolution of consciousness are indicated in Figure 1 below.

The evolution<sup>38</sup> of consciousness discourse has a relatively short history in the academy.<sup>39</sup> The notion was originally seeded by several German Idealists and Romantics towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Almost a century before Charles Darwin published his *Origin of Species* (1859/1998), Johann Gottfried von Herder published *This Too a Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity* (1774/2002), setting out the notion that “there exist radical mental differences between historical periods, that people's concepts, beliefs, sensations, etc. differ in

<sup>36</sup> Chalmers (1996) makes it quite clear that psychological properties like learning and memory, while posing some philosophical issues, are primarily small technical issues that can be addressed through research and are thus an ‘easy problem.’ In contrast, the ‘hard problem’ arises because the “impressive progress of the physical and cognitive sciences has not shed significant light on the question of how and why cognitive functioning is accompanied by conscious experience. The progress in understanding the mind has almost entirely centered on the explanation of behavior. This progress leaves the question of conscious experience untouched” (p. 25).

<sup>37</sup> This is referred to in the consciousness science discourse as *epiphenomenalism*. “[This] is the view that mental events are caused by physical events in the brain, but have no effects upon any physical events.” <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epiphenomenalism/>

<sup>38</sup> In addition, the meaning of the term *evolution* in this paper should be seen to sublate within itself two other terms that are often seen to be in contradiction to it, these being *emergence* and *involution*. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss, however, this is the subject of a further paper (Gidley, 2007c).

<sup>39</sup> There is also a longer and deeper genealogy to this story, told orally among the ancient wisdom traditions (Bamford, 2003; Lachman, 2003; Steiner, 1973b) However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore this material in detail.

important ways from one period to another” (Forster, 2001). Von Herder’s seminal ideas on the evolution of consciousness were extended in manifold ways by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe,<sup>40</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel,<sup>41</sup> and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling.<sup>42</sup> These pioneering individuals both conceptualized and enacted an integrative worldview—for example Goethe was an eminent scientist, philosopher and literary pioneer. In particular, Schelling’s contribution foreshadowed current notions of *conscious* evolution (Teichmann, 2005). Although inspired by earlier unitive worldviews, these integral philosophers also pointed forward, beyond the limitations of both pre-modern, mythic consciousness and modernist *formal* rationality, foreshadowing a more conscious awakening of a *postformal*, integral consciousness. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century these ideas were further developed by several pioneers (Aurobindo, 2000; Bergson, 1911/1944; Gebser, 1970/2005; Lovejoy, 1936; Neumann, 1954/1995; Steiner, 1926/1966b, 1959a; Teilhard de Chardin, 1959/2002, 1959/2004).

The general notion of evolution—and thence consciousness evolution—became academically colonized by classical biology as a result of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century interpretations of Darwin’s work.<sup>43</sup> Clearly, biology as a discipline has been transformed by such 20<sup>th</sup> century developments as chaos and complexity theories, with classical Darwinism and neo-Darwinism more recently making way for emergence theories (Braxton, 2006; Deacon, 2003; Goodenough & Deacon, 2006; Thompson, 1991). In spite of these developments within biology, science during much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was grounded in a materialist worldview. Darwinian evolutionary notions reputedly also influenced other late 19<sup>th</sup> century socio-cultural theories, such as pioneering sociologist, Auguste Comte’s (1855/2003) views on *social progress*, and Herbert Spencer’s (1857) *developmental* and *progressive* theories—most notably, Social Darwinism (Barnard & Spencer, 1998). The evolution discourse remained dominated by a physicalist form of biology, such that significant pioneering works on the evolution of consciousness, that were inclusive of spiritual dimensions, were ignored, dismissed or marginalized by the *science of the day* (Aurobindo, 2000; Bergson, 1911/1944; Gebser, 1970/2005; Neumann, 1954/1995; Steiner, 1926/1966b, 1959a; Teilhard de Chardin, 1959/2002, 1959/2004). Although the last few decades have seen a reconsideration of some of these pioneers—particularly as a result of integral approaches to the evolution of consciousness—the new biological sciences still retain a powerful claim on the evolution of consciousness discourse (Loye, 2004). However, the growing awareness of a potential planetary crisis has highlighted the significance of finding new ways of thinking, if humankind is to move through our current complex challenges. This critical imperative appears to be mobilizing researchers from a wide range of disciplines to broaden the notion of evolution of consciousness beyond its biological bounds. Although only a small

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<sup>40</sup> Goethe, through his integration of science and literature, drew on his extensive biological studies in morphology—a term he coined—to ground the concept of evolution of consciousness which he introduced in his novel *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*, which he published in 1796.

<sup>41</sup> Hegel’s focus in the evolution of consciousness domain was particularly concerned with the evolution of ideas and concepts and introduced in his lectures on the History of Philosophy.

<sup>42</sup> Schelling’s seminal integrative philosophy provides the genealogical trace for two of the currently divergent streams of postmodernism—deconstructive and reconstructive, as outlined by Arran Gare’s philosophical research (Gare, 2002), recently also summarized by Hampson (2007) in this journal.

<sup>43</sup> Several more recent interpretations point to a much fuller breadth in Darwin’s original writings (Conway Morris, 2007; Loye, 1998; Richards, 1992, 2002).

number of articles are as yet appearing in academic journals, there is evidence of some disciplinary diversity.<sup>44</sup>

László (2006) aptly sums up this critical imperative in the following rallying call:

Einstein was right: the problems created by the prevalent way of thinking cannot be solved by the same way of thinking. This is a crucial insight. Without renewing our culture and consciousness we will be unable to transform today's dominant civilization and overcome the problems generated by its shortsighted mechanistic and manipulative thinking.

. . . The conscious orientation of the next cultural mutation—the shift to a new civilization—depends on the evolution of our consciousness. This evolution has become a precondition of our collective survival. (pp. 39, 77)

The *evolution of consciousness* has become a central theme in much of integral theory. In its many forms<sup>45</sup> integral theory is making a significant contribution to the discourse. Yet leading integral theorists, such as Wilber and László, appear not to see eye to eye in their somewhat rivalrous endeavors to each create an *Integral Theory of Everything* (TOE), within which their writings on the evolution of consciousness could be theoretically situated (László, 2007; Wilber, 2000a). A major distinction appears to be that László (2007) builds his *general evolution theory* in a more formal, systematic manner. He claims that he built significantly on the theoretical traditions of Whitehead's *process* theory, Bertalanffy's *general system* theory and Prigogine's *non-linearly bifurcating dissipative structures* (p. 164). Wilber's process appears to have been much broader and more diverse—but perhaps less systematic—gathering together as many theorists in as many fields of knowledge as he could imagine, then arranging them according to the system that he developed—which he calls an *integral operating system* (Wilber, 2004). Another difference is that although they both appear to use *imagination* and *intuition* in the construction of their theoretical approaches, Wilber does not make this explicit whereas László (2007, p. 162) does. Numerous other researchers, particularly over the last decade, have also contributed to the evolution of consciousness discourse, but the various theoretical strands still stand in relative isolation from each other. These issues will be discussed below.

It is my view that no single discipline or field can colonize the evolution of consciousness discourse—not even science. Because of its complexity the topic can only adequately be approached in a transdisciplinary manner. Nor can it be colonized by a particular theoretical approach, no matter how apparently integral that approach claims to be. Such disciplinary and theoretical constraints would only serve to limit our potential understanding.

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<sup>44</sup> In a recent title search of four academic databases using the words “evolution” and “consciousness” sixteen articles were retrieved with seven of them from a biological/science perspective, the remainder were from the perspectives of psychology (two), philosophy (two), theology (two), the arts (two) and language (one).

<sup>45</sup> Hampson (2007) has put forward an ecology of integrals that includes six intertwined genealogical branches: those aligned with Sri Aurobindo, Gebser, Wilber, Gangadean, László and Steiner (noting that the Steiner branch is via the conduit of my research on Steiner, Gebser and Wilber) (p. 121). I am in agreement with this ecology, which to a large extent co-arose from our dialogues.

## Theoretical Issues Surrounding Evolution of Consciousness Research

Ultimate truth, if there be such a thing, demands the concert of many voices. *Carl Jung*.  
(cited in Neumann, 1954/1995, p. xiv)

There are several complex theoretical issues in evolution of consciousness research.

### A. Direct and Indirect Evidence for Evolution of Consciousness

The discourse may be informed from two broad directions. The first is the research that directly identifies new stage/s or emergence of consciousness. The second is research that apparently enacts emergent postformal, integral, and/or planetary consciousness without identifying it as such. This is further discussed in Part 8 of this paper and published elsewhere (Gidley, 2007a).

### B. Short- and Long-range Theories of the Origins of Culture and Consciousness

In regard to the research on human origins there are two major schools of thought. The *short-range theories* which propose that there was a sudden cultural explosion around 30-40,000 years ago in Western Europe associated with the migration of anatomically modern humans and the subsequent replacement of the extant Neanderthals, driving them to extinction. The *long-range theories* propose a much more gradual and also more polycentric process of evolution of culture and consciousness. These theories are discussed at some length in Appendix C.

### C. The Postmodern Deconstruction of *Progress, Growth and Development*

A major theoretical issue in researching the evolution of consciousness is that it is intimately linked with socio-cultural evolution and the contentious 19<sup>th</sup> century models of social progress and development of Auguste Comte (1855/2003) and Herbert Spencer (1857). Such theoretical models were used to rationalize many racist and ethnocentric social abuses—including slavery, colonialism and ethnocide. Cultural anthropologists developed powerful critiques of these models, particularly following on from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century shift to ethnographic field research. For a few decades the notion of evolution itself came under critique from anthropologists and critical social scientists. However, there has been a revival of interest as new, more integrative anthropological theories began to emerge, such as Marshall Sahlins' theory that there is both evolution of human culture in general—characterized by “growing complexity and unilinearity, with culture apparently leaping from one societal form to another,” and specific evolution, “to account for the great variety in historical developments” of particular societies (Barnard & Spencer, 1998, p. 214). In addition to the contributions of integral theory which are my focus, developments in world systems analysis, systems philosophy and macrohistory have also contributed to a broadening and integrating of theoretical perspectives (Galtung & Inayatullah, 1998; László, 2004/2007). It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss these developments in detail. A superficial glance at the narratives of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber may give an impression that they are simply modernist, unilinear, socio-evolution models packaged as something more. How they each deal with these issues will be addressed under the methodological issues section below.

#### D. Paradoxical Thinking Within the Discourse

There is a paradox<sup>46</sup> surrounding this research in that an emerging postformal, integral movement of consciousness can best be understood from the types of thinking that actually reflect postformal, integral consciousness. Not surprisingly, one of the characteristics of postformal thinking identified in adult developmental psychology is paradoxical thinking—“the capacity to see and accept paradox and tolerate ambiguity” (Cook-Greuter, 2002, p. 24).<sup>47</sup> This research does not claim to resolve such a paradox, but rather to point to its existence.

#### E. The *Evolution of Evolution Theory*

In regard to the *evolution* of evolution theory, the present research does not succumb to the *evolution-terminus fallacy*<sup>48</sup>—where modern humans have reached their ultimate stage. Rather it adopts a developmental and futures approach to the evolution of consciousness—in particular pointing to the current emergence of a new movement of consciousness. This calls for an evolution of the discourse itself. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss this but it will be elucidated as part of the larger project (Gidley, 2007b).

#### F. Territorial Issues in the Discourse

There are several territorial issues including at least; socio-cultural and geo-political territorialism around earliest artifacts; epistemological issues surrounding disciplinary territorialism; and philosophical issues related to the contestation between the dominant discourse based on a metaphysics of physicalism and the alternative discourse based on a metaphysics of integration of spirit and matter. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss this but it will be elucidated as part of the larger project (Gidley, 2007b).

#### G. The Notion of *Adequatio*

Neo-Platonist, Plotinus (205-270 CE) developed the notion of *Adequatio*—most likely informed by Aristotelian concepts. *Adequatio* means “the understanding of the knower must be adequate to the thing to be known” (Schumacher, 1977, p. 39). In regard to the *adequate coherence* between the object of knowledge in this research—the evolution of consciousness—and the epistemology that is researching it, the present research is framed within a postformal, integral, layered epistemology that foregrounds the *noosphere* and its role in conscious evolution. I also include spirituality in contrast to the dominant physicalist discourse. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss this but it will be elucidated as part of the larger project (Gidley, 2007b).

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<sup>46</sup> A similar paradox can be expressed in relation to creative thinking: “in order for creative thinking to be understood and articulated, it requires the very kind of creative thinking that it seeks to understand” (Montuori, Combs, & Richards, 2004, p. 226).

<sup>47</sup> This is one of the characteristics of Cook-Greuter’s *autonomous* stage.

<sup>48</sup> This is a phrase I have coined to refer to the evolution of the discourse itself in relation to evolution (Gidley, 2007b).

## H. Postformal Enactment of Language and Construct Awareness

A further—and perhaps the most complex—theoretical issue is that, in addition to the claims of all three authors I focus on in this paper that consciousness is evolving, it is implicit in all of their work that they see themselves as operating from a consciousness that is beyond the modernist/formal thinking of their day.<sup>49</sup> While it is beyond the scope of this paper to actually establish the veracity of this proposition, it is clearly a theoretical challenge of this work as it implies a superior truth claim. In the final section of this paper I will return to this issue with some further reflections, particularly in regard to examples from their language styles.

## I. Epistemological Pluralism of Minor Threads in the Discourse

Current theories concerning the evolution of consciousness arise from a number of schools of thought. These can be categorized in many different ways. It is worth noting that debate surrounding scientific evolution theory and its *pros and cons* is still alive in the USA according to some integral theorists. A recent article in *What is Enlightenment* magazine<sup>50</sup> attempted to contribute to a broadening beyond the Darwinism vs. Creationism poles that are emphasized in the US media. They proposed a twelve-theory spectrum between two extreme epistemological positions—scientific materialism and religious determinism, which they then reduced to *science* and *spirit*. They placed *neo-Darwinists* and *progressive Darwinists* at the science end of the spectrum and *intelligent designers* and *Theistic evolutionists* at the spirit end. In between, they listed a range of other perspectives including *collectivists*, *complexity theorists*, *directionalists* and *transhumanists*, on the science side and *esoteric evolutionists* on the spirit side. At the centre of their spectrum, indicating degrees of integration of science and spirit, they placed *process philosophers*, *conscious evolutionists* and *integralists*—the latter being represented by those theorists whom they appear to favor<sup>51</sup> (WIE, 2007). While this approach may appear at first glance to be a useful and convenient way to categorize as it gives an important overview of some often-neglected approaches, the simple slotting of some theorists into these individual conceptual categories is a gross reduction of their comprehensive epistemologies.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, it is based on a simple bi-polar dimension between science and spirit, whereas the phenomenology of the evolution discourse is much more complex than that. While I do agree that there is an intimate relationship between the evolution of consciousness discourse and the appropriate development of integral theory, it is vital for the academic credibility of integral theory that this relationship is

<sup>49</sup> Wilber actually explicitly states that he is writing from a vision-logic standpoint (Wilber, 2000d, pp. 190-191).

<sup>50</sup> WIE is a North American magazine that publishes “reader-friendly” articles on integral theory, including articles by, or about, a range of integral theorists.

<sup>51</sup> Major figures listed as *integralists*: Beck, Combs, Godwin, Goerner, Leonard, Murphy, Thompson and Wilber (WIE, 2007, p. 100). This does not appear to be a comprehensive—or even impartial—list of relevant theorists, according to my research.

<sup>52</sup> A particularly significant misplacement is made of Steiner as an esoteric evolutionist whereas his vast scientific, philosophical and spiritual writings are more substantial than many of those placed as integralists. A similar narrowing has also been made of contemporary philosopher, Tarnas (WIE, 2007, p. 97). Of course it should be acknowledged that this is *not* an academic journal, but rather a populist magazine.

developed in a scholarly manner. More substantial research on the complexity of these issues is in preparation (Gidley, 2007c).

### **J. The Integrality of Integral *Theories of Everything* Including Evolution**

One of my major interests in this paper is to explore this relationship—between evolution of consciousness and integral theory—in some depth and to indicate how different evolutionary perspectives lead to a different kind of integral theory structure, and vice versa. A further point is that it is vital that the discourse is not colonized by a particular version of integral theory. While Wilber and László are arguably the most prolific and significant contemporaries in broadening the evolution of consciousness discourse through their integral theories, my research points to gaps in their theoretic narratives.

Wilber was one of the first contemporary theorists to attempt to draw together, in a transdisciplinary manner, some of the earlier pioneering works on the evolution of consciousness (Wilber, 1996a). Because of the popularity of Wilber's work on this topic, and because of the manner in which he has staked his claim on this aspect of integral theory, his theoretic narrative is quite influential. However, there are several taken-for-granted assumptions that have slipped into the integral discourse on the evolution of consciousness, through Wilber's influence, which this paper seeks to uncover. Two assumptions that I wish to challenge in relation to Wilber's self-proclaimed *authority* in this territory are that:

- He has included all the major pioneering theorists of the evolution of consciousness;
- He has accurately represented the research of major theorists, such as Jean Gebser.

László, over the past two decades, has initiated a major research initiative<sup>53</sup> into the serious limitations of the dominant reductionist, scientific discourse on evolution in general. Clearly, this has significant implications for the evolution of consciousness discourse. Considerable research resulting from this initiative has been undertaken by a diversity of scientists—particularly, systems scientists, chaos and complexity theorists and cognitive psychologists (Loye, 2004). Much of their work draws on László's general systems theory (László, 2006, 2007), Riane Eisler's *partnership theory* (Eisler, 1987), and David Loye's emphasis on the notions of love, mind and moral development in Darwin's *The Descent of Man*—which he argues have been completely overlooked in the dominant evolution discourse (Loye, 1998). This research is clearly a major advance on the dominant neo-Darwinist theories.<sup>54</sup> However, it is still limited in that it primarily privileges scientific discourse—albeit the new sciences—without making explicit what discourses are not included, e.g. those from philosophy,<sup>55</sup> theology/spiritual science,

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<sup>53</sup> The General Evolution Research Group (GERG), was founded by László in Budapest, in 1986, during the Cold War. Their stated aim is to create a “full spectrum, action-oriented,” or “fully human theory” of evolution. [http://www.thedarwinproject.com/gerg/gerg\\_world\\_futures.html](http://www.thedarwinproject.com/gerg/gerg_world_futures.html)

<sup>54</sup> It also positions itself within the *credibility* of science, which Wilber does not limit himself to.

<sup>55</sup> Philosopher Arran Gare critiques the lack of philosophical and critical perspective in the research in Loye's book. He points to the apparent lack of awareness of the contribution of idealist philosophers such as Schelling to the notion of “conscious evolution” (Gare, 2007).

mythology,<sup>56</sup> art and oral history, and even developmental psychology. Further, although brief mention is made of Wilber's theories in this research, Gebser's and Steiner's research is overlooked. My research could be seen to build on the work of Laszlo's *General Evolution Research Group* in a number of ways, most obviously through my focus on philosophical, theoretical and methodological approaches that are not limited to scientific epistemologies. In addition, my research directly addresses the following key points in the guidelines to László's and Loye's project for a *fully human theory of evolution*.

- Explore points of evolutionary consensus as well as differences between science and spirituality.
- Work towards consensus on unifying frameworks and imagery . . .
- . . . but explore the ignored, the repressed, and new vision before locking into new paradigms (Loye, 2004, p. 14).

All of these points are being emphasized in my research and in addition, it could contribute significantly to several of their foundational themes—the evolution of love, consciousness, and the drive of creativity in “conscious evolution” (Loye, 2004, p. 13).

While Wilber's and László's *theories of everything* both have enormous merit, they too are partial. In this regard, I discern two major obstacles for integral theorists who seek to introduce more breadth and depth into the evolution of consciousness discourse. The first, the ongoing colonization of the discourse by science narratives, is clearly apparent even within integral theories, such as László's. The second—which is more subtle and tacit—is the potential colonization of the discourse *within* integral theory by particular integral approaches. Clearly, there is some overlap between these two obstacles.

### **K. Transdisciplinarity Can Include Depth Through Disciplinary Diving**

Perhaps I am biased towards Steiner and Gebser—or even Wilber. A critique could certainly be raised about my choice of Steiner and Gebser as major theoretical foci, given that neither of them has been alive to benefit from the incredible advances in knowledge specialization in the last few decades. There is no question that the detailed knowledge acquired by numerous diverse disciplines in their various specialized fields has increased greatly in the last century, since Steiner's and even Gebser's time. However, the question remains: Are we getting close to the kind of integrated understanding of our world that will enable us to address the complexity of current planetary challenges? I suggest that we are not there yet and so does Morin (2001a).

An influx of knowledge at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century shed new light on the situation of human beings in the universe. Parallel progress in cosmology, earth sciences, ecology, biology and prehistory in the 1960s and 1970s have modified our ideas about the universe, the earth, life and humanity itself. But these contributions remain disjointed. That which is human is cut up into pieces of a puzzle that cannot form an image. This raises an epistemological problem: it is impossible to conceptualize the complex unity of the human

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<sup>56</sup> Notwithstanding Eisler's substantial contribution to a reconstruction of cultural mythology and history (Eisler, 1987).

by way of disjunctive thought . . . The new knowledge, for lack of being connected, is neither assimilated nor integrated. There is progress in knowledge of the parts and paradoxical ignorance of the whole. (pp. 39-40)

I propose below a tentative circular model of disciplinary fields that can potentially inform the evolution of consciousness discourse (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: A Circumscription of the Evolution of Consciousness Territory**<sup>57</sup>

Although I have undertaken more extensive reviews of the evolution of consciousness literature elsewhere (Gidley, 2007c), the stated purpose of this paper was not to attempt to achieve a broader, more comprehensive review than has already been done. Because the territory is so extensive now, the danger in this approach is to fall into a superficial syncretism. Rather my purpose is to introduce more depth, but in a different way to the kind of depth achieved in disciplinary specialization. The depth I am attempting is to look with a deep gaze at the writings of others who themselves have covered an extensive breadth. I believe that this potentially creates a new kind of scholarly alchemy that has not been frequently attempted to my knowledge. It is referred to as *gap-diving* (Roy, 2006b) and resembles the kind of integration of

<sup>57</sup> I have deliberately left this diagram conceptually simple, as my purpose is not conceptual mapping—which has already been given much attention by Wilber—but to foreground the importance of participatory and aesthetic dimensions to a fuller conceptualization of the theory.

depth and span that Foucault used in his lectures on the *Hermeneutics of the Subject* (Foucault, 2005).

Before moving on, I particularly wish to honor the significant contributions of several pioneers—other than Steiner and Gebser—to my understanding of the discourse (Aurobindo 2000; Bergson, 1911/1944; Campbell, 1968; Neumann, 1954/1995; Teilhard de Chardin, 1959/2002, 1959/2004). In addition, I find it encouraging that, in addition to Wilber, László and myself, there are a raft of other contemporary theorists from a variety of disciplines who have begun to research the evolution of consciousness from a more integral perspective (Bamford, 2003; Bocchi & Ceruti, 2002; Christiansen & Kirby, 2003; Conway Morris, 2007; Cousins, 1999; Donald, 2001; Earley, 1997; Eisler, 1987; Elgin, 1993, 1997; Eliade, 1954/1989; Firestone, West, & Warwick-Smith, 2006; Gangadean, 2006a; Grof, 1988; Grossinger, 2000; Habermas, 1979; Hart, 2001; Hefner, 1998; Inayatullah, 2004; Jantsch, 1980; Loyer, 1998; Montuori, 1999; Morin & Kern, 1999; Nelson, 2005; Neville, 2006; Ornstein & Ehrlich, 1991; Russell, 2000; Subbiondo, 2003; Swimme, 1992; Swimme & Tucker, 2006; Thompson, 1998; Wade, 1996).<sup>58</sup>

My choice of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber was also influenced by the fact that all three of them have in a substantial way included most of these knowledge areas (see Figure 1) in their narratives, whereas many theorists are much more limited in scope. I further propose that although the inclusion of many of these areas is vital to a comprehensive integral evolution of consciousness theory, it is equally vital that such a theory not be merely about content. While Wilber's content is unquestionably comprehensive—and his theory elegant—his areas of weakness are the areas of strength of Steiner and Gebser: participatory engagement and aesthetic sensibility. By contrast, Wilber's embrace of contemporary research and his accessible text complement aspects of Steiner's and Gebser's contribution. Because I have chosen to focus in-depth on three major sources, I acknowledge that my coverage of many significant theorists is of necessity brief. I have also taken into account that Wilber has quoted extensively from many of these sources and I have not in all cases been able to check his interpretation for accuracy as I have done with Gebser.

In my own research I have drawn from all these diverse areas (see Figure 1), although in many cases only to clarify specific details. Because of the somewhat heterodox research methods of Steiner<sup>59</sup>—and to a lesser extent Gebser and Wilber—in regard to palaeo- and pre-history,<sup>60</sup> I have paid particular attention to the academic research that might reflect on these periods. As with the overall stance of my research, it has not been my intention to do a broad scan of the archaeological, paleoanthropological, or art historical research, but rather to dive into specific areas of controversy where there appeared to be a gap or a divergence of consistency. In

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<sup>58</sup> Recent educational research by the author (Gidley, 2007a) also draws attention to the growing number of educational researchers who are identifying the need to educate for an evolving consciousness (Goerner, 2000; Hart, 2001; House, 2004; Mazzone, 2004; McDermott, 2005; Miller, 1999; Miller, 2000; Montuori, 1999; Morin, 2001a; Neville, 2006; Sloan, 1992).

<sup>59</sup> Steiner's research methods, along with Gebser's and Wilber's are discussed in the next section.

<sup>60</sup> I am using the problematic term pre-history as it is used according to academic convention—that is prior to literate culture.

particular, for the very early pre-historical periods, research from the following—somewhat overlapping—disciplines have been invaluable.

- Anthropology (Barnard & Spencer, 1996/1998; Belasco, 1975; Clayton, 2006; Foster, 1996/1999; Gatto, 2004; Headland, Pike, & Harris, 1990; Isenberg & Thursby, 1984-6; Levi-Strauss, 1963; Levinson & Ember, 1996; Lock & Peters, 1999).
- Archaeology (Berg & Woodville, 2004; Domenici & Domenici, 1996; Foucault, 1970/1994; Gatto, 2004; Johnson, 1999; Kühne, 2004; Quilter & Urton, 2002; Seger, 2006; Settegast, 2005; Spears, 1996; Spikins, 1997; Wallis & Spencer, 2003; White, 2006; Zhang, Harbottle, Wang, & Kong, 1999; Zilhão, 2007).
- Art history (Bednarik, 2006a; Berg & Woodville, 2004; Conkey, 1996/1999; Hooker, 1990; Iinitchi, 2002; Quilter & Urton, 2002; White, 2006; Zhang, Harbottle, Wang, & Kong, 1999; Zilhão, 2007).
- Rock art science (Anati, 2004; Bahn, 2005; Bednarik, 1992, 2003b, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d 2007, Brumm & Moore, 2005; Chippindale & Tacon, 1998; Hodgson, 2000; Reddy, 2006).
- Paleo-anthropology and paleo-ontology (Cairns, 2005; Carlson et al., 2007; Colman, 2007; Conard & Bolus, 2003; Conway Morris, 2004, 2007; Gould, 1977; Gutscher, 2005; Key, 2000; Rolston III, 2005; Settegast, 2005; van Huyssteen, 2004; Varadi, Runnegar, & Ghil, 2003; Wood & Collard, 1999).

In addition, considerably more research has also been cited in Appendix C, which deals more extensively with the Palaeo-periods than the main narrative. As my research progressed I became increasingly aware of the Anglophone and Eurocentric bias of the discourse—even within integral theory. I thus endeavored to search beyond the dominant geographical regions to find researchers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Consequently, my list of citations may also be somewhat heterodox. As discussed already, one of my interests is in focusing on research that has been, or is likely to be, marginalized. One could argue for the inclusion of additional fields (such as cosmology and linguistics) and sub-fields (such as transpersonal and depth psychology).

### **L. Integration of Integral Views**

Finally, I wish to point to several other contemporary researchers who have attempted an integration of integral evolution-of-consciousness theories. Most include one or two of my key authors, but not all three substantially. Combs (2002) privileges Wilber and Gebser but marginalizes Steiner; Elgin (1993) privileges Gebser and Wilber but does not refer substantially to Steiner; Lachman (2003) privileges Steiner and Gebser but marginalizes Wilber; Thompson (1998) also privileges Steiner and Gebser but marginalizes Wilber. In addition, Benedikter (2005) has researched the philosophical relationships between Wilber and Steiner, with some reference to Gebser, but his work is primarily in German, and as yet most of it has not been translated into English.<sup>61</sup> There are also other macrohistorical/evolutionary narratives which draw primarily on one of my key authors, such as Earley (1997) on Wilber; Feuerstein (1997) on

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<sup>61</sup> This lack of English translation of Benedikter's work means that it has not entered into the Anglophone integral theory discourse and consequently has been overlooked by many theorists who are limited to the English language.

Gebser; Bamford (2003) on Steiner. Educational theorists Marshak (1997), and Miller (2005), have written substantial educational literature about Steiner, in combination with other educational theorists; and McDermott (1984, 2001) has written substantially—though separately—on Steiner and Sri Aurobindo, and to a lesser extent on Wilber. Finally, the vast majority of contemporary evolutionary narratives make no significant reference to Steiner, Wilber or Gebser, drawing principally on *new science* theories (Edelman, 1992; László, 2006; Loye, 2004; Ornstein & Ehrlich, 1991; Russell, 2000; Swimme, 1992); or socio/cultural and/or philosophical theories (Bocchi & Ceruti, 2002; Eisler, 1987; Habermas, 1979; Morin & Kern, 1999). It is to this large-scale omission and/or undervaluing of their significant contributions that this paper pays attention. Given the extensiveness of the territory, I will undoubtedly have omitted some important researchers and/or areas of research. For this I apologize.

## **Methodological Issues in Postformal Research**

It is perhaps unnecessary to reiterate that we cannot employ the methods derived from and dependent on our present consciousness structure to investigate different structures of consciousness, but will have to adapt our method to the specific structure under investigation . . . contemporary methods employ predominantly dualistic procedures that do not extend beyond simple subject-object relationships; they limit our understanding to what is commensurate with the present Western mentality. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 7)

A number of methodological issues need to be explicated in relation to this research. Because of the complexity of the territory, it is imperative that it be approached in a transdisciplinary manner. Secondly, because of the marginal and somewhat heterodox methods of all three authors, it is essential that my methodology in dealing with them be as transparent as possible. Thirdly, the multi-layered nature of this research is a further complication. I have attempted to deal with this by providing a balance of direct textual extracts and interpretation when making a point. Also I begin each section of the narrative with an academic contextualization.

Before introducing the methodologies and validity and truth claims of Steiner, Gebser, Wilber and myself, in the interests of transparency, I will summarize my process in relation to arriving at criteria for exclusion and inclusion of particular research.

## **Criteria for Exclusion and Inclusion in the Research**

The process began with a meta-analysis<sup>62</sup> of the literature related to the evolution of consciousness. It became evident fairly early that this was an overwhelming task and once the literature had been broadly categorized, two exclusion criteria were introduced. The process is summarized below.

At the first level of analysis the evolution of consciousness discourse to date could be categorized into three major subgroups:

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<sup>62</sup> My research has involved a meta-analysis of the evolution of consciousness literature. Some of this research has been published, as noted and some of it is still in unpublished manuscript form as part of a Doctoral Dissertation and post-doctoral publications.

- Scientifically-based evolution research, particularly from evolutionary biology;
- Additional disciplinary—or sometimes interdisciplinary—research from fields such as evolutionary psychology and anthropology, philosophy, sociology, theology (for more detail on fields that may inform this research see Figure 1 above);
- Transdisciplinary research from integral studies, futures studies, general systems theory.

At the next level of analysis it became apparent that much of this research, is based on the assumption that human consciousness has reached its culmination with rationality, or *formal operations*<sup>63</sup>—to use Piaget’s term. The first exclusion category concerned literature that did not honor the notion of further movements of consciousness beyond formal operations in the individual, or beyond mental/rational as a stage of cultural evolution. In relation to the former, there is now a large body of literature, particularly from the adult developmental psychology field, that has established at least one—and up to four—cognitive stages beyond formal operations (Cartwright, 2001; Commons et al., 1990; Cook-Greuter, 2000; Kegan, 1994; Kohlberg, 1990; Kramer, 1983; Labouvie-Vief, 1990, 1992; Riegel, 1973; Sinnott, 1998, 2005). The present paper is not concerned with demonstrating that consciousness is evolving, nor to substantially review the existing literature that has demonstrated this. Additional research has further explored this literature and identified several threads in the discourse (Gidley, 2006, 2007c).

At a further level of analysis it became apparent that much of the research operated from within fairly tight disciplinary boundaries. Disciplinary research is unquestionably important to shed light on detail and it has been used in this research in that manner. It is not necessarily helpful in facilitating the big-picture perspective required for this research. Consequently, the second exclusion category concerned literature that drew primarily from just one or two disciplines. In other words transdisciplinary and/or integral research has been privileged in my research.

As a final point of self-reflection, perhaps in the end my choice of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber was also influenced by the intuitive resonance I felt with all their work, and the fact that I felt that I was in a unique position—based on my experience and interest—to do this research.<sup>64</sup>

A brief summary of the methodologies of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber will be followed by a summary of my own methodology and process.

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<sup>63</sup> I am using the term *formal operations* here to denote both a stage of individual cognition and also to represent the general evolutionary stage that Gebser called mental/rational.

<sup>64</sup> I have a twenty-five year history of studying, working and living with Steiner’s philosophy, including founding and pioneering a Steiner school in Australia over ten years (up to 1994), and undertaking a Master of Arts (research) involving Steiner-educated Australian students (Gidley, 1998b, 2001b, 2002b). I also became an executive member of the Integral Education committee of Wilber’s Integral University over two years, and participated in an Integral Life Practices seminar run by Integral Institute in 2005.

### Steiner's Research Methodology<sup>65</sup>

Although much of Steiner's writing, particularly prior to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was purely philosophical—in the traditional academic manner of his day—much of his later work was based on what he referred to as his spiritual-scientific research. Steiner (1904/1959) discussed his research methods in his book *Cosmic Memory* where he detailed much of his research on early periods of pre-history. He claimed that, as a result of decades of disciplined thought practice, he was able to read information that was stored in what he called the *Akasha record/chronicle*. Ironically, some of the terms Steiner used to characterize his spiritual-scientific<sup>66</sup> methodology—such as *cosmic memory* and *Akashic record* are currently being re-introduced into the scientific discourse by László: “Ervin László's concept of the Akashic Field includes the idea of cosmic memory” (Sheldrake, 2006, abstract).

Before going into Steiner's method in more detail, I would like to contextualize it from within László's (2007) theory of an enduring *In-formation Field* that, under special circumstances, can be *read*. The following extract from László's recent book, *Science and the Akashic Field*, bears remarkable similarity to Steiner's descriptions.

The evidence for a field that would conserve and convey information is not direct; it must be reconstructed in reference to more immediately available evidence. Like other fields known to modern physics, such as the gravitational field, the electromagnetic field, the quantum fields, and the Higgs field, the in-formation field cannot be seen, heard, touched, tasted, or smelled . . . it seems evident that a further field is required to account for the special kind of coherence revealed at all scales and domains of nature, from the microdomain of quanta, through the meso-domain of life, to the macrodomain of the cosmos . . . In my previous books I named the universal in-formation field the Akashic Field . . . In the Sanskrit and Indian cultures, Akasha is an all-encompassing medium that underlies all things and becomes all things. . . . Our bodily senses do not register Akasha, but we can reach it through spiritual practice. The ancient Rishis reached it through a disciplined, spiritual way of life, and through yoga. (p. 73-76)

Steiner spent the last 25 years of his life developing and consolidating a methodology of thought training/discipline. He claimed that, if practiced, these methods could lead to new levels of cognitive and psycho-spiritual development, building on the rigorous methods of the natural sciences. Although his methods are claimed to lead to spiritual perception, they should not be confused with pre-rational, mythic, atavistic methods.<sup>67</sup> He practiced these methods himself and

<sup>65</sup> I have given extended space to a discussion of Steiner's methodology for acquiring knowledge—compared with Gebser and Wilber—as his methods are the most heterodox and arguably the least understood.

<sup>66</sup> Steiner referred to the overall corpus of his work as spiritual science, as he extended natural scientific methods to research what he called the spiritual or *supersensible world*. A forerunner to this was Goethe's *delicate empiricism*, discussed elsewhere and William James' *pragmatism* (Gitre, 2006).

<sup>67</sup> Steiner actively disapproved of the pre-rational, atavistic methods of *so-called spiritual research* of the Theosophists as not appropriate methods for his times as did Sri Aurobindo. Both wrote of these matters critically, strongly distancing themselves from the methods and activities of the Theosophical Society at the time (Aurobindo, 1997; Steiner, 1925/1928).

his research methodology proceeds from them. I have included a rather long quote here, as I believe it is important to read Steiner's own words on these matters. The practice Steiner refers to appears to be aligned with László's claims above. If what Steiner and László are claiming is valid, then it is of major significance and requiring far more substantive research attention than has currently been given. Steiner (1904/1959) states:

By means of ordinary history [humans] can learn only a small part of what humanity experienced in prehistory. Historical documents shed light on but a few millennia. . . . Everything belonging to the external world of the senses is subject to time. In addition, time destroys what has originated in time. . . . Everything which comes into being in time has its origin in the eternal. But the eternal is not accessible to sensory perception. Nevertheless, the ways to the perception of the eternal are open for [humans]. [We] can develop forces dormant in [us] so that [we] can recognize the eternal<sup>68</sup> . . . from transitory to non-transitory history . . . written in other characters than is ordinary history. In gnosis and in theosophy it is called the "Akasha Chronicle." Only a faint conception of this chronicle can be given in our language. For our language corresponds to the world of the senses. That which is described by our language at once receives the character of this sense world . . . The one who has acquired the ability to perceive in the spiritual world comes to know past events in their eternal character. They do not stand before [us] like the dead testimony of history, but appear in full life. In a certain sense, what has happened takes place before [us]. Those initiated into the reading of such a living script can look back into a much more remote past than is represented by external history; and—on the basis of direct spiritual perception—they can also describe much more dependably the things of which history tells. (pp. 38-40)

Although the latter statement of Steiner's is a somewhat radical truth claim for a method of research that is difficult to validate, he does qualify his claims in various ways, as for example in the following two quotes:

In order to avoid possible misunderstanding, it should be said that spiritual perception is not infallible. This perception also can err, can see in an inexact, oblique, wrong manner. No man is free from error in this field, no matter how high he stands. (Steiner, 1904/1959, p. 41)

It will be evident in the narrative that some of Steiner's findings from his research are only recently being rediscovered and formalized into scientific theory. László's (2007) theory of the Akashic field itself, is an excellent example of this process. Steiner (1954/1981a) also qualifies the difficulties in this process:

We must take all this as but approximate description, for we are bound to words which are coined for things only come into existence in our Earth period.<sup>69</sup> We should first have to

<sup>68</sup> At this point in the text Steiner (1904/1993) refers to his book: *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds: How is it Achieved*. This is his primary introduction to how to develop this type of cognition.

<sup>69</sup> Steiner held a view similar to some of the latest cosmology theories on meta-verses. He would be referring to our current evolutionary cycle.

invent a language if we would express what is seen by the eye of the Seer. All the same these descriptions are important, for they are the first way of coming to the truth. Only through picture, through imagination do we find the way to vision. We should make no abstract concepts, mechanical schemes, nor draw up diagrams of vibrations, but let pictures arise within us; that is the direct path, the first stage of knowledge. (p. 113)

As an echo of Steiner's words, László (2007) also writes of the importance of expressing the visions of the Akashic field, not just through science but also through poetry. He spends several pages writing poetically of his own Akashic vision of the birth and rebirth of our universe "addressed not to our intellect, but to our heart" (pp. 129-133). László's text is not greatly dissimilar in tone from some of the passages in Steiner's books, demonstrating further congruence between their works.

Steiner (1930/1983a) has written substantially about the search for truth, with some of his statements indicating that he had something of a postmodern sensibility in regard to the notion of *truth*.

Since truth is manifold in meaning, all we can reasonably say is that [humans] must set out to grasp truth and to kindle in [themselves] a genuine sense of truth. Hence we cannot speak of a single, all-embracing truth. (p. 34)

There are no grounds at any time for remaining content with something already known. (p. 50)

Steiner developed his evolutionary theories in a time when many controversial socio-cultural models were in vogue. However he eschewed their materialistic biological underpinnings and their simplistic unilinearity. Although his theoretical approach was unquestionably developmental, a basis of much of his writing was aimed at significantly broadening 19<sup>th</sup> century notions of human development and evolution. As will be demonstrated below, his early 20<sup>th</sup> century writings on the evolution of consciousness and spiritual development foreshadowed contemporary notions of the emergence of postformal-integral consciousness, conscious evolution and the emergence of moral imagination,<sup>70</sup> and to some degree the new biological theory of emergentism (Steiner, 1894/1964b).

The appearance of completely new moral ideas through moral imagination is, for the theory of evolution, no more miraculous than the development of a new animal species . . . Ethical individualism, then, is the crowning feature of the edifice that Darwin and Haeckel have striven to build for natural sciences. It is spiritualized theory of evolution carried over into moral life . . . the free moral life [is] the spiritual continuation of organic life. (pp. 165-166)

This statement encapsulates how Steiner's epistemology represents a dialectical integration of scientific and spiritual features into his *spiritual science*.

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<sup>70</sup> Steiner wrote about the link between the moral imagination and Darwinism, foreshadowing recent research by Loye's Darwin Project (Loye, 1998, 2004; Steiner, 1914/1973c, 1894/1964b, 1971c).

## Gebser's Research Methodology

Unlike Steiner and Wilber, whose writings encompass vast territories, Gebser's interest was primarily consciousness evolution—particularly the emergence of integral consciousness—through what he saw as cultural mutations or sudden leaps. In an article, first published in German in 1956, but not translated into English until 1996, Gebser discusses the contribution of cultural philosophy towards facilitating the emergence of integral-aperspectival consciousness. He described this methodology of cultural philosophy as proceeding through phenomenological, comparative, coordinating and finally reductive work. I will summarize these four stages as follows including extracts of his words:

- Firstly, “comprehending the results of the various natural sciences and humanistic disciplines”—as a type of cultural phenomenology;
- The second step is “to compare the individual phenomena;”
- Thirdly, the task is to “coordinate these phenomena to bring out their common denominator;”
- Finally, there is an attempt to “reduce the most diverse by thematically related phenomena to the elements of their fundamental structure” (Gebser, 1996a, p. 80).

Intriguingly, this process appears very similar to Wilber's methodology of *orienting generalizations* discussed below, though I am not aware of any source where Wilber makes this connection or whether he is even aware of this particular article or of Gebser's stated methodology. This could provide further important theoretical grounding for Wilber's methodology.

Gebser also considered his work to have been indirectly influenced by Sri Aurobindo. In another context, Gebser stated that he first became aware of his concept of the formation of a new consciousness “by a flash-like intuition in the winter of 1932-33. . . . I see an explanation for this phenomenon in the fact that I was in some way brought into the extremely powerful spiritual field of force radiating through Sri Aurobindo” (Mohrhoff, 1992, p. 1). Gebser acknowledges that such an insight only has personal validity, but that he spent the next 17 years in deep, scholarly research and that the “quotations and references to such sources are intended to lend a generally valid evidential character to the personal validity of the original conception” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. xxviii).

Elsewhere, Gebser (1949/1985) summarized the intent of his methodology as follows: “Our ‘method’ is not just a ‘measured’ assessment, but above this an attempt at ‘diaphony’ or rendering transparent” (p. 7).

Gebser's *truth* claims are integrated with his entire approach. The way that he has endeavored to characterize the various structures of consciousness by enactment and illustration as well as explanation, is integral to his methodology of what he calls “imparting of truth.” His notion of truth however is not merely a concept, but an attempt to enter into the depth of things and to render them transparent.

Integral reality is the world's transparency, a perceiving of the world as truth: a mutual perceiving and imparting of truth of the world and of man and of all that transluces both. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 19)

Clearly, his notion of truth is not static.

Gebser's context was different from Steiner's in that he had experienced first-hand the catastrophic results when Social Darwinism was hybridized with Nazism. In this seminal work on consciousness, he (Gebser, 1949/1985) problematizes terms such as *evolution*, *development* and *progress* referring to their serious limitations in the following words. "The rationalistic thought-cliché of "progress" (more often than not a progression away from origin) the biologizing notion of evolution, and the botanizing idea of development are all inapplicable to the phenomenon of consciousness" (p. 38-39). He throws further light on this view in his last book—which is not yet officially available in English—but first published in German in 1970, three years before his death. A recent informal translation (Gebser, 1970/2005) indicates the distinction he makes between his alternative view and the evolutionary theories of his day.

Evolution is in this view neither progress nor development, but crystallization of the invisible in the visible, that should be achieved by adequate work . . . The presently valid evolutionary theories including that of development and progress are hardly older than 100 years. They deal merely with one part of reality . . . i.e. only the visible and conclusive. The total reality as far as it is accessible to us comprises however also the other half that is invisible to us.

Later, in that document, he endorsed the involution theories of Sri Aurobindo, which clearly underpinned his evolution of consciousness approach.

### **Wilber's Research Methodology**

Wilber refers to his main methodology as *orienting generalizations* which he describes in the following way: "If we look at the various fields of human knowledge—from physics to biology to psychology, sociology, theology and religion—certain broad, general themes emerge, about which there is very little disagreement"<sup>71</sup> (Wilber, 1996a, p. 17). Expanding on his methods for constructing his theory, Wilber (1996) continues:

If we take these types of largely-agreed-upon orienting generalizations from the various branches of knowledge . . . and if we string these orienting generalizations together, we will arrive at some astonishing and often profound conclusions, conclusions that, as extraordinary as they might be, nonetheless embody nothing more than our already-agreed-upon knowledge. . . . In working with broad orienting generalizations, we can suggest a broad orienting map of the place of men and women in relation to Universe, Life and Spirit. (p. 18)

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<sup>71</sup> This is perhaps one of the more contested areas of Wilber's approach.

Wilber's overall 'integrative method' is further detailed by Jack Crittenden in the *Forward* to Wilber's *The Eye of Spirit*, (2000d) and described as having three steps. I have summarized Crittenden's description of these three steps as follows:

- Wilber develops the orienting generalizations within each field of study—"a type of phenomenology of all human knowledge conducted at the level of orienting generalizations."
- "Wilber then arranges these truths into chains or networks of interlocking conclusions. At this point Wilber veers sharply from a method of mere eclecticism and into systematic vision." Crittenden claims that at this point Wilber asks himself: "What coherent system would in fact incorporate the greatest number of these truths?"<sup>72</sup>
- "The third step in Wilber's overall approach is the development of a new type of *critical theory*." Crittenden explains that once Wilber has developed his optimum schema (eg AQAL) he then critiques the partiality of the narrower approaches. "He criticizes not their truths, but their partial nature" (pp. xiii-xiv).

In regard to his own truth claims, Wilber gives mixed messages. In a discussion of what he calls *broad science*—or even *spiritual science*—he claims that all "truth claims [can be] guided by the three strands of valid knowledge (injunction, apprehension, confirmation; or exemplars, data, falsification) *applied at every level* (sensory, mental, spiritual)" (Wilber, 1998, p. 174). In other contexts he honors the role of pluralism and relativism in truth claims. Yet he positions his integral theory above other theories, suggesting that his tacit bias may be to believe that his theory is more "true" than others.

In the foreword to the second edition of *Up from Eden*, Wilber tackled head-on what he sees as the major critiques against evolution theory that still hampered the appropriate development of the evolution of consciousness theory at the time he was writing. Wilber (1996c) claims that there has been considerable opposition to the notion of cultural and consciousness evolution—from the traditionalists, because evil is still happening; the Romantics, who hark back to the past; and from the liberal social theorists, reacting to the horrors of Social Darwinism. He then puts forward several arguments for cultural evolution, particularly drawing on Habermas' notion of the *dialectic of progress*. He also points to the "distinction between differentiation and dissociation," "the difference between transcendence and repression," "the difference between natural hierarchy and pathological hierarchy," and how "higher structures can be hijacked by lower impulses" (pp. xi-xiv). These are important theoretical contributions to the discourse.

### **My Postformal Research Methodology—a Theoretical *Bricolage***

[A *bricoleur-theorist* is one who] works between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 6)

<sup>72</sup> This description of Wilber's methodology appears to reflect his enactment of postformal thinking processes such as 'systematic' or even 'metasystematic' reasoning, as identified in seminal developmental psychology research on postformal stages (Commons & Richards, 2002).

In its embrace of complexity, the bricolage constructs a far more **active** role for humans both in shaping reality and in creating the research processes and narratives that represent it. (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 324)

Before examining my unique methodological approach, I wish to identify the mood of soul in which I undertook the research. I entered a mood of critical reverence,<sup>73</sup> integrating heart and mind in a way that both honored the huge contributions of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber, yet retained a critical mind.

To assist with understanding of the overall framing of this research within the larger project, I have included a table showing the layered framing of the research in which this paper is situated (See Table 1).

**Table 1: A Layered Research Framing**

<i>Type of Inquiry</i>	<i>Conceptual Research</i> <sup>74</sup>
<b>Substantive Conceptual Content</b>	Evolution of Consciousness
<b>Pragmatic Interest</b>	Cultural Pedagogical Practice <sup>75</sup>
<b>Philosophical Interests</b>	Integral <sup>76</sup> Evolutionary Philosophy
<b>Epistemology</b>	Transdisciplinarity
<b>Methodology</b>	Theoretical Bricolage

**Source:** (Gidley, 2007b)

Undertaking postformal or integral research presents several methodological challenges. With a topic as far-reaching as the evolution of consciousness these challenges are multiplied in manifold ways. However, because of the complexity of the research topic and the transdisciplinary<sup>77</sup> epistemology (Grigg, Johnston, & Milson, 2003; Nicolescu, 2002; van den

<sup>73</sup> It is worth noting that several researchers include *reverence* as a postformal quality, particularly in the education research (Gidley, 2007a; Miller, J. P., 2000; Miller, R. 2000).

<sup>74</sup> *Conceptual research* is a term used in social science research such as psychology, psychotherapy and psychoanalysis for research that is not empirical or clinical (Young, 1995).

<sup>75</sup> *Cultural pedagogical practice* is a phrase used in the critical pedagogical philosophy of Henry Giroux (1998), who acknowledges that education does not just take place in schools and universities but in multiple sites as also reflected in my research where I use the broader term *youth enculturation*, in addition to *education* or *schooling*.

<sup>76</sup> My use of the term *integral* incorporates at least the composite meaning of *postformal-integral-planetary*.

<sup>77</sup> "Transdisciplinarity is . . . radically distinct from multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity because of its goal, the understanding of the present world, which cannot be accomplished in the framework of disciplinary research. The goal of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity always remains within the framework of disciplinary research" (Nicolescu, 2002).

Besselaar & Heimeriks, 2001) it was too limiting to use one singular research methodology. In my search for a suitable methodology that could hold all of these perspectives, the postformal methodology of *bricolage*<sup>78</sup> has emerged as the most appropriate. Specifically my *theoretical bricolage*,<sup>79</sup> includes hermeneutics (Bruns, 1992; Demetario III, 2001; Foucault, 2005; Habermas, 1986; Palmer, 1969; Ricoeur, 1986; Wachterhauser, 1986); narrative inquiry (Bocchi & Ceruti, 2002; de Beer, 2003; Montuori, 1999); and feminist methods such as intuitive and organic (Braud & Anderson, 1998). As indicated in the section above, it is also informed by a variety of philosophical perspectives such as integral theory, postmodern philosophy, and futures studies. However, in spite of the plethora of methods that have contributed in some way to this research, the primary methodology used for the analysis is hermeneutics: specifically an in-depth textual analysis of the theoretic narratives of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber.

Hermeneutics as a research methodology in the social sciences has developed over several iterations, from its original roots in Biblical exegesis. There has been much debate in recent decades about the different versions of hermeneutics. The most notable debate was that between Gadamer (1986a) and Habermas (1986). Gadamer's more traditional, philosophical hermeneutics—by his own admission—draws on the early Romantic phase of hermeneutics. Habermas' critical hermeneutics arose from critical theory. French philosopher, Ricoeur called it the *hermeneutics of suspicion*, linking it with the rationalist stream coming from the European Enlightenment (Ricoeur, 1986). Ricoeur has attempted to find reconciliation between these two opposing camps.

This research draws strongly on the hermeneutic approach of Ricoeur. Ricoeur (1986) identified two major approaches to hermeneutics, in the sense that it is about understanding symbolic texts, which have multiple meanings. He refers to one as the *hermeneutics of suspicion*, which seeks to destroy the symbol as the representation of a false reality, destroying “masks and illusions in a relentless rational effort at “demystification” (Palmer, 1969, p. 44). The other approach—*demythologizing*—“deals lovingly with the symbol in an effort to recover meaning hidden in it” (Palmer, 1969, p. 44). It is my intention in this paper to *demythologize* the narratives of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber, in the sense that Ricoeur uses the word.

As an outcome of Ricoeur's hermeneutic reconciliation of the Gadamer-Habermas debate, he developed an integrated approach to hermeneutics that I have utilized. Wilber (2000d) has also developed an approach to hermeneutic interpretation, based on the four quadrants component of his integral framework. Because it is so aligned to Ricoeur's approach, I have included an annotation related to Wilber's quadrants in my summary below. It is worth noting that although

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<sup>78</sup> Interestingly, from a transdisciplinary perspective, Derrida (2001) also discusses the value of Levi-Strauss's use of bricolage in critical analysis of all discourse. “If one calls *bricolage* the necessity of borrowing one's concept from the text of a heritage which is more or less coherent or ruined, it must be said that every discourse is *bricoleur*.”

<sup>79</sup> The notion of “theoretical *bricoleur*” was introduced by Denzin and Lincoln (2005). *Bricolage*—the process and product of the *bricoleur*—has been substantially developed as a postformal educational research methodology by educational researchers Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg drawing on a wide range of philosophies, epistemologies and methods such as critical theory, ethnography, hermeneutics, postmodernism, poststructuralism (Kincheloe, 2001, 2005; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004; Kincheloe, Steinberg, & Hinchey, 1999).

Wilber makes brief mention of Ricoeur's work, he does not mention the close relationship between their positions as indicated below. It is unclear why this might be the case.

In brief, in Ricoeur's (1986) section *Critical reflection on hermeneutics* where he examines Gadamer's position with "a critical eye," he speaks of four ways to approach a hermeneutic analysis—through the *fundamental phenomenon of the text* and through what he calls the *threefold autonomy of the text*.

- The autonomy of the text—the fundamental phenomenon—aligns to Wilber's Upper Right quadrant (UR);
- Autonomy of the text with respect to the intention of the author, aligns to Wilber's Upper Left (UL);
- Autonomy of the text with respect to the cultural and sociological conditions of the text. It is most likely that Ricoeur is using cultural and sociological in the sense of Wilber's Lower Right (LR);
- Autonomy of the text with respect to the "original addressee." This appears to relate to Gadamer's *reader response factor* and would thus align to Wilber's Lower left (LL). (pp. 328-329)

Most of my hermeneutic analysis throughout the main narrative in this paper relates to the first two of Ricoeur's points. In other words my own interpretive task is a hermeneutic dance between the autonomy of each author's actual text (Wilber's UR)—the major reason that I have engaged in such lengthy quoting—and my best interpretation of their original intent (Wilber's UL). The major influences on *how* I interpret their original intent from the actual text are related to the historico-cultural (Wilber's LL) and sociological (Wilber's LR) circumstances of the three authors and myself. In hermeneutic analysis, the best way to improve the validity of the research is to be as transparent as possible in relation to such socio-cultural contextual features as may influence interpretation through hidden biases. The following section attempts to create transparency in these domains.

## A Hermeneutic Contextualization

### Steiner,<sup>80</sup> Gebser and Wilber—Perspectives on Socio-Cultural Contexts

I do not believe that Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), Jean Gebser (1905-1973) or Ken Wilber (born 1949) need a formal introduction in this particular journal. However I will briefly comment, for hermeneutic transparency, on the cultural context of each. A notable fact is that neither Steiner nor Gebser is still alive, whereas Wilber is a contemporary, like myself. I may have cultural biases in this regard and in due course will attempt to make those explicit.

Interestingly, both Steiner and Gebser were central Europeans who moved to Western Europe. In spite of the somewhat unique flavors of these stimulating European cultures where they lived, they both participated intellectually and spiritually—though without contact with each other—in

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<sup>80</sup> I have listed the names here and in the title chronologically, in relation to the timing of their births—Steiner (1861-1925), Gebser (1905-1973), Wilber (born 1949).

the major cultural flourishing that took place in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>81</sup> This included a new openness to Eastern, particularly Indian, spirituality and culture. Gebser himself referred to this extraordinary cultural-scientific-philosophical-artistic flourishing as demonstration of the breaking through of the new integral consciousness structure. They also both witnessed Europe being torn apart by war.

Steiner was born in Croatia, spent his childhood in Austria, then lived and worked mainly in Germany, until escaping to Switzerland after the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, where he remained living and working until his death. However, from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when he began his more active spiritual-scientific work, he traveled extensively in western and central Europe and the UK, to lecture and collaborate with other academics and professionals. Steiner referred to the approach that he took with his work as spiritual science, or *Anthroposophy*.<sup>82</sup>

Gebser was born in Poland, but spent much of his adult life in Italy, Spain and France being friends with Spanish artists and poets, such as Pablo Picasso, and Federico García Lorca. Gebser, like Steiner, also had to escape to neutral Switzerland, being fortunate to leave Paris just prior to the German invasion and enter Switzerland only hours before the borders were closed. He referred to the kind of research he undertook as cultural philosophy (Gebser, 1996a). Gebser obviously also took part in the further cultural-philosophical developments of his times as he lived, for another forty-eight years after Steiner.

By comparison with Steiner and Gebser, Wilber's external cultural context—mid-20<sup>th</sup> century North American—would appear somewhat bland. In his childhood he would have imbibed—either explicitly or implicitly—the mid-western American early television culture of *Cowboys and Indians*.<sup>83</sup> Later in his adolescence and early adulthood he would have been enculturated—even if unconsciously—by American scientism, politico-global hegemony, economism and the reduced versions of modern and postmodern philosophy that seem to have arisen out of this broader hybridization of science-politics-economics for which 20<sup>th</sup> century USA has been notorious.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, the waves of new consciousness that swept the Western world in the sixties and seventies originated in the USA and have contributed a powerful shaping influence on the worldviews of people growing up in those times. Additionally, Wilber, as an adult, clearly took his own enculturation and inner development in hand during the 70's and beyond with his immersion in Eastern spiritual traditions and western philosophy and psychology and his extensive self-education in many fields of study.

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<sup>81</sup> The outstanding individual contributions to an integralization of the noosphere include Einstein, Steiner, Whitehead, Bergson, James, Dewey, Sri Aurobindo, Tagore—to name just a few in the Indo-European lineage. Richard Tarnas (2006) indicates connections between these philosophical-cultural movements and the movements of cosmic proportions also occurring during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I must confess to relative ignorance of parallel developments in other cultures that I imagine have occurred and would be most interested if readers can inform me on this gap.

<sup>82</sup> Anthroposophy could be described as the wisdom of the human being.

<sup>83</sup> This may have some bearing on Wilber's occasional use of *cowboy* metaphors when discussing his critics—a residue of cultural shadow perhaps?

<sup>84</sup> For further academic analysis on the Americanization of postmodern philosophy, refer to Hampson (2007).

In summary, it is my interpretation that some contextual biases arise from this material.

- Gender bias: all three are male and also mostly use the masculine gender when speaking about human beings;
- Eurocentrism: all three are of European descent and there is evidence of Eurocentrism at times in all of their work;
- Indo-Euro-centrism: there is also evidence of an Indo-European cultural and spiritual heritage in all three, though Gebser demonstrates more cultural breadth than the other two in some of his examples;
- All three are biased in favor of progressive and developmental notions of individual and socio-cultural evolution, however they also in different ways problematize such concepts in terms of how they have been used previously. Nuances between them will be uncovered throughout the text.
- Spiritual orientation: all three are critical of the materialist worldview and promote spiritual perspectives. Although none of them are fundamentalist or even sectarian, Steiner and Gebser demonstrate a stronger Christian bias, perhaps related to their cultural contexts. Wilber by contrast demonstrates a bias toward Eastern spiritualities, especially Buddhism.<sup>85</sup>
- Aesthetic orientation: Steiner and Gebser are both strongly oriented towards the aesthetic dimension in the emergent consciousness they characterize, while Wilber is more cognitively oriented;
- Additionally, Wilber appears to be both Anglophone and somewhat American-centric in his orientation.

### Perspectives on My Cultural Context

And what is my own cultural context, my own story? As an Anglo-Australian, not fluent in any other languages, I am aware that my own research is biased by my inability to access relevant material in other languages, unless it has been translated into English. I also have to admit that the cultural context of my own childhood in suburban Australia was probably as bland as Wilber's. Overall, I imagine I have been subjected to several similar cultural and *Zeitgeist* influences to Wilber. We were both children in the fifties, adolescents in the sixties and young adults in the seventies. These are some of the things that have made studying Wilber comfortable for me and may hide some tacit biases. However, I didn't much enjoy the American *westerns* that were offered on TV. Rather, I preferred to draw, read books, knit and daydream. Thankfully, I have little interest in metaphors of war and conflict, including academic "culture wars" or "turf wars." Also, I am a woman, mother, educator, psychologist and futures researcher.

I will proceed to briefly discuss how I am constructing my emphasis with regard to each. By making explicit the biases that I am aware of, I also hope to make more transparent any tacit potential biases that may have slipped my attention. I have been aware for some time however that Steiner's substantial contribution to world philosophy has been strikingly overlooked

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<sup>85</sup> I wonder if the cultural context for this may be as a reaction to some of the fundamentalist strands of Christianity prevalent in the USA. This has been called Wilber's *Pacific* philosophic tendency in contrast to the *Atlantic* philosophic tendency of Steiner and Gebser (Benedikter, 2005).

particularly in the Anglophone academic world. I recognize this is largely because his primary, early 20<sup>th</sup>-century-German writings are very difficult for many contemporary scholars to read and understand, even when translated. Also the explicitness about spirituality<sup>86</sup> in his writings may have been unpalatable to academics until probably the last decade when there has been a shift—at least in the Anglophone academic world. Gebser's work appears to have been similarly overlooked. Over the last decade I have pursued a strong interest in studying/researching many integrative philosophies and theories. When I came to Wilber's work a few years ago I intuitively felt a strong resonance between his and Steiner's work and began to research Wilber in more depth. I was surprised to discover that he had not included any in-depth study of Steiner's extensive writings on the evolution of consciousness. This was in spite of the espoused comprehensiveness of Wilber's synthesis of significant integral theorists in this area. I felt inspired to address this significant gap in the growing integral knowledge base and deepened my research with a view to a postformal integration of Steiner's and Wilber's work. As I immersed myself in the primary sources<sup>87</sup> that Wilber refers to I became increasingly aware of the significance of Gebser's research in its own right, particularly in regard to the scholarship of both his theory and his phenomenology. In order to extend the rigor of my analysis of Steiner and Wilber I decided to use Gebser's structures of consciousness to provide a scaffold to anchor my analysis, thus foregrounding his work. Overall, it is my intention to give a relatively equitable focus to each of their contributions, though not in a mechanical way. As an exception, there are two areas of discussion where I have emphasized Steiner's narrative more strongly, because he has made significant additional theoretical contributions—the impact of astronomic cycles and rapid geo-climatic events on culture and consciousness movements, and the transition between Gebser's magic and mythical structures. I have also chosen in some places to do more direct interpretive quoting from Steiner's work as it is the most dated and difficult and thus the least accessible. By contrast, Wilber's writing is readily available and relatively easy to read and thus paraphrase.

In summary, my reconstructed narrative that draws on the other three, endeavors to balance most of their biases. However, upon reflection, I note that I have actually intensified others to counterbalance the tacit bias in the dominant evolution of consciousness discourse.

- Gender bias: as a woman I provide some balance to the gender bias and endeavor to use gender neutral language myself. However, on further reflection, I wonder why I primarily drew on three male authors—a tacit cultural bias perhaps?
- Eurocentrism: I am also of European descent but have endeavored to balance the Eurocentrism where possible, though I am limited by my lack of other languages;
- Indo-Euro-centrism: I have become aware through this research of my own tacit bias in this direction and have endeavored to address this where possible;

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<sup>86</sup> Some of Steiner's books and lectures use the term *occult* in their titles. He did this deliberately because his whole purpose was to bring into the light of day—through his scientifically and philosophically grounded epistemology—a methodology for accessing knowledge that had previously been *hidden*—that is, *occult*—in Church dogmas and secret societies. The dialectical title *Occult Science*, for one of his major books, was an attempt to make this task explicit (Steiner, 1910/1939).

<sup>87</sup> While I have also begun to enter into the significant contribution of Sri Aurobindo in this area, in order to bound this research into a manageable size, I have had to leave the delight of more fully engaging his work for a future time.

- I am also biased in favor of progressive and developmental notions of individual and socio-cultural evolution and yet also problematize these concepts in terms of how they have been used in modernist discourses;
- Anglophone centrism: I have become aware of my own Anglophone centrism during this research and have endeavored to address it up to the limits of my language skills;
- Spiritual orientation: I also share this bias and have retained it consciously as it is a balance to the dominant discourse which is biased towards scientific materialism;
- Aesthetic orientation: I also share a bias towards the aesthetic dimension. I have chosen to retain it as a balance to the cognicentrism in the dominant discourse, including much of the integral discourse;
- Finally, I am probably a postformal romantic philosopher seeking to salvage remnants of the enormous contribution of the German Idealists and Romantics<sup>88</sup> and proffect them into the future.

My own truth claims are rather humble. I am aware that some of the “data” I present from my three major sources is scientifically unorthodox. I am not claiming that this data is *factual* in a fixed way that can be argued from the perspective of other apparently opposing scientific *facts*. Nor do I think that the current state of scientific knowledge of our deep past and potential futures is the final word. As Foucault and others have demonstrated there are many versions of history. My intuition tells me that there are many versions of evolution of consciousness, and science has not yet discovered them all. My narrative complexly interweaves the honest, authentic life work of three heterodox integral scholars and I intuit that there may be more than a thread of “truth” in what they say. We have seen scientific theories change dramatically over time, and scientists themselves admit that the new insights that drive their research often come from their imaginations, or from intuition. As László (2006) states:

Bruno, Galileo, Copernicus, Kepler, and Newton himself had deep intuitive, even mystical streaks. Nor did intuition lack in the giants of twentieth-century science. As their writings testify, it was a leading element in the thinking of Einstein, Erwin Schrödinger, and Neils Bohr, as well as Wolfgang Pauli and Carl Jung, to mention a few. (pp. 59-60)

I have primarily sought to broaden and deepen the evolution of consciousness discourse, to bring new narratives to the table: the table where *truth* is a movable feast.

Having established the philosophical, theoretical and methodological context, I will now introduce the main narrative in which I integrate the three individual narrative threads of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber, into a larger creative tapestry.

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<sup>88</sup> I note also that Wilber does not give a positive picture of romantic philosophers or eco-philosophers—and I question much of his evidence for this. I suggest that the influence on integral theory of this apparent bias also needs some balancing.

## 2. A Macrohistorical Planetary Tapestry: The Fascinating Integral Narratives of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber

### A Circumnavigation of the Topic

The dialectical challenge felt by many is to evolve a cultural vision possessed of a certain intrinsic profundity or universality that, while not imposing any a priori limits on the possible range of legitimate interpretations, would yet somehow bring an authentic and fruitful coherence out of the present fragmentation, and also provide a sustaining fertile ground for the generation of unanticipated new perspectives and possibilities in the future. (Tarnas, 1991, p. 409)

We live in an hour of grand transition. The tensions between rival worldviews, globally and locally, cry out for mediatory perspectives. Many perceive the current global tumult as evidence of breakdown of culture and with it the safety of the *familiar*. They posit their various solutions, such as: the secular neo-liberal economics of globalization, a return to religious fundamentalism, *cures* for emotional and psychological despair, or just plain war.

Others, like myself, perceive signs of luminous *breakthrough* everywhere.

Is my response—and that of others I resonate with—simply a regressive retreat to romantic naivety? Or might it reflect a transcendence of the worn-out solutions of the “already said?” Might it open up fresh possibilities that lie hidden in the textural—and textual—folds of a delicately re-woven noospheric tapestry? *But . . .* in the wake of postmodernism will I be *allowed* to re-weave a new *macro*-narrative from the unraveled threads of Lyotard’s “incredulity towards metanarratives,” and Derrida’s gift<sup>89</sup> of deconstruction? Perhaps my postcritical *naiveté* may be emboldened by the *écriture féminine* of Hélène Cixous (1991), or what Ursula Le Guin (1989) calls *the native tongue of the individual*<sup>90</sup>—a new way of languaging that is “the coming together, the marriage of the public discourse and the private experience, making a power, a beautiful thing, the true discourse of reason.” Yet Lyotard, Derrida and others<sup>91</sup> need to be honored for deligitimizing and deconstructing many of the grand narratives and taken-for-granted assumptions of the modernity project, that were colonizing our global mind-space. Particularly relevant to evolution of consciousness research was the deconstruction of Social Darwinism, which in an unproblematized form has been used for racist purposes.

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<sup>89</sup> Derrida’s deconstruction is often regarded as a negative and nihilistic *destructive* contribution. However as Benedikter and Hampson—and a reading of Derrida’s own writing—demonstrate, this is largely a misinterpretation (Benedikter, 2005; Derrida, 1995; Hampson, 2007).

<sup>90</sup> Le Guin contrasts this with two other types of language that she calls the “father tongue” (the language of science and politics) and the “mother tongue” (the language of relationships or that spoken by the mother to her children).

<sup>91</sup> There has clearly been some overlap between this therapeutic unraveling of the hegemonic aspects of modernity by postmodern philosophers, and the diverse works of feminists, artists, critical futurists and many post-colonial scholars too numerable to mention.

It is interesting to consider the diversity of myths that existed in the noosphere<sup>92</sup> prior to its colonization by mental-intellectual-rational thinking, then to consider the even greater diversity of mental-intellectual-rational concepts and discourses that have evolved over the last two millennia—notwithstanding the more recent modernist tendency toward scientific hegemony. In this context, how could we not be enthusiastic about the vast potential of integral theories, discourses, narratives and languages that are only recently beginning to emerge on a planetary scale? Among others the integral narratives of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber each offer potential ways to transcend both the illegitimate aspects of earlier grand narratives and the narrative vacuum that has arisen in their place. One of the dangers inherent in such vastly integrative approaches is the potential for philosophic arrogance either in the originator or their followers.<sup>93</sup> Any claim to universalist supremacy in the emerging integral noospheric space may indicate such a shadow. My hope is to contribute to integral *noospheric diversity*<sup>94</sup> by counter-pointing all three narratives.

I offer this contribution to integral theory by way of a four-dimensional article—that in turn encloses a four-strand narrative<sup>95</sup> as its structural anchor—a gesture towards stretching our noospheric vitality, imagination and concepts into future times and cosmopolitan spaces. This article honors the evolutionary life-works of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber with creative, critical reverence. It is a long piece of writing, but not, I hope, too long to be enjoyed. I invite the reader to consider taking the journey—not as one might drive through a fast food outlet, but—as one might wander through a museum or art gallery, taking time to ponder and reflect along the way.

## **An Articulation in Four Dimensions**

The concept of the “four-dimensional continuum” as “curved space” thus holds the incipient possibility of realizing the *integrum*, the “four-dimensional” transparent “sphere in motion.” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 352)

I investigate from one particular aspect . . . and then I investigate three more aspects. . . . In walking round the topic as it were, we are presenting an artistic image of the matter. If one is not aware of this, nothing will be achieved but abstractions and a sclerotic reproduction of what is previously known. (Steiner, 1930/1983b, p. 15)

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<sup>92</sup> Noosphere is a term popularized by Vladimir Vernadsky and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin who referred to it as “the envelope of thinking substance” (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959/2002, 1959/2004). In his 1943 work, *Some Words about the Noosphere*, Vernadsky noted that the term *noosphere* was co-developed and introduced in 1927 by Bergsonian philosopher [Edouard] Le Roy and Teilhard de Chardin (Vernadsky, 1943/2005).

<sup>93</sup> I have experienced this first hand in relation to some exponents of all three approaches.

<sup>94</sup> To my knowledge, feminist theologian and Teilhard de Chardin scholar, Ursula King (2005) coined the term “noospheric diversity.”

<sup>95</sup> My own narrative that weaves the other three together is the fourth strand.

In evolution in general, and human evolution in particular, we are tracing *four different strands* . . . the interior and the exterior of the individual and the social, or the inside and the outside of the micro and the macro.<sup>96</sup> (Wilber, 2000d, p. 125)

Without wanting to become too literal about the number *four*—whether in relation to dimensions, aspects or quadrants—I feel that there is untapped academic value in honoring Gebser’s approach to integrality by way of *enacting* the different structures of consciousness that can be enfolded by it. I have chosen to privilege Gebser’s theoretical framework over the other two, firstly because he has specialized in cultural philosophy and history, and secondly as a check against my own potential bias towards Steiner or Wilber. The five structures of consciousness that Gebser (1949/1985) identified are differentiated by “differing degrees or intensity of awareness.” Gebser (1949/1985) briefly summarized them as follows:

- *Archaic* –It is antecedent to any awareness of time and space and prior to magic consciousness, and inhabits a zero-dimensional world. It is spiritually embedded in nature;
- *Magic* – It corresponds to deep sleep, does not know of time and space, and has its domain in a one-dimensional world. It is vegetative, instinctual and vitalistic in nature;
- *Mythical* –It corresponds to dream states, knows time but not space, and inhabits a two-dimensional world. It is psychic in nature;
- *Mental* – It corresponds to wakefulness, to life in time and space in a three-dimensional world. It is essentially rational in nature;
- *Integral* – It corresponds to aperspectival consciousness, comprising a world of four-dimensions (p. 84). It is essentially spiritual in nature. Elsewhere (Gebser, 1949/1985) notes “This space-time freedom . . . is spiritual; and in this sense the fourth dimension in all its plenitude is the initial expression of a concretion of the spiritual” (p. 387).

A central claim of Gebser is that in order to effect integrality it is necessary to first be able to identify, understand and experience each of the earlier structures. For him, the luminescence of integrality comes from the ability to experience these in full awareness simultaneously—he calls this *concretion* of structures and he writes with this intent.

Several years ago, educationist and Gebser scholar, Bernie Neville, coined the phrase *writing the diaphainon*,<sup>97</sup> pointing to the need to develop new forms of academic writing that enacted integrality (Neville, 2000). I propose that dialogic<sup>98</sup> writing, intertextuality, layering, multivocality are some of the ways forward for enacting integrality in academic writing. Many of

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<sup>96</sup> Wilber’s four quadrants as summarized briefly by him here, bears a remarkable similarity to the *Four Fields of Knowledge* put forward by Ernst Friedrich Schumacher in his 1977 *Guide for the Perplexed*, summarized as 1. I – inner; 2. The world (you) – inner; 3. I – outer; 4. The world (you) – outer. (Schumacher, 1977, p. 62) Although Wilber refers to this book in his reference list at the end of SES, and in two endnotes, he does not cite Schumacher in relation to his four quadrants. (Wilber, 2000d) Some clarification from Wilber on this issue would be valuable.

<sup>97</sup> The *Diaphainon* is one of Gebser’s terms for the transparency of spirit that can arise when integrality is enacted

<sup>98</sup> Any reference to dialogue in integral theory must take account of the seminal work on *deep dialogue* of philosopher, Ashok Gangadean (1998).

these styles are utilized in poststructuralist writing (Deleuze & Conley, 1992; Derrida, 2001; Hampson, 2007; Kristeva, 1982; MacLure, 2006a, 2006b) and formerly by Nietzsche (Del Caro & Pippin, 1887/2006). The journal *Integral Review* is contributing significantly to this project by including extended works, in which the multifocality of a main piece with several appendices can enable a rich hermeneutic circling of understanding (Roy, 2006a). This facilitated the recent article by Gary Hampson (2007), which emphasized the intimate dialogue between content and style through *nanotextology*. Within integral theory Roland Benedikter (2005) has also made a significant beginning with dialogic academic writing. I have also enacted multivocality through my interwoven tapestry of narratives.

It is my intention in terms of overall style to strike a balance between organized structure and creative flow; between repetition and difference (Deleuze, 1994); and between breadth of overview and depth of gap-dives (Roy, 2006b). I will also be using an abundance of textual quotations, firstly because my primary methodology is hermeneutics, and secondly, because I value the versatility of language, the uniqueness of each individual's expression—its flavors and textures, its structure, rhythm and artistry. Specifically, I will introduce each major section with one quote from each of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber, which encapsulates something of their sense of the type of consciousness being discussed in each section. In the main narrative I will be enacting a narrative writing style that deliberately weaves conceptual reasoning with imagination, though from a *post-rational mythopoetic*<sup>99</sup> rather than a *pre-rational* mythic stance.

## A Tapestry of Narratives—Terminological Threads in the Weave

Human art, myths, and philosophies are obvious testimonies to the simple truth that we humans have always been fascinated (if not obsessed) by questions about ourselves. Our myths narrate the stories of how and why we got here, while our philosophies define and analyze what makes us human. (Isenberg & Thursby, 1984-6, p. 2)

The human race seems inexorably drawn toward situating itself within cosmic narratives. (Poletti, 2003, p. 395)

The macrohistorical and macrocosmic scales that are required to research the evolution of consciousness provide significant challenges to the formal research methods of the empirical sciences. This realization is arising from within science itself. Emergentist biologist, Stuart Kauffman, (cited in Kiblinger, 2007) notes that the change in scientific emphasis from the *universal* laws of physics to the open, *contingent* possibilities of the new sciences shifts the methodological interest to stories. “Biologists tell stories. If I am right, if the biosphere is getting on with it, muddling along, exapting,<sup>100</sup> creating, and destroying ways of making a living, then there is a need to tell stories” (p. 196). Delving into ancient paleo-history requires, even of science itself, the narrational piecing together of fragments of fossil evidence and cohering it with

<sup>99</sup> *Mythopoetic* infers a meta-reflection on existing myths including exegesis and re-creation.

<sup>100</sup> *Exaptation* refers in evolution to the cooptation of traits previously adapted for other uses or conditions. Another term that has been used for this characteristic is *bricolage* (Bocchi & Ceruti, 2002).

*sensible imagination*.<sup>101</sup> In considering periods *prior* to fossil evidence the boundaries begin to blur between science, ancient mythology and such fascinating macrohistorical narratives, as I will be presenting here. In this context direct empiricism is inapplicable in isolation, whereas new methods can be developed incorporating imagination, deep intuitive insight and creative storying *in addition to* observation and understanding informed by scientific epistemologies. Goethe foreshadowed this two centuries ago with his *delicate empiricism* that infused both his scientific and his literary work (Holdrege, 2005; Robbins, 2006).

Before beginning the journey of exploration of these three fascinating narratives, I will contextualize key terms used in the title.

## Macrohistorical

The term *history* is problematic in relation to human evolution, because *formal* history refers only to post-literate societies and because, as Foucault and others have demonstrated, an undeconstructed history hides implicit power relations in its explicit narratives (Foucault, 1970/1994). Over the last few decades the tensions between biology-based evolutionists and others taking broader historical, anthropological, philosophical or spiritual views, has paralleled the emergence of transdisciplinary fields, such as cultural studies, futures studies and more recently, integral studies. The concept of *macrohistory* has emerged from futures studies and includes the philosophy of history, macrosociology, geopolitics, cultural studies, international relations, social and cultural anthropology, and spiritual evolution (Galtung & Inayatullah, 1998). It is a term that generously allows for creative, visionary thinking about the past and future while providing a flexible structure from which to view the resultant perspectives. (For a discussion of conceptualizations of history through time, and of time through macrohistory, see Appendix A)

## Planetary

The use of the term *planetary* has been increasing within evolution of consciousness discourses. The semiotic pluralism of its contemporary usage provides a counterbalance to the more politico-economic term: globalization. The major threads include the gradual formalization throughout last century of several layers or spheres of planetary concern to human research: *geosphere*—the physical body of the planet; *biosphere*<sup>102</sup>—the ecological concern for the life system of the whole planet; *noosphere*—in relation to integral planetary consciousness; and *cosmosphere*<sup>103</sup>—in relation to broader understanding of the place of the earth in the cosmos. Many contemporary discourses using the term planetary have been inspired by Teilhard de

<sup>101</sup> My intention with this dialectical term is to ground imagination in the phenomenology of the senses, in the Husserlian sense of *sensible intuition*, in combination with the everyday use of sensible as implying a wisdom dimension.

<sup>102</sup> In Vladimir Vernadsky's theory of how the Earth developed, the noosphere is the third in a succession of phases, after the geosphere (inanimate matter), and the biosphere (biological life)—the latter term he attributed, correctly, to Eduard Suess in his (1885) book *The Face of the Earth*.

<sup>103</sup> The term *cosmosphere* has been largely appropriated by the physical science of cosmology, and other terms which are more inclusive of the possibility of spiritual dimensions to the cosmos are only beginning to be explored. (For more information see Appendix B.)

Chardin's research on the noosphere and his notion of the "planetization of mankind" (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959/2004). (For further discussion on these themes, see Appendix B)

## Tapestry

Why tapestry? Tapestry is a complex, subtly three-dimensional, weaving system traditionally combining a horizontal warp with a weaving weft that is built up vertically enabling rich imagery to emerge through the relationships between the colors. I am picturing the horizontal warp as my endeavors to adequately integrate a spatial perspective—reflecting the span of integration (as discussed above and in more detail in Appendix B). The creative weft enables me to vertically integrate the three narratives through the temporal journey. The narratives of Steiner, Wilber and Gebser provide the colorful image-patterns that are interwoven in the bigger *yarn* of my narrative. Tapestry appears to have reached an artistic peak with the famous *Hunt of the Unicorn* tapestries<sup>104</sup> created in France/Brussels in the early 1500s. This time was a crucial turning point in Europe when the last vestiges of mythic-picture consciousness were about to be rationalized away as superstition (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 21). My interest is in weaving a tapestry<sup>105</sup> of ideas, a *noospheric* tapestry that provides a rich, colorful, evolutionary picture where both *universal* themes and *particularities* can be clearly perceived without disabling further conceptual movement and growth.

## Integral

Socially engaged contemplation [for example, dialog and knowledge building practices] forcefully brings in the ethical dimension, which one risks leaving as remote in strictly private contemplative practices. (Murray, 2006, p. 263)

My interest in writing this composite narrative is one of *integration* of integral theoretic narratives,<sup>106</sup> whereby, in addition to their unique particularities, the potential convergences between Steiner's integrative spiritual-science, Gebser's integral-aperspectival cultural phenomenology, and Wilber's integral-AQAL<sup>107</sup> theoretic framework, will emerge. These

<sup>104</sup> Perhaps these tapestries—of the hunting and capturing of a unicorn—symbolize the overshadowing of mythic and magical consciousness structures in Europe, to be followed by the European Enlightenment. Yet, the mythical unicorn was not actually killed but merely captured and caged. The honoring given to the story in such a grand artistic project may foreshadow the potential re-integration of magic and mythical consciousness within integral consciousness.

<sup>105</sup> In addition, I must honor the previous use of the term "planetary tapestries" by Frank Poletti (2003).

<sup>106</sup> My privileging of the term *integral* over other possible terms such as *holistic*, or *integrative*, is in no way intended to contribute to any "turf wars." I have done this primarily to honour the substantial academic and spiritual grounding given to the term *integral* last century by Gebser and Sri Aurobindo, whose contributions are different in emphasis but entirely consistent with each other. If the notion of integral is able to retain both the scholarship and the spiritual depth of their contributions, integral consciousness will be on safe ground to flourish this century. Furthermore, by using the phrase *integration of integral views* in this paper, clearly I am not referring to any *one* particular integral theory. I also intend for *my* notion of integrality to conceptually include the notion of *holistic*, at least as it used by numerous holistic theorists who honour a developmental and evolutionary perspective.

<sup>107</sup> Although I have not categorized my work explicitly according to Wilber's AQAL framework (Wilber, 2004), the components of this model are implicitly included throughout, though contextualized within the

convergences point to a rising *universal field* of integrality beyond the bounds of any one interpretive framework, yet open to individual interpretation. This is not to ignore the contentions between them or smooth over the gaps and wrinkles, but to see in them the possibility for new understanding to be advanced and new meaning to emerge. Perhaps the differences, gaps and wrinkles are Deleuzian folds—holding within them secrets yet to be revealed, new “lines of flight” for the human family (Deleuze & Conley, 1992). My hope for this century and beyond is that all manner of integral theories and post-theories will flourish as part of integrality’s own awakening. From my assessment—to be discussed in more detail at the conclusion of this paper—Gebser’s writing is the most successful in *enacting* integrality. I have endeavored to echo this style of integrality through enacting the resounding of magic vitality, the circling of mythical imagination, the purposefulness and direction of mental/theoretical concepts, and the clarity of integral concretion of multiple perspectives, to encourage the originary presence to shine through. In this way the intent of my own integrality is not so much in detailing and mapping integral concepts—which Wilber has done so extensively—rather to *enliven* them. I hope to nurture and transpire the living imaginations of the *Zeitgeist* shining through the concepts of integral awakening in our time.

*Now Time.*

### **Fascinating Narratives**

Since evidence can be adduced and interpreted to corroborate a virtually limitless array of worldviews, the human challenge is to engage that world view or set of perspectives which brings forth the most valuable, life-enhancing consequences. (Tarnas, 1991, p. 406)

The narrative I have constructed in this paper attempts what Tarnas suggests. The term *fascinating*, particularly in combination with *narrative*, allows for the visionary and inspirational aspects of Steiner’s, Gebser’s and Wilber’s ideas to come through. I believe that there is something in the way that their narratives are not held within the orthodoxies of one discipline that makes them so fascinating, so “irresistibly charming or attractive” so inclined to “delight” and “spell-bind”<sup>108</sup> us, that is, if we are able to receive them with a consciousness that is open to crossing the boundaries between disciplines. And this is what is required for the new, integral consciousness to emerge.

One of the major challenges confronted by Steiner, Gebser and Wilber is that each in his own way has attempted to elucidate an emergent movement of consciousness that is not yet well-

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larger narrative. 1) *Quadrants* are referred to re integral hermeneutic methodology; 2) clearly Wilber’s *developmental waves* are addressed; 3) a number of *lines* or *streams* are included, such as cognitive, imaginative, spiritual, linguistic and aesthetic, to name a few; 4) the major *states* of deep sleep, dreaming and waking are inherent in the magic, mythic and mental structures of consciousness—as noted earlier; and 5) the notion of *types* is addressed by my overall project which weaves together different *types of integral theoretic narratives*. Finally, my use of *theoretic bricolage* is a type of *methodological pluralism*, which draws in some way on all the various methods Wilber lists in his *eight native perspectives* (Wilber, 2006).

<sup>108</sup> These phrases in inverted commas are selected from a range of dictionary meanings for the term, *fascinating*.

established within mainstream academic discourse. All three use a combination of language and terminology that may be found in a range of disciplines, especially cultural-anthropological, philosophical, psychological, scientific and spiritual/religious. They are telling planetary tales that interweave to varying degrees: art, linguistics, literature, macrohistory, paleontology, philosophy, psychology, science and spirituality. Yet in their endeavors to integrate contributions from the individual disciplines, they are likely to fall prey to attack from within each discipline as not fully embracing their orthodoxies. So rather than referring to their contributions as scientific research, philosophical deduction or spiritual insight, although they include elements of these, I am choosing the term *narrative* for its potential inclusiveness. This also honors the emergence of narrative theory in social science research over the past decade (de Beer, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Heikkinen, Huttunen, & Kakkori, 2000) within the broader context of the *narrative turn*—which followed the *linguistic turn*—within the Academy as a whole (Montuori, 1999). Paradoxically, the narrative turn has co-arisen in parallel with Lyotard's (2004) identification of the “de-legitimation of the grand narratives” of modernity. The constructive nature of his perspective is indicated in the following words:

Most people have lost the nostalgia for the lost narrative. It in no way follows that they are reduced to barbarity. What saves them from it is their knowledge that legitimation can only spring from their own linguistic practice and communicational interaction. Science 'smiling into its beard' at every other belief has taught them the harsh austerity of realism. (p. 41)

This freedom from the hegemony of scientific and ideological *grand narratives* has created a space, a “productive void”<sup>109</sup> from which a plurality of creative, new—perhaps more *humble*—narratives, can arise. In their book, *The Narrative Universe*, “what Ceruti and Bocchi call for is the complex engagement with a multitude of mininarratives” (Poletti, 2003, p. 398). My tapestry of narratives is an artistic engagement with this perspective. Frank Poletti, Ceruti's translator, summarizing some other work of Ceruti, refers to his notion of *Unitas Multiplex*<sup>110</sup> for “unity-in-diversity and diversity-in-unity” (F. Poletti, 2005, p. 290).

This is a contemporary postmodern echo of Whitehead's call a century ago for the production of “a diversity of metaphysical schemes” (Gare, 2002, p. 49). In a comprehensive study of the genealogy of both poststructuralism and process philosophy via Schelling, Gare cites Whitehead: “we cannot produce that final adjustment of well-defined generalities which constitute a complete metaphysics . . . we can produce a variety of partial systems of limited generality” (Gare, 2002, p. 49). Gare continues:

The resulting rival schemes, inconsistent with each other but each with its own merits and its own failures, will then warn us of the limitations within which our intuitions are hedged. This simultaneously opposes the quest for absolute truth while allowing that understanding can be advance. (p. 49)

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<sup>109</sup> Roland Benedikter uses this term to describe the space created by postmodern philosophers, such as Foucault, Derrida, when they go beyond deconstruction to find the “productive void” (Benedikter, 2005).

<sup>110</sup> The term *Unitas Multiplex* has been popularized in Europe by Morin (2001a).

The three narratives I am interweaving could be seen as somewhat *rival* metaphysical<sup>111</sup> schemes in the sense described by Whitehead. From the perspective of some of their followers, there is certainly a competitive element and in some respects an exclusive, rather than inclusive, sensibility. My multifocal process unravels the individual narratives, discarding unviable threads, while simultaneously re-weaving my own composite narrative tapestry to bring a fresh luminescence to the evolution of consciousness discourse.

## An Encircling of Appendices

A brief summary of the three appendices now follows.

### Appendix A: From Time to Time: Retro-Meta-Reflections on Time(s)

Time . . . is a much more complex phenomenon than the mere instrumentality or accidentence of chronological time. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 285)

My cognizance of the complexity of the discourses on time—cultural, scientific, philosophical, feminist, historical, theological—in-*tim*-idates me. Yet, inspired by the criticality of our present planetary moment *in time*, I feel beckoned into developing a tentative temporal template<sup>112</sup> for my evolution of consciousness research. This appendix contextualizes and discusses the default view of time—the three-phase linear-time model of past, present and future that underlies modernist models of *development*, *evolution* and *progress*. It is contrasted with alternative views of time based on Gebser's temporics, which is used to explore Steiner's, Wilber's and other views of time. Gebser's notion of *concretion of time* as being central to integral consciousness is also highlighted. (For more detail see Appendix A).

### Appendix B: Cosmic Kinship: A Micro-Macro View of Space

The overemphasis on space and spatiality that increases with every century since 1500 is at once the greatness as well as the weakness of perspectival man. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 22)

As far as we know, or can determine at this point in our global knowledge capabilities, the earth is the only-born child of her kind in the cosmos. In spite of our common biological ancestry with other mammals,<sup>113</sup> we humans appear to be the most biologically suitable species to play an active role in earth's nurturing care. Yet the imbalance that has arisen from the over-extension of the deficient egoistic aspects of mental-rational consciousness has led to the polar opposite of care for our only planetary home. There is a growing complexity and urgency of planetary issues

<sup>111</sup> One needs to bear in mind that the term *metaphysical* has multiple meanings and it is beyond the scope of this paper to enter into such a terminological discussion. However, based on Wilber's interpretation of Habermas, Wilber describes himself as 'post-metaphysical' (Habermas, 1992; Wilber, 2001c).

<sup>112</sup> My usage of template refers at least to its etymological roots from the Latin: *templum* "piece of ground consecrated for the taking of auspices, building for worship," and from the French *templet* "weaver's stretcher," the latter, in relation to my planetary tapestry.

<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=template&searchmode=none>

<sup>113</sup> It is noteworthy that our brains are second only in complexity to dolphins (Russell, 2000).

from socio-cultural, politico-economic and environmental perspectives—such as a growing youth mental health problems, increasingly inequitable wealth distribution, climate change, mass extinction of species and water shortages. These require more than piece-meal, fragmented *solutions*, and demand a reframing of human relationships with nature and the cosmos. This appendix engages the notion of space in a multidimensional—but not technicist—manner, including: a re-examination of terms such as cosmology, cosmogony, cosmosophy, cosmography and cosmopolitanism; the metaphoric terrestrialization of the cosmos; consideration of the emergence of planetary conceptions of space in the 15<sup>th</sup> century; the plight of indigenous people; and noospheric space. (For more detail see Appendix B).

### **Appendix C: Literacy Unveiled: Art as Language from a Palaeoaesthetic Perspective**

It took centuries to sufficiently devitalize and demythologize the word so that it was able to express distinct concepts freed from the wealth of imagery, as well as to reach the rationalistic extreme where the word, once a power and later an image, was degraded to a mere formula. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 83)

The evolution of human consciousness is intimately interwoven with the development of speech, language and in the last few millennia, increasingly more abstract forms of writing. A brief pictorial essay of this development is interspersed with contextualizing conceptual comment. The piece will, I hope, inspire a new understanding of the earliest forms of aesthetic sensibility expressed by humans and even *pre*-humans. The images may provide an aesthetic balance to my own egocentric bias at times. Although originally intended to also continue the presentation through the aesthetic dimensions of mental and integral modes of consciousness, this proved too large a project for an appendix in an already lengthy article. The piece has been bounded at the end of what we are calling the mythic period, prior to the ego-mental emergence around 800 BCE. The remainder will be pursued as further research. (For more detail see Appendix C).

### 3. The Emergence of the Dawn Human

That original wisdom was an actually inspired wisdom, one that came to man from without, arising from divine worlds. (Steiner, 1971a, p. 114)

Dreamlessly the true men of earlier times slept. Chaung-tzu ca. 350 BCE. (cited in Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 44)

In the uroboric state, man “swims about in his instincts like an animal. Enfolded and upborne by great Mother Nature, rocked in her arms, he is delivered over to her for good or ill.” (Wilber, 1996c, p. 31)

#### Context for Emergence of Dawn Humans

Scientific data and interpretation of it regarding the emergence of human beings on earth is fragmentary, somewhat incoherent, and still being uncovered.<sup>114</sup> To add to the challenge of transdisciplinary research in this area, there appears to be different nomenclature and time-lines to classify the various geological and archaeological periods both between and within disciplines. Scientific convention currently places the emergence of the *Homo* species within the Pliocene geological epoch (c. 5-1.8 million years BP<sup>115</sup>) and continuing throughout the Pleistocene epoch that is referred to as the *Great Ice Age*<sup>116</sup> (c. 1.8 million 10,000 BP) (Lock & Peters, 1999). The Pleistocene—or *Great Ice Age*—also contains within it colder and warmer cycles called glacial and interglacial,<sup>117</sup> respectively. A potential confusion is that the most recent *glacial* period (c. 70,000-10,000 BP) is often also referred to in common parlance as *the Ice Age*. It was preceded by a warm, humid, *interglacial* period (c. 130,000-70,000 BP) (Ambrose, 1998). Within the macro-geological period—the *Great Ice Age*—there are also two archeological periods: the Lower Paleolithic (2.5 million to 180,000 BP) and the Middle Paleolithic (180,000-30,000 BP) (Bednarik, 2007). (For chronology of Palaeolithic periods, see Table C1 in Appendix C).

<sup>114</sup> There are many complex scientific issues re accurately dating events of the past. Radiocarbon dating is only accurate back to c. 60,000 years BP. Also “Fossils older than ~100,000 years do not yield measurable DNA samples, thus do not currently bring order to the confusion of bones and stones among the hominins dating back millions of years.”

[http://www.tufts.edu/as/wright\\_center/cosmic\\_evolution/docs/fr\\_1/fr\\_1\\_cult1.html](http://www.tufts.edu/as/wright_center/cosmic_evolution/docs/fr_1/fr_1_cult1.html)

<sup>115</sup> ‘BP’ in geological terms refers to *Before Present* (which actually means before 1950).

<sup>116</sup> Although the theory of the Great Ice Age was formalized by Swiss paleontologist Louis Agassiz in 1837, the term *Eiszeit* or Ice Age, had already been coined by Goethe in his novel *Wilhelm Meister* in 1823 (Cameron, 1965). Goethe’s contribution to the nomenclature has been endorsed by *The Subcommission on Quaternary Stratigraphy* (SQS), International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS). <http://www.quaternary.stratigraphy.org.uk/about/history.html>

<sup>117</sup> For at least the last million years the glacial/interglacial periods have followed fluctuating cycles related to the astronomical phenomenon called the *precession of the equinoxes*, now recognized as contributing to geologically abrupt climate change (Varadi, Runnegar, & Ghil, 2003). <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/paleo/abrupt/story2.html> For discussion of the potential influence of these cycles on culture and consciousness see Appendix A.

The biological lineage and nomenclature of early species within the *Homo* genus is also academically contested, with almost every source using a slightly different taxonomy and/or chronology. It is beyond the scope of this article to fully articulate this debate except by brief pointers. The early *Homo* species, *H. Habilis* and *H. Rudolfensis*, according to fossil records, first inhabited Africa in the Pliocene epoch, a little over 2 million years ago (Lock & Peters, 1999). However, the *Homo* status of these early *hominins*, is currently under revision (Key, 2000; Wood & Collard, 1999). The middle *Homo* period included *H. Ergaster/Erectus*—who emerged in both Africa and Eurasia, during the Plio-Pleistocene transition (2 million to 200,000 BP) (Key, 2000; Lock & Peters, 1999; Wood & Collard, 1999). The group of species now generally referred to as *Archaic Homo* species (Key, 2000), include the well-known *H. Neanderthalensis* from western Eurasia (250,000-30,000 BP) and *H. Heidelbergensis* identified in Africa and Eurasia (500,000-100,000 BP) (Key, 2000; Lock & Peters, 1999; Wood & Collard, 1999). Archaeological convention currently dates the first appearance of *H. Sapiens*—also referred to as *anatomically modern human*—to approximately 100,000 BP (Key, 2000), though it is often placed earlier.

The timing of the development, evolution and characteristics of the origins of human nature and consciousness is also a highly academically contested area. My interest here is not in debating issues of taxonomy or detailed chronology as these are appropriate areas for disciplinary specialization. Rather my interest is in the bigger picture transdisciplinary context that this data informs, particularly the assumptions about the nature and consciousness of early humans. For a discussion on the two major theories regarding human origins: the *short-range* (or *cultural explosion* theories) and the *long-range* (or gradualist theories) see Appendix C. With regard to the capabilities of *Homo Ergaster/Erectus* the views range from archaeologists who claim that they were little more than apes, to rock art scientists who claim that they were already sea-faring at 800,000 BP (Bednarik, 2003a). The use of fire by *H. Ergaster/Erectus* is generally accepted from at least one million years ago (Sedikedes, Skowronski, & Dunbar, 2006) and may go back to 1.42 million years ago (Watson, 2005, p. 26). Watson claimed that about a million years ago *H. Ergaster/erectus* spread out over much of Eurasia (i.e., not the northern latitudes, Australia or the Americas). This may add circumstantial support to Bednarik's sea-faring claims. The second major cranial expansion occurred around 500,000-300,000 BP with the new species *H. Heidelbergensis* being referred to as the *archaic Homo Sapiens* from which both the Neanderthal and the anatomically modern human emerged (Hodgson, 2000; Mithen, 2007).

There are challenges in unraveling the links between the academic context and the earliest consciousness referred to in our three narratives particularly with regard to early chronology. Wilber's—with his access to contemporary taxonomies—is the easiest to place. His narrative begins with the pre-homo, hominin species dating from five or six million years to 200,000 years BP. Steiner's somewhat contradictory statements about chronology need to be contextualized within the early 20<sup>th</sup> scientific notion of the earth as being only about 100 million years old. (See Appendix A for more details.) Steiner refers to the first period of *human* consciousness in many of his lectures as having a duration of millions of years. It appears most likely that both Wilber and Steiner are referring to the early and middle *Homo* species during the Plio-Pleistocene glacial epochs—up to, and including, Lower Palaeolithic *archaic humans* prior to the emergence of anatomically modern humans. Gebser refuses to enter into what he calls *mental mode* linear,

temporal placement of archaic consciousness, though his choice of the term *archaic* may not be coincidental (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 61).

## Terminology Issues

A divergence between the three narratives is their terminology for identifying these earliest humans and their consciousness. Steiner's rather anachronistic terminology for this first type of human is *Lemurian*, which in his day was a conventional scientific term.<sup>118</sup> As mentioned, Gebser used the term *archaic*, because of its Greek roots in *arche*, meaning inception or origin, from which Gebser focuses on *origin*.<sup>119</sup> Wilber uses the hybrid term *archaic-uroboric*, to combine an honouring of Gebser's usage with his own research: "*Uroboros*<sup>120</sup> is the primordial mythic symbol of the serpent eating its own tail, and signifies self-possessed, all-enclosing but narcissistic, "paradisical" but reptilian (or embedded in lower life forms)" (Wilber, 1996c, p. 26).

Unlike most scientific endeavors that study the human as an *object*, Steiner, Gebser and Wilber have each written narratives of the evolution of human consciousness, from the *inside*—the *subjective* side. Wilber asks: "What might Dawn [Human] have experienced, before [she] developed language,<sup>121</sup> higher-order emotions, and self-consciousness?" (Wilber, 1996c, p. 33). Gebser (1949/1985) uses *cryptic koans* from Chinese sages of the late mythic era—see above quote—claiming they are more illuminating of archaic consciousness than our contemporary "retrospective conclusions and prognostications" (p. 45). Steiner (1904/1959) in reference to the subsequent stage—has this to say: "The aim here is to record some details concerning their spiritual character and the inner nature of the conditions under which they lived" (p. 41).

## Key Features of *Archaic* Consciousness

Several features have been identified in the narratives—or associated literature—and will be briefly explored through the text:

<sup>118</sup> In Steiner's time the word *Lemuria* had a scientific meaning as it was coined by geologist Philip Sclater who theorised a lost continent related to the presence of fossil *lemurs* in both Madagascar and India, but not in Africa or the Middle East. The term was used by biologist, Ernst Haeckel, and also by theosophists. While Steiner initially collaborated with Ernst Haeckel and theosophists he later clearly distanced his epistemology from both (Steiner, 1925/1928, pp. 338-339).

<sup>119</sup> *Archaic* is also used in several other ways: In paleoanthropology it is used to refer to early Homo species such as *H. Heidelbergensis* and *H. Neanderthalensis* in alignment with Gebser (Key, 2000). In American pre-history it is used to describe the period from 8,000-1,000BCE; and is also used in art history. [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia/761566394\\_9/Human\\_Evolution.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia/761566394_9/Human_Evolution.html)

<sup>120</sup> It appears that Wilber may be taking an overly biological interpretation of this symbol compared to the intention of Erich Neumann whose work he cites. Neumann (1954/1995) himself has much to say about the *Uroboros* symbol, including the following: "As the Heavenly Serpent, the uroboros was known in ancient Babylon . . . and also the Primal Being that says: I am Alpha and Omega . . . the most ancient deity of the prehistoric world" (p. 10).

<sup>121</sup> It should be noted that humans are not the only species who have developed higher-order emotions, complex language and some degree of self-consciousness. It is outside the scope of this paper to explore this in detail however (Hampson, 2005; Lilly, 1967; Russell, 2006).

- Embeddedness in nature and the cosmos.
- Biologically primitive or spiritually wise?
- Matriarchal culture.
- Sense of Eden/Paradise.
- Palaeoaesthetic sensibility and expression. (This is detailed in Appendix C).

### **Embeddedness in Nature and the Cosmos**

I will set the scene with Wilber's characterization of Archaic-Uroboric. Drawing on a range of anthropological sources, he summarizes it thus:

The uroboros represents a primal, undifferentiated, dreamy autistic state in which man did not know himself as separate, and did not have self-conscious life. (Wilber, 1996c, p. 29)

While Wilber emphasizes the embeddedness in nature at this stage, Gebser and Steiner also emphasize embeddedness in the cosmos. Although Gebser (1949/1985) does not go into detail in cosmogenic terms, he claims that the primary relationship for archaic human was with the “universal or [cosmic]” (Synoptic table). Steiner's cosmogony is extensive but beyond the scope of this paper to cover in any detail. A distinguishing feature of Steiner's dialectical insights is that his notion of human is *spiritual* in origin—and thus not solely dependent on the *Homo* or even hominin *biological* form. He sees early life forms as part of the struggle of the originary soul-spiritual human being to take physical form on earth (Poppelbaum, 1970; Thompson, 1998).<sup>122</sup> Gebser and Wilber make similar claims that the physical world unfolds from the spiritual, though neither discuss this area in as much detail as Steiner. There are several integral theorists who have proposed a dialectic between biological *evolution* and spiritual *involution*<sup>123</sup> (Aurobindo, 2000; Combs, 2002; Davidson, 1992; Gebser, 1970/2005; Hocks (2006); Murphy, 1992; Steiner, 1971c; Wilber, 2001b). Even though Steiner, Gebser and Wilber share the involutionary view of evolution, there are subtle divergences as the next sub-section demonstrates.

### **Biologically Primitive, or Spiritually Wise?**

Georg Feuerstein, key interpreter, and translator of Gebser's work in the USA, identifies a significant divergence between Wilber's and Gebser's views in one important area. Feuerstein (1997) notes Gebser's position on archaic consciousness as being “closest to and presumably originally identical with Origin” while Wilber's position is that “the archaic structure is closest not to Origin but to the great apes and [hominins]” (p. 34). While space does not allow a full participation in the ensuing discussion between Wilber and Feuerstein, my interpretation is that

<sup>122</sup> This is notwithstanding the notion that numerous species diverged from this hominin line at various earlier points in time.

<sup>123</sup> The notion of involution could be conceptually linked with the concept of *implicate order* developed from the 1960s by theoretical physicist David Bohm drawing on quantum physics and Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy (Bohm, 1980; Bohm & Edwards, 1991). Bohm's notion of implicate order has also been conceptually linked to biologist Sheldrake's (2006) *morphic field* theory and more recently with systems scientist Laszlo's Akashic—or information—field theory (Combs, Arcari, & Krippner, 2006; László, 2007). Further research on this topic is in process (Gidley, 2007c).

the problem arises from a polarized perspective between biological and spiritual evolution. In regard to the earliest humans, Gebser emphasized spiritual evolution whereas Wilber focused on the biological primitiveness.

The archaic-uroboric period . . . presents in a very global fashion the great transition from mammals in general to man in particular, and stands further as the great subconscious ground out of which the figure of the ego would eventually emerge. . . . (Wilber, 1996c, p. 33)

Steiner dealt with this paradox dialectically by presenting information from both perspectives. In some of his writing he spoke in reference to the dominance of biology in terms of “passionate impulses” in a similar vein to Wilber’s reference to their embeddedness in, and domination by, the “lower levels themselves.” His biological knowledge was quite extensive. Some of his descriptions of the proto-humans<sup>124</sup> prior to anatomically modern humans suggest biological knowledge similar to that expressed in recent reconstructions of *H. Ergaster/Erectus*, by evolutionary psychologists—“a shift of energy from the gut to the brain” (Sedikedes, Skowronski, & Dunbar, 2006, p. 59). The other pole of the dialectic is that—like Gebser—Steiner (1971a) drew attention to the original wisdom of these early humans.

That *original wisdom* was an actually inspired wisdom, one that came to man from without, arising from divine worlds [italics added] (p. 114).

Wilber (1996c) is apparently also aware of this paradox, using the term “ground unconscious” to distinguish this period from a fully unfolded future “superconsciousness” (p. 34-35). This paradox will continue to recur as our narrative proceeds and becomes increasingly illuminated—as Gebser might say—the more *transparency* we bring to the issues. My research seeks to throw light on this issue through exploring the art of the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic period. (See Appendix C).

## **Matriarchal Culture**

Another convergence between the three narratives is that all three consider the archaic, and subsequent period to be strongly influenced by female archetypes. As Wilber (1996c) states—citing Campbell—the Great Mother “has shown herself at the very dawn of the first days of our own species” (p. 129). This is consistent with other cultural mythological research on the significance of the female archetype as primordial Goddess—represented in Paleolithic art as the Venus figurines; and the Great Mother archetype in Neolithic and Egyptian mythology (Eisler, 1987; Neumann, 1954/1995). Gebser (1949/1985) claims that the matriarchy did not really break down until around 500 BCE with the entrenchment of patriarchy in Greece. Steiner claimed that these early matriarchs assisted the development of early language, and even memory, through initiating rhythmical chanting, and interpreting the hidden language of nature—which they expressed in *sound, tone and rhythm*. This is supported by recent research into the origins of music and language (Dissanayake, 2005; Merker, 2001; Mithen, 2007; Skoyles, 2000; Wallin, Merker, & Brown, 2001). Human language is believed to have developed very slowly—with few

<sup>124</sup> “The shape of the head and forehead was quite different; the forehead was much lower and the digestive organs were much more powerful” (Steiner, 1986a, p. 65).

sounds, mostly consonantal and gradually in combination with vowels—for about half a million years during the Paleolithic period, until the Upper Paleolithic around 35,000 years ago (Lock & Peters, 1999, p. 771-772). (See also Appendix C).

### **Sense of Eden/Paradise**

In spite of some differences in temporal orientation and detail, the narratives of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber converge in many respects on their overall sense of this archaic structure of consciousness. Gebser stresses the pre-temporal and pre-spatial nature of their consciousness. Steiner (1978b) claimed that this period was what in the bible was called “Paradise” (p. 90). Gebser’s (1949/1985) representation of this period is very similar:

It is akin, if not identical, to the original state of biblical paradise: a time where the soul is yet dormant, a time of complete non-differentiation of [human] and universe. (p. 43)

Wilber (1996c) citing Gowan’s (1975) *Trance, Art and Creativity*, concurs with both Steiner’s and Gebser’s notion of the relationship between the dawn human and the biblical paradise, or Eden:

*Genesis* describes this state as “Eden” and tells us that when [humans] ate of the tree of knowledge, [they lost their] innocence, and [were] cast out (into space, time, and personality). (p. 29)

The inclusion of these comments is not intended to suggest that these authors take the biblical metaphor of Eden/Paradise literally. Rather, my interpretation of their original intentions is that they are each taking a critical stand against the materialistic perspectives of most evolutionary biology and are endeavoring to present an alternative narrative for consideration. My privileging of their narratives arises from the same rationale. It is a rewriting of the evolution story at its origins.

### **Summary and Relevance for Today**

In summary, although there is a remarkable coherence between the three narratives for this archaic beginning of human consciousness, there is also differentiation of emphasis. Gebser’s interest appears to focus on grounding this early consciousness in an originary spiritual experience, with limited attention to matters of biological development—he is primarily developing a spiritually-oriented, cultural phylogeny. He does however make reference to “the parallels between the developmental stages of mankind and those of the individual, in the context of the various structures of consciousness” but does not pursue this in detail (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 58). Wilber’s interest appears to be in emphasizing the limitations of the early biological human form in enabling complex cognition, which he sees as a basis for spiritual development. He also subscribes to the notion that individual development (ontogeny) recapitulates cultural evolution (phylogeny). Steiner integrates these positions demonstrating an evolving complex dialectical relationship between the originary soul-spiritual consciousness of humans that he claimed accompanied and *informed* biological evolution. He also described the gradual incorporation of the human spirit into material/biological form over vast time periods, as the

proto-forms biologically evolved.<sup>125</sup> Anthropologist/ ethnographer Richard Grossinger uses the dialectical phrase *spiritual embryogenesis* for the significant work that Steiner has undertaken in this regard (Grossinger, 2000, p. 706).

The relevance for today of Gebser's notion of the originary spiritual aspects of archaic consciousness is intrinsically linked with his notion of integral consciousness, which, when awakened, enables conscious access to this original spirituality. For Gebser, the key though is *intensification* of consciousness, not *regression* to a previous state.

### Transition

A major dissonance between the evolutionary biology narratives and these narratives, particularly Steiner's and Gebser's, is that the latter identify a type of spiritual wisdom in the consciousness of these early humans. An appreciation of the notion of involution as being in a dialectical relationship with evolution—which Wilber has as well—is a starting point to understand these perspectives. This is in stark contrast to the views of most biologists, including emergence theorists who claim that mind, morals—and even spirituality—emerge purely from physical/biological existence (Goodenough & Deacon, 2006).

Yet Steiner, Gebser and Wilber all agree that these archaic humans did not yet experience their own independent selves, nor did they yet have a sense of difference between earth and sky. Based on this the transition between what Gebser calls *archaic* and *magic* consciousness appears to mark the emergence of the human's earliest sense of his or her own individual self/soul. This is not inconsistent with recent evolutionary psychology research (Sedikedes, Skowronski, & Dunbar, 2006). This consideration leads the narrative into the next major period.

Before we continue our narrative we need to diverge momentarily and consider some macro-pauses in this evolutionary narrative . . .

### The Punctuated Global *Disequilibrium*<sup>126</sup> of Geo-Climatic Catastrophes

The extent to which human consciousness and culture have been affected by major geologic and climatic events has received little attention in the evolution of consciousness discourse, perhaps largely as a result of disciplinary isolationism. Steiner is one of the first post-Enlightenment theorists to coherently integrate phenomena such as astronomical cycles and geoclimatic changes with culture, mythology and consciousness through his evolutionary macrohistory (Scharmer, 1998). His approach foreshadowed contemporary integrative scientific and philosophical developments (Firestone, West, & Warwick-Smith, 2006; Tarnas, 2006;

<sup>125</sup> Sri Aurobindo's extensive writings on evolution also include a similar perspective to Steiner's where the spiritual dimension he calls *overmind* gradually descends into the material world (Aurobindo, 2000).

<sup>126</sup> The term Punctuated Equilibrium was coined by palaeontologists Niles Eldridge and Stephen Jay Gould in 1972 to represent observed discontinuities and plateaus emerging from fossil evidence and in contrast to Darwin's *gradualist* evolution theory (Eldridge & Gould, 1972). The term punctuated *disequilibrium* has recently been used to refer to sudden catastrophic climatic or ecological events related to global warming (Angelo, 2005). I am semiotically linking these two meanings in my use of the latter term.

Ulansey, 1994). Neither Gebser nor Wilber seem aware of, or pay attention to, the impact of such geo-climatic events on culture and consciousness. However, Steiner—who predicted that science would eventually realize the validity of his insights—spoke of the significance of *two* major environmental catastrophes that marked transitions between major movements of culture and consciousness.

Steiner’s narrative gains some support from the renewed interest in catastrophe theory in geology, in response to the current climatic situation and the growing awareness of the possibility of future rapid climate change (Mithen, 2004; Weart, 2003). Early 19<sup>th</sup> century theories of catastrophism and resultant extinctions were generally associated with *short* time-scales for the history of the Earth, and religious overtones—positing miraculous/divine interventions in subsequent re-population. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a shift to more scientific geological theories, such as *uniformitarianism* and theories of gradual change that echoed Darwin’s *gradualism* in classical biology. However, the postformal, interdisciplinary turn in science is beginning to point to underlying phenomenological connections that may have been “known” in pre-modern myths but that went unnoticed as a result of the disciplinary specialization of the modernist scientific period (Ulansey, 1991). In addition to the major scientific shifts from classical to quantum physics and from classical biology to chaos and complexity, the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw dramatic changes to scientific perceptions and theories about numerous other phenomena with potential relevance to evolution of consciousness theories:

- Radio carbon dating was discovered in 1949, enabling scientists to determine the age of materials up to 60,000 years ago;
- As a result, the scientifically theorized age of the earth, went from 100 million years to 4.5 billion years;
- The stable, static notion of continents gave way to continental drift theory in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, followed in the 1960s by the mobile dynamic notion of plate tectonics.

In the light of some of these changes, contemporary geology theories propose that Earth’s overall history is a slow, gradual story, punctuated by occasional natural catastrophic events that have affected the Earth and its inhabitants (Firestone, West, & Warwick-Smith, 2006). Contemporary interdisciplinary theories are beginning to address these issues. Recent research from evolutionary psychology<sup>127</sup>—including methods from geology, physics, archaeology, mythology, and anthropology—supports the “punctuated” narrative of cultural evolution proposed here (Sedikedes, Skowronski, & Dunbar, 2006, p. 58). Also leading archaeological and anthropological research appears to be moving in this direction. Archaeologist, Steven Mithen, refers to glaciations cycles, ice ages and global warming as significant events in cultural change. Anthropologist, Richard Klein, points to the significance of both the Younger Dryas event and also the Toba Volcano—which we will discuss below—as triggers for major shifts in culture and consciousness (Klein & Edgar, 2002). Such research demonstrates support and formalization of some of the insights that Steiner intuited and cohered more than a century ago. What is still

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<sup>127</sup> A critique can be made of much evolutionary psychology in that it is uncritically endorsing the one-sided materialistic Darwinism of much evolutionary biology (Loye, 2004).

needed, though, is a comprehensive transdisciplinary theoretical integration of this material focusing on potential effects on the evolution of culture and consciousness.

Firstly, Steiner (1904/1959) referred to a geo-climatic catastrophe that marked the end of the development we have been discussing and the beginning of the culture that followed it: “mighty volcanoes existed almost everywhere and developed a continuous destructive activity. . . . It was through the activity of this volcanic fire that the destruction of the Lemurian land came about” (p. 85). He saw this as a period when much of the population of the time was wiped out: “a great part of the land was destroyed, and only a small number of the inhabitants . . . were preserved and could continue the human race” (Steiner, 1954/1981a, p. 123). Paleoanthropologist, Stanley Ambrose (1998), proposed that the eruption of the *Toba Volcano*<sup>128</sup> caused the well-documented massive reduction in global population—called a bottleneck (p. 627). He concludes that “Volcanic winter may have inserted a brief Punctuated Equilibrium event (Eldredge & Gould, 1972), in the course of recent human evolutionary history, accelerating geographic differentiation (p. 644-645). Although there has been some contestation of details of his claims (Gathorne-Hardy & Harcourt-Smith, 2003), Ambrose (2003) has responded, providing further substantial evidence for his theories. Anthropologist Richard Klein has also lent support to Ambrose’s theory (Klein & Edgar, 2002). More research appears to be needed.

A second abrupt and extreme climatic catastrophe occurred approximately 60,000 years after the Toba volcano. This event is known as the Younger Dryas. Very recent archaeological research indicates the Younger Dryas event was triggered by the meltwater in North America, from the last glacial period, forcing the ocean current patterns to slow or stop. This was as a result of a surge of fresh water and reduced salinity in the North Atlantic Ocean, and sent Europe into a sudden freeze, over just a few decades. (Carlson et al., 2007; Colman, 2007; Tarasov & Peltier, 2005). This new cold event lasted around 1,400 years to approximately 9,500 BCE, beginning as the Earth was coming out of its 60,000-year glacial period.

Steiner also speaks of a second major catastrophe that occurred at the end of the ice age. Steiner (1910/1939) described and theorized it as a major geo-climatic event of freezing and melting during which the sea levels rose such that “The face of the earth was totally changed in regard to the distribution of water and land” (p. 94). Steiner’s insight was quite unusual for his times given that the geological convention was uniformitarianism. The Younger Dryas as a phenomenon was not discovered until 1949, and the acceptance of the notion of rapid climate change by geoscientists has only begun very recently. Physicist Spencer Weart (2003) pinpoints it to, “the day they read the 1993 report of the analysis of Greenland ice cores.”

A recent scholarly book by nuclear physicist Richard Firestone, Allen West and geologist, Simon Warwick-Smith (2006), has emphasized the significance of catastrophe theory. They draw on a combination of hard science and North American indigenous mythology and oral history focusing on cosmological contributions to such events. Their evidence pointing to a comet strike corroborates with the timing of the beginning of the Younger Dryas, 13,000 years ago. Steiner (1910/1939) also pointed to the interconnections between these tellurian events and

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<sup>128</sup> In Ambrose’s (1998) words “The last glacial period was preceded by one thousand years of the coldest temperatures of the Later Pleistocene (71–70 ka), apparently caused by the eruption of Toba, Sumatra. Toba was the largest known explosive eruption of the Quaternary” (p. 623).

events of cosmic proportions. “Such periods and changes consequent upon them are connected with mighty processes in the constellation, position and movement of the cosmic bodies connected with the sun” (p. 94). These earth-influencing astronomical cycles are now referred to as the *Milankovitch cycles* (See Appendix A).

In summary, the last glacial period—known as *the ice age* (c. 70,000-10,000 BP)—appears to have been punctuated on either side by two relatively sudden, extreme environmental events.

- The volcanic winter and subsequent 1,000 year freeze caused by the Toba supervolcano in Indonesia approximately 73,000 years BP; and
- The Younger Dryas, a dramatic 1,300-1,500 year freeze—up to 11,500 BP—as a result of the ice-melts in North America from the warming after the last major glacial period.

Notwithstanding the difficulties a century ago—and even today<sup>129</sup>—in accurately dating such distant events, Steiner identified dramatic geo-climatic events very similar to these, pointing to them as significant markers between the major movements of culture and consciousness we are discussing. It is however difficult to establish the veracity of his claim in relation to the earlier of these two events because he gives contradictory indications about chronology.

The next section of our narrative introduces developments in consciousness and culture—especially aesthetics—of the Ice-Age Humans and particularly their development during the period between and surrounding these punctuations (70,000-10,000 BP).

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<sup>129</sup> The radiocarbon dates from *Geißenklösterle* corroborate observations from other non-archaeological data sets indicating large global fluctuations in the atmospheric concentrations of radiocarbon between 30 and 50 ka calendar years ago. These fluctuations lead to complications in building reliable chronologies during this period and cause the *Middle Paleolithic Dating Anomaly* and the *Coexistence Effect*, which tend to exaggerate the temporal overlap between Neanderthals and modern humans (Conard & Bolus, 2003).

## 4. Magic Connectionism: Art and Culture in a Glacial-Landscape

Of the period we are about to enter, and with that “subjective mood” in mind, I suggest quite simply: the first men and women to appear on the earth during these times . . . were not just simple hunters and gatherers—they were magicians. (Wilber, 1996c, p. 43)

Everything that is still slumbering in the soul is at the outset for magic [consciousness] reflected mirror-like in the outside world . . . as we experience dream events in sleep . . . In a sense one may say that in this structure of consciousness was not yet [internalized], but still resting *in the world*. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 46)

In the earliest period [humans] possessed strong magical powers. With these powers [they] . . . mastered the forces of nature and in a certain way [were] able to see into the spiritual world. Clairvoyance then gradually faded. [Humans] were destined to found the culture belonging to the earth; they were to descend to the earth in the real sense. (Steiner, 1978b, p. 96)

### Context for the Flourishing of Palaeoaesthetics

‘Art’ has always been associated with the early cultural ‘success’ of anatomically modern humans, and with the establishment of what appears to be a ‘fully human’ cultural pattern. (Lock & Peters, 1999, p. 289)

This decade-old conventional archaeological statement appears to be becoming outmoded by the increasing body of evidence of aesthetic development in early *Homo* species, such as *H. Heidelbergensis* and *H. Neanderthalensis* and the growing interest in palaeoart outside of Europe (as discussed in some detail in Appendix C). The last glacial age (c. 70,000-10,000 BP) was a period of great development of culture and human consciousness. This is within the late Pleistocene age and up to the beginning of the current geological epoch—the Holocene that began c. 10,000 BP. In archeological terms this includes the latter part of the Middle Paleolithic period and the entire Upper Paleolithic period. As indicated earlier the transition from the Lower to the Middle Palaeolithic periods was highly significant for human evolution with several species of the *Homo* genus co-habiting the planet—*H. Heidelbergensis* identified in Africa and Eurasia (500,000-100,000 BP), followed by *H. Neanderthalensis* from western Eurasia (250,000-30,000 BP) and *H. Sapiens* (appearing c. 100,000 BP) now frequently referred to as *anatomically modern human* (Key, 2000; Lock & Peters, 1999; Wood & Collard, 1999).

Since the discovery in 1940 of significant rock art<sup>130</sup> in the *Lascaux* caves in France, several sub-cultures have been identified by paleoanthropologists (Conard & Bolus, 2003). These are detailed in Appendix C. There is currently much debate in archaeological and other discourses

<sup>130</sup> These discoveries lent support to the modernist bias in archaeological and anthropological research of the time that was already Eurocentric. However, research in recent decades, particularly in Australia and India, points to significantly earlier rock art (Bednarik, 2003b; 2003c).

that study human origins. The new field of evolutionary psychology<sup>131</sup> is a quasi-scientific field that investigates such matters (Sedikedes, Skowronski, & Dunbar, 2006). However, even within this field there is contestation regarding the evolution of what is called *symbolic self*: the ability to “consider the self as an object of one’s own reflection;” “to store the products of such reflections in memory;” and to regulate its relations with the “social and physical environment” (Sedikedes, Skowronski, & Dunbar, 2006, p. 56). Constantine Sedikedes and his colleagues propose that the *human self* emerged with the “cultural revolution . . . in Africa some time prior to 100 [thousand years ago]” (p. 66). This is considerably earlier than the widely held belief that it was simultaneous with the explosion of cultural activity in the Upper Paleolithic period in Europe around c. 40,000 years ago. A recent edited book has explored—perhaps for the first time—an archaeological theoretic perspective that considers the possible role of the individual in Lower and Middle Palaeolithic times (Gamble & Porr, 2005). The latter points beyond the dualism of cultural explosion and gradualist models to “a complex mosaic pattern of cognitive advances” (Clack, 2005, p. 281). The notion that individuals as such existed in these times and could be situated in their “landscapes rather than their evolutionary stages” (Clack, 2005, p. 282), may lend some indirect support to the heterodox notions of Steiner and Wilber that at any one time in evolutionary human history there have been groups of individuals, in each cultural landscape, operating at higher developmental levels than the majority of humans.

Another major change that is arising is arguably part of what I will speak more about in the penultimate section of this paper—the evolution of discourses through the emergence of postformal-integral-planetary consciousness. In fields such as archaeology and anthropology the shift from modernism to postmodernism is particularly evident leading to a spectrum of theories in relation to evolution, development and progress (Barnard & Spencer, 1998; M. Johnson, 1999). Archaeology professor Julian Thomas refers to the need to introduce hermeneutic, phenomenological, feminist and post-structuralist philosophies into the field of archaeology (Thomas, 1998, 2004). Such a postmodern approach to archaeological research is being undertaken by rock art scientist Robert Bednarik, who has been developing a more postformal epistemological approach incorporating taphonomy,<sup>132</sup> cultural hermeneutics, and notions from the field of semiotics (Bednarik, 1994, 2003b, 2003c, 2006a; 2006b). Numerous non-Anglophone scholars<sup>133</sup>—particularly from Eastern Europe are pursuing a postformal, semiotic approach to their archaeological research (Antonova & Rayevsky, 2002; Gheorghiu, 2002; Klejn, 2005, 2006; Stoliar, 2006; Yevglevsky, 2002, 2005, 2006).

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<sup>131</sup> Evolutionary psychology as a field is largely subject to the materialistic biases of much of the biological evolution discourse (Loye, 2004).

<sup>132</sup> *Taphonomy* refers to the “study of the processes affecting rock art after it has been executed, determining its present appearance and statistical properties” – IFRAO Glossary (Bednarik, 2007, p. 199).

<sup>133</sup> Much of this work appears in a three-volume series that was published in the Russian language. I have been able to discern the relevance of this work from access to the abstracts which are available online in English. <http://www.donnu.edu.ua/hist/archgroup/en/sem1/>

## Terminology Issues

Steiner, Gebser and Wilber all refer to the notion of magic—or magical thinking—as being a significant factor in this second major movement of consciousness.

Another complexity is that the temporal placements of this movement of consciousness are contradictory. Gebser points to the possibility that there may have been “one or even two further structures of consciousness between the archaic and magic, such as a “post-archaic” and a “pre-magical” structure” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 45). Because of lack of evidence to support this theory he proposes that:

The magic “epoch” as we see it, not only encompasses an extended “era” but also a variety of modes of manifestation and unfolding that are only imprecisely distinguishable from one another. [Yet] . . . we shall consider all such modes to be manifestations of magic [consciousness]. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 46)

Gebser’s focus for the magic structure is mainly on the Upper Paleolithic cave paintings in Europe—particularly hunting scenes. Incidentally this perspective was quite conventional within early 20<sup>th</sup> century anthropology, arising from the “first round” of ethnographic interpretations of “art-as-hunting-magic” (Conkey, 1999, p. 300). He also draws on examples of magic consciousness from much later times where he claims that it overlaps with his notion of mythic consciousness that emerged approximately 3,000 BCE (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 57). Wilber, on the other hand, regards what he calls the “magical-typhonic period” as beginning with *Homo Sapiens* and extending up to the end of the Paleolithic period. Incidentally, Habermas, uses the term “magical-animistic” to refer to the representational world of Paleolithic societies (Habermas, 1979, p. 104). (See Appendix A for more discussion of issues surrounding constructions of time.)

Steiner also refers to a major movement of consciousness up to the end of the glacial period for which he uses the anachronistic term *Atlantean* in much of his writing, which was a conventional archaeological term in his day. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when Steiner was writing, literary and archaeological writing referred to Plato’s references in both the *Critias* and *Timaeus* to an ancient civilization—*Atlantis*—that had been destroyed by climatic catastrophe approximately 9,500 BCE.<sup>134</sup> Comparative literature researcher, André Spears, reviews and discusses references to Plato’s Atlantis theory in the literary/philosophical works of D. H. Lawrence, Antonin Artaud and Charles Olsen (Spears, 2001). He also notes “through the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was not uncommon for archaeologists working in Mexico to link Mesoamerican civilization . . . with the legend of Atlantis” (Spears, 2001). This was the academic context of Steiner’s usage of the term *Atlantean* for the glacial age. Steiner (1904/1959) also noted that the culture and consciousness he referred to in this period also took place “in the neighboring regions of what today is Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. What took place in these regions later, developed from this earlier civilization” (p. 41). Intriguingly, some recent European archaeological and paleo-geological research has provided some tentative

<sup>134</sup> This dating by Plato bears a striking synchronicity with the flooding that occurred at the end of the Younger Dryas, as discussed earlier, and the beginning of the Holocene geological epoch.

support for the claims in Plato's dialogues.<sup>135</sup> However, space does not allow a further digression.<sup>136</sup> Perhaps the story of Atlantis may not be over yet.

## Key Features of Magic Consciousness

Gebser (Gebser, 1949/1985) draws attention to several key features of this structure of consciousness.

- Spacelessness, timelessness, unitive interconnectedness, merging with nature;
- The egolessness of magic human, embeddedness in the tribe;
- The magic response to Nature, by “standing up to Nature” and becoming a “Maker,” thereby becoming conscious of his/her own will (p. 48);
- The flourishing of art—music, song and painting. (See Appendix C).

As demonstrated below, Steiner and Wilber describe similar features.

### Spacelessness, Timelessness, Unitive Interconnectedness, Merging With Nature

Gebser (1949/1985) regards these first four features to be intimately inter-related.

The spaceless and timeless phenomena [that] arise from the vegetative intertwining of all living things [as] realities in the egoless magic sphere. . . . earth-bound and earth-imprisoned, natural and primal . . . [requiring] the almost superhuman attempt to [be] free . . . from the fusion with nature. (p. 49, 51)

It is not hard to see the resemblance between Gebser's scene and the following depictions of Steiner (1954/1981a).

[Their] dwellings were put together by what was given by nature; [they] molded the stones and bound them together with the growing trees. [Their] dwellings were formed out of living nature, were really transformed natural objects. (p. 131)

This appears to hint at the cultural ancestry to some of the later megalithic structures of European and Meso-American cultures. Wilber (1996c) also describes this interconnectedness with nature that characterized the magic consciousness.

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<sup>135</sup> Recent scientific research in the area of the Spartel “paleoisland” off the Iberian peninsula has provided some support for the claims in Plato's dialogues regarding the place and time of the Atlantean catastrophe—via volcano and floods. Independent studies include: the archaeological findings of German archaeologist, Rainer W. Kühne (2004) relating to significant sea level rise around 9,000BCE as a result of melting ice; French palaeogeologist, Marc-André Gutscher (2005) has also found evidence of major volcanic activity consistent with Plato's account.

<sup>136</sup> A substantial academic overview has been undertaken of the various research perspectives on the topic of Atlantis (Wallis & Spencer, 2003).

Man's original fusion with the world . . . with its landscape and its fauna, has its best-known anthropological expression in totemism, which regards a certain animal as an ancestor, a friend, or some kind of powerful and providential being. (p. 50)

For more detail on the timelessness of the magic structure, refer to Appendix A.

### **The Egolessness of Magic Human, Embeddedness in the Tribe**

All three narratives characterize the social groupings as being based on what Wilber (1996c) called "kinship ties" (p. 72). Steiner referred to "little tribes that were still preserved through blood relationship, whilst a powerful authority was exercised by the strongest, who was the chieftain . . . (Steiner, 1954/1981a, p. 131-133). Gebser related this to:

The egolessness of the individual—who is not yet an individual—demands participation and communication on the basis of the collective and vital intentions; the inseparable bonds of the clan are the dominant principle. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 58)

### **The Magic Response to Nature**

Gebser notes that the struggle to develop beyond the forces of nature led to consciousness of will forces. Steiner made a similar claim: "[They] had . . . a very powerful will. . . . Thus they exercised a powerful influence over Nature. . . . They pressed the powers of nature into their service" (Steiner, 1986a, p. 95-96). Gebser (1949/1985) also saw this striving to become independent of nature as providing the impulse for the magical power.

Here lies the basis of all sorcery and magic, such as rain-making, ritual, and the countless other forms by which magic [human] tries to cope with nature. (p. 51)  
. . . Magic [human] possessed not only powers of second sight and divination, [s/he] was also highly telepathic. (p. 55)

Steiner foreshadowed Gebser's claims about these magical relationships with nature. He noted however, that not all the humans at that time had these abilities to a high degree.

At the height of [this] culture there were seers, clairvoyants and powerful magicians who worked by means of magical forces and were able to see into the spiritual world.  
. . . Beside [the magicians], were people who were preparing to be the founders of present humanity. . . . They possessed the elementary faculties of calculation, computation, analysis and so forth. They were the people who developed the rudiments of the intelligence of today and no longer made use of the magical forces . . . (Steiner, 1978b, pp 96-97)

This aligns to Wilber's view. He proposed that in addition to the majority of the people who were operating at an early level of consciousness,<sup>137</sup> the more advanced individuals had magical powers related to what we would now call *shamanism* (Wilber, 1996c, p. 75, 339).

<sup>137</sup> A feature of Wilber's (1996c) evolutionary approach is that he traces what he calls "two parallel strands of evolution: the evolution of the *average mode* of consciousness and the evolution of the *most*

## The Flourishing of Art—Music, Song and Painting

Much has been written about the appearance of cave art and interpretations of its possible meaning. Gebser and Wilber both emphasize the art-as-magic interpretation. Wilber's (1981/1996) explanation is that the "subject and object, psyche and world, were not yet fully differentiated . . . [thus] between the object and the symbol of the object "existed a magical rapport." To manipulate the symbol was to affect the object symbolized" (p. 51). In spite of Gebser's (1949/1985) adoption of a similar view he also claimed that the sensory emphasis of the magic consciousness was primarily auditory rather than visual.

It is this auditory aspect, not the imagistic or pictographic, which we will have to attribute to the initial phenomena. . . . Sonority and music, not image or sign, are the inceptual and coincident manifestational and realizational forms of the magic structure, where they still form a unity. (p. 125)

Steiner pointed towards the development during this period of tonal speech, and also suggested that this was when the musical qualities of language—that had begun with chanting and dancing—were being further developed as a way in which the sense of the self could begin to arise in individuals (Steiner, 1904/1959, p. 82). Gebser (1949/1985) drew attention to the tonal quality in Chinese and other related languages that apparently still retain this more musical quality (p. 126). (Much more is demonstrated on the relationship between language and the arts in Appendix C.)

## Deficient Manifestations of Magic Consciousness

Gebser used the terms *efficient* and *deficient* when speaking about the structures of consciousness—both in regard to transitions between structures and in regard to the expression of various earlier features at later stages. Similarly Wilber uses the terms *healthy* and *pathological*. While Steiner does not have a specific equivalent pair of terms, he does take a similar view in regard to cultural transitions. Another pair of terms that has been used in a similar manner, in psychotherapy discourses is *formative* and *deformative* (Boadella, 1998). The language of deficiency and pathology is somewhat problematic in the light of contemporary research on psychological stage transitions (Commons & Richards, 2002). However, it is a part of all three of these narratives so will be referred to at various points in the narrative where it is relevant to the discussion.

From Gebser's (1949/1985) perspective, the deficient aspect of a structure of consciousness primarily occurs in the later period of its development.

The exhaustion of a consciousness structure has always manifested itself in an emptying of all values, with a consistent change of efficient qualitative to deficient quantitative values.

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*advanced* mode of consciousness (p. 339). He also claims "the true shaman—was the first great voyager into realms of the superconscious (p. 75). Although Wilber claims that, as far as he knows, such an approach has never been explicitly followed before (p. 75), as we have seen, Steiner's narrative is underpinned by a similar view.

It is as if life and spirit withdrew from those who are not co-participants in the particular new mutation. (p. 538)

Steiner concurs that faculties tend to become deficient or decadent towards the end of a developmental period. In relation to the pre-glacial (archaic), and glacial (magic) periods, he referred to overuse of the powers or abilities that had been developed, to the point that they became decadent. He also indicated that each of the major (post-glacial) cultures and civilizations had their flourishing followed by their decadent period in a kind of cyclical rhythm. Wilber is more inclined to take a dialectical view in regard to all the earlier stages of consciousness. He has a strong interest in countering any romanticism towards the early stages of human development. He continually points to the negative or pathological aspects of the earlier cultures and civilizations.

Gebser (1949/1985) referred to the deficient form of magic consciousness as “witchcraft and sorcery [which] is immoderate and unmeasured” in contrast with the efficient form as “spell-casting which retains the character of moderation” (p. 94). One of the unique contributions that Wilber (1981/1996) makes to illuminating the earlier structures of consciousness is that he does not romanticize them—if anything he emphasizes the darker side of what for him are clearly *lower* stages of consciousness.

The self was indeed magically connected with the environment, but for that very reason it was also unprotected from invasion by unconscious elements within and extrasomatic factors without. . . . a time of danger, a time of taboo, a time of superstition. (p. 56)

Steiner pointed out the difference between what he called white magic and black magic, where the increase of the latter—the use of magic for immoral, selfish ends—led to the decadence and decline of these early magic cultures. Gebser (1949/1985) noted its deficient manifestation during his times in the “mass psychology” evident during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War in Europe (p. 60). Gebser also made an interesting point that there is a strong affinity between the deficient mental—that is, rational—and deficient magic structure, resulting in a strong propensity for regression from excessive rationality to a deficient magic consciousness.

Whenever we meet up with overweening emotionalism as in mass assemblies, propaganda, slogans . . . we are dealing mainly with essentially deficient manifestations of magic. Their deficiency can be recognized by their very claim to exclusivity, as if they alone had validity or worth in contrast to the validity of other structures and forms of manifestation. (p. 154)

Gebser (1949/1985) saw the deficient magic tendencies as potentially dangerous, even terrifying. Because of its unconscious nature, its “striving for power” and connection with “loss of ego and responsibility” he was concerned that “the unconsciously activated magic structure will ultimately (at least for us today) lead—via the atomization of vitality, the psyche and the ego—to destruction” (p. 60). He felt compelled to make these tendencies transparent so that even if we could not prevent them we could at least avoid becoming submissive to them.

## Summary and Relevance for Today

Magic is clearly an academically contentious notion today, particularly in the scientific arena. Since the European Enlightenment, the dominance of scientific rationalism has dismissed such notions as regressive.<sup>138</sup> This view persisted in the Academy until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In a context of rationalistic and primitivist views of non-European cultures, a classical anthropologist Sir James Frazer, wrote a seminal anthropological text on magic and religion, *The Golden Bough*, re-opening the territory (Frazer, 1922/2000). Frazer described magic as a type of pseudo-science—a first stage in the evolution of human thought; followed by religion; and then what he called “true, experimental science” (Barnard & Spencer, 1996/1998, p. 341). Since then, the notion of magic and its place in culture has become of ethnographic interest to social and cultural anthropologists—including such notables as Claude Lévi-Strauss (Levi-Strauss, 1963). A spectrum of theoretical perspectives has arisen over the last century, many grounded in fieldwork and/or influenced by postmodern philosophical perspectives, such as pluralism and cultural relativism. These theories have been summarized by Barnard & Spencer (1998).

- Notions of magical phenomena as objectively real, even if inexplicable in terms of Western scientific knowledge—based on field experience with South American and African shamans, it has been called *radical empiricism*;
- Explanations for postmodern beliefs in magic, including notions of empirical validity outside orthodox science, different physical and spiritual laws, epistemological relativism and subjective, metaphorical value;
- A reformulation of theories based on laboratory research in parapsychology;
- Philosophical considerations of the apparent congruence between traditional magical philosophies of an organic, interconnected universe, and the New Physics theories on the unity of mind and matter (p. 342).

The renewal of interest in the marginalized Hermetic writings of Kepler, Newton and others may reintroduce many more questions about magical consciousness in the coming times. Gebser's (1949/1985) interest was to bring our conscious awareness to the magical nature of our instincts and impulses so that they can be a “serving and sustaining potency” (p. 60). He spoke of music as one of the most powerful means to activate the magic timelessness in a way that is appropriate for our times. He also referred to prayer as a constructive engagement of the type of psychic connectionism that is inherent in magic consciousness.

## Transition

Because of the complexity and divergence of opinion on the timing and nature of the transition between magic and mythical consciousness I have devoted a separate section in my narrative to this transition. We will now consider this aporia<sup>139</sup> in detail.

<sup>138</sup> However, as noted elsewhere in this paper, several of the originators of modern science—Kepler, Newton—were also scholars of the Hermetic sciences of alchemy and astrology. These were linked to magical consciousness, for example, in Paracelsus.

<sup>139</sup> The term *aporia* is from the Greek word meaning *impasse*, or *puzzle*. It was used frequently by Plato in his philosophical writings, and also more recently by Derrida.

## 5. The Magic-Mythical Transition: A Complex *Aporia*

Firstly came the hunting peoples, then the farming peoples and thirdly the development of mining,<sup>140</sup> which brought to light what is under the Earth. (Steiner, 1982a, Lecture XXX)

These animal breeders as well as the hunting and nomadic cultures, are predominantly rooted in the magic culture. Strictly agricultural cultures on the other hand already take part in the mythical structure. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 305)

Farming was the most obvious *effect*, or perhaps vehicle, of a deeper transformation in structures of consciousness: it was the earliest expression, that is, of a shift from magical-typhonic to what we will call mythic-membership consciousness (level 3). (Wilber, 1996c, p. 93)

There appears to be something of a cultural hiatus or *aporia* in the period between the end of the Younger Dryas—approximately 9,500 BCE and the beginning of the Neolithic<sup>141</sup> period (c. 8,000 BCE). This roughly demarcates the period referred to as the Mesolithic<sup>142</sup> (c. 10,000-8,000 BCE) an archeological period that appears to have a dramatically reduced status compared to the Paleolithic and the Neolithic. This is perhaps not surprising considering the dramatic environmental change occurring, during which “most of the final (warming) transition may have occurred in just a few years” (Colman, 2007, Abstract). Between the height of the cultural activity of the Upper Paleolithic glacial period and the establishment of agricultural settlements in the fertile crescent of Mesopotamia—China’s Yellow River and the Indus and Nile valleys—the sea level rose approximately 120 meters, with much of this occurring between 12,000 BCE and 8,000 BCE.<sup>143</sup> Geoscientists have demonstrated the significance of the end of the last glacial age by introducing a new geological epoch—the Holocene<sup>144</sup> Epoch which continues into the present time. This also conventionally marks the beginning of the Neolithic period. As the geo-climatic conditions began to stabilize, the climatic changes associated with the end of glaciation actually facilitated the development of farming of cereals and the domestication of sheep, goats, pigs and cattle through the warmer climate and flooding of river basins.

<sup>140</sup> This section deals with the transition from the hunting to the farming peoples. In the following section, when mythical consciousness fully awakens, we are dealing with the mining peoples—the beginning of the bronze and iron ages. Interestingly, Teilhard de Chardin also refers to a similar three phases: a “thin scattering of hunting groups” of the Ancient World; a more dense scattering of “agricultural groups installed in fertile valleys;” and, the “first civilizations” (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959/2004, p. 169-170).

<sup>141</sup> Although *Neolithic* literally means ‘new stone age,’ the term is generally used to refer to the cultural movements of agriculture and pastoralism and the social organization features, such as larger settlements, to accomplish them (Barnard & Spencer, 1998, p. 615).

<sup>142</sup> The term, *Mesolithic*, refers to the middle ‘stone age’ period between the Paleolithic and the Neolithic. It is generally associated with European development at the end of the glacial period, and is characterized by “microlithic industries” (Barnard & Spencer, 1998, p. 613).

<sup>143</sup> This dramatic sea level data is sourced from the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, NASA, New York. [http://www.giss.nasa.gov/research/briefs/gornitz\\_09/](http://www.giss.nasa.gov/research/briefs/gornitz_09/)

<sup>144</sup> Holocene comes from Gk. *holo-*, combined form of *holos* “whole, entire” + *kainos* “new, recent.” Adapted from the Online Etymology Dictionary, <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php>.

As mentioned previously, there are discrepancies between Gebser's and Wilber's temporal situating of magic and mythical consciousness. My interpretation is that the period c. 9,500-3,000 BCE is a significant period of transition between magic and mythical consciousness throughout the world. This period encompasses the latter part of Gebser's magic as well as Wilber's low mythic-membership period (9,500-4,500 BCE) and the beginnings of his high mythic-membership period (4,500-1,500 BCE) (Wilber, 1996c, p. 110). There are also contradictions within Gebser's own dating of this transition.<sup>145</sup>

I propose that Steiner's narrative makes a unique contribution to the understanding of this lengthy transition period. Firstly, he acknowledged an ecological condition of great geo-climatic instability from the end of the ice age. Secondly, he drew attention to the potential influence on culture and consciousness of the *precession of the equinoxes*<sup>146</sup> every 2,160 years approximately.<sup>147</sup> Steiner identified two specific cultural periods prior to 3,000 BCE—the Asiatic, or ancient Indian (c. 7,200-5,000 BCE); and the ancient Persian (c. 5,000-3,000 BCE). Incidentally, Gebser (1949/1985) also identified two major cultural epochs—the domesticating-agricultural, and the tool-making and craft cultures.<sup>148</sup> He particularly noted the significance of the shift from domesticating to agricultural cultures in relation to the transition from magic to mythical consciousness (see introductory quote). He regards the former as tribal and the latter as matriarchal societies attuned to the cycles of “maternal realm of the earth” (p. 305). Wilber (1996c) concurs that the great planting cultures that led up to the development of the city-states, were both mythic and matriarchal (p. 124). Wilber also discussed the significance of farming in facilitating the major cultural developments that occurred during the next few millennia.

Of particular interest in Steiner's narrative about this transition period is the ancient pre-history of Asia—particularly India—and Mesopotamia<sup>149</sup>—Persia-Sumeria. Although he did extensive research on these cultural periods, giving hundreds of lectures that have been published in dozens of volumes, I can introduce only a few fragments within the space of this section. He focused on these particular regions during that period based on his claims that: (a) they provided continuous, genealogical links to a cultural tradition of ancient spiritual wisdom; (b) their philosophical and scientific traditions were foundational to later European<sup>150</sup> philosophical,

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<sup>145</sup> When first introducing the structures of consciousness, Gebser notes that the mythic structure begins to overlap the magic in the third millennium BCE (p. 57). However, elsewhere he notes that the mythic-matriarchal structure underpinned agricultural societies that, as we know today, were well in existence prior to 3,000 BCE. Perhaps he added this information later for the second edition in 1966, as indicated by this comment: “Recent developments in anthropology have enabled us to discern two major successive cultural periods” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 305).

<sup>146</sup> This astronomical cycle and its influence on the earth, culture and consciousness, is discussed in some depth in Appendix A.

<sup>147</sup> Steiner also discussed similar cyclical periods prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> millennium BCE but it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss them (Steiner, 1971a, p. 112-113).

<sup>148</sup> Gebser located the tool-making and craft cultures within the later, mental-patriarchal structure.

<sup>149</sup> My interpretation is that Steiner is referring to a broad region here including Mesopotamia and the Levant to its West.

<sup>150</sup> A critique that could be leveled at such a narrowing of cultural focus is that it is Indo-Eurocentric. It cannot be denied that the people and cultures of other parts of the world are also significant and also have their cultural and spiritual traditions. I propose that a belief in the significance of the Indo-European

scientific and cultural developments; and (c) the cultural activities that took place there were significant in enabling the refining and consolidating of important subtle aspects of human biological and psycho-spiritual development.

Jungian depth psychologists and transpersonal psychologists—including Wilber—have contributed significantly during the 20<sup>th</sup> century to increased understanding of subtle aspects of human psycho-spiritual development (Bache, 2000; Boadella, 1998; Ferrer, 2002; Grof, 2000, 1988; Jung, 1990; Orme-Johnson, 2000; Walsh & Vaughan, 1993; Wehr, 2002; Wilber, 1996b, 2000b; 2005b, Part I). Steiner also undertook significant phenomenological research into the subtle dimensions of human psychology but this has been largely overlooked even in transpersonal psychology.<sup>151</sup> Steiner proposed that in addition to the physical body, in order for humans to function in the complex ways that we do today, other more subtle bodies also needed to be developed in our species as a whole. He identified a *life body*<sup>152</sup> through which our energy and vitality flows and an *emotional body*<sup>153</sup> through which we experience feelings and passions (Steiner, 1909/1965). Both Gebser (1949/1985, p. 67, 261) and Wilber conflate the vital and emotional dimensions to some extent, perhaps contributing to the complexity of the transition from magic to mythical consciousness. Wilber (2005a, Part 4, p.1) conflates them by using the hyphenated term *vital-emotional* that he attributes incorrectly—according to my research—to Sri Aurobindo.<sup>154</sup> While this is a vast area of research beyond the scope of this paper, what is relevant is that Steiner claimed that these *subtle bodies* were being developed and refined during this period of evolution—the *life*, or vital, body in the first cultural period, that he called the ancient Asiatic/Indian, and the *emotional* body during the second cultural period, that he called the ancient Persian (Steiner, 1910/1939, 1986a, 1990a). Several contemporary researchers have begun to research and extend Steiner’s approach to spiritual psychology (Kuhlewind, 1988; Sardello, 1990, 1995). A beginning has also been made in researching the relationship between Jung’s depth psychology and Steiner’s spiritual psychology (Wehr, 2002).

This section may contribute potential new insights into subtle aspects of the evolution of human biopsychology.

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heritage for global cultural development is a bias of the integral consciousness movement (including Steiner, Gebser and Wilber). One of my interests is to make this bias more explicit, so that it can be balanced in the future, but it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss.

<sup>151</sup> Much of the transpersonal psychology that has developed in the USA—with significant contributions from Wilber—privileges eastern spiritual traditions over the western traditions that Steiner reflects. Jorge Ferrer (2002) critiques this eastern-centric aspect of transpersonal psychology yet also omits Steiner’s contribution. There are however several transpersonal theorists who do recognize Steiner’s contribution in this area (House, 2004; Kuhlewind, 1988; McDermott, 2001; Sardello, 1990, 1995; Tarnas, 1991).

<sup>152</sup> Steiner also used the term *etheric body*. Sri Aurobindo (2000) uses the term “vital body” in a similar sense (p. 216).

<sup>153</sup> Steiner also used the term *astral body*. Sri Aurobindo (2000) also refers to “the ancient idea of a subtle form or body inhabited by a psychic . . . or soul entity, carrying with it the mental consciousness” (p. 780).

<sup>154</sup> Sri Aurobindo’s characterizations of the vital/life and emotional/psychic energies/bodies are far more intricate and subtle than a simple hyphenated conflation of vital-emotional could denote (Aurobindo, 2000, p. 216, 780). Also in 526 pages of writings and essays between 1910 and 1950, he does not use the hyphenated term *vital-emotional* (Aurobindo, 1997).

## The First Post-Glacial Cultural Period—Earth as *Maya*, Spirit as Home

The profound Vedas, the Bhagavad-Gita, that sublime song of human perfection, are only the echoes of that ancient divine wisdom. (Steiner, 1986a, p. 99)

The first significant post-glacial cultural period that Steiner proposed was the *Asiatic*—earlier called *Ancient Indian*—cultural period (c. 7,200-5,000 BCE) (Steiner, 1971a, p. 51-53). He commented elsewhere that the evolutionary developments that occurred during this period affected all people inhabiting the planet. At this time—early Neolithic—most people were still nomadic, although some farming had commenced in the area known as the “fertile crescent,” which we will visit in the next section. Steiner claimed that some of the ancient south Asian—particularly Indian—people of this early Neolithic period embodied a sublime spiritual wisdom.<sup>155</sup>

Indology scholar, Asko Parpola (2005) presents a contemporary academic perspective on this view.

The Indus Civilization came into being as the result of a long cultural evolution in the Indo-Iranian borderlands. From the first stage of development, about 7000–4300 BCE, some twenty relatively small Neolithic villages are known, practically all in highland valleys. (p. 29)

### Key Features of the First Post-Glacial Cultural Period

Steiner pointed to several key features that characterize the development of the culture and consciousness of this period, particularly in India. Although Gebser and Wilber mention some of these features in passing—in relation to cultural practices in the early Indus civilization—neither of them have identified a specific Indian or Asian cultural period during the magic-mythic transition.

- Earth as *Maya*, Spirit as Home;
- Internalization of rhythms of nature through poetic speech;
- Development of spiritual practice or Yoga;
- Sanskrit as complex language development.

### *Earth as Maya, Spirit as Home*

According to Steiner, the ancient Indians perceived the physical world around them to some extent as an illusion (*Maya*), regarding the spiritual cosmos as their true home and resulting in a mood of “longing” in their souls (Steiner, 1910/1939, p.200). He claimed they regarded the earth as the lowest part of this spiritual cosmos, and that it was permeated through and through with

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<sup>155</sup> Steiner also proposed that this was the case with several ancient cultures—notably the Indian, Chinese and Meso-American—where a type of recapitulation of different lineages of ancestral spiritual wisdom *informed* their cultural development. I propose this could be taken in László’s (2007) sense of *informed* universe.

Spirit (Steiner, 1950, p. 24). Steiner also claimed that as a result of the rising sea levels, they had migrated over time through Europe—led by their leader *Manu*<sup>156</sup>—to settle in the Indian subcontinent. He also referred to cultural and spiritual leaders in this period as the *Holy Rishis*, the name used in ancient Indian sacred texts, such as *The Ramayana and Mahabharata* (Steiner, 1986a, p. 99). Steiner pointed to the sacred texts, the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*—at first handed down orally and later formalized in writing—as the echoing vestiges of this great wisdom. While Gebser (1949/1985) refers only briefly to some revelations of the *Upanishads* (p. 210), Wilber (1996c) draws quite strongly on some of the ancient Indian sacred texts, claiming—like Steiner—that they were originated by the leading-edge of culture at the time (p. 255-257). Of the three, Gebser draws more strongly on the ancient wisdom of China. (For more information on cultural-aesthetic developments in China during this period, see Appendix C.)

### *Internalization of Rhythms of Nature Through Poetic Speech*

Steiner pointed to a significant feature of the ancient Indian culture in relation to the development of rhythm. He claimed that they experienced a special relationship with the seasonal rhythms and cycles of nature through which they developed a sense of rhythm in their thoracic organs (heart and lungs) (Steiner, 1971a, p. 52). Steiner (1950) proposed that this was enhanced by the rhythmical repetition of chanting—the later echo of this being found in long epic poems, such as the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Vedas*, which resounded from the rhythms of their hearts (p. 18). He claimed that this rhythmic repetition strengthened the vital body as discussed above and also facilitated a new internalized form of human memory (p. 18). (See the section on Rhythmic Memory in Appendix A). It is interesting to note that the lineage of much of Wilber's spiritual nomenclature goes back to Vedanta Hinduism (Wilber, 1996c).

### *Complex Language Development*

Steiner proposed an important relationship between the rhythmical processes that facilitated the internalization of memory, and language development (Steiner, 1984c). Linguistic research indicates that during the Neolithic period—around 5,000-7,000 BCE—language developments included, functional diversification of speech, more autonomous speech forms within communities, more precise and explicit forms, analogical correlations and the beginnings of grammar (Foster, 1999, p. 772; Kay, 1977). Clearly in order for language to develop such systemic components, significant memory capability needed to be in place.<sup>157</sup> The language development of the ancient Indians—later classified as *Sanskrit*—is one of the major common roots of the Indo-European<sup>158</sup> language (Foster, 1999; Lock & Peters, 1999).

<sup>156</sup> In the epic poem of *Rama*, the ancient Prince of India, which is included in the sacred Indian text *The Ramayana and Mahabharata*, appears the line: “Like the ancient monarch *Manu*, father of the human race.” <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/dutt/rama01.htm>

This appears to corroborate Steiner's narrative, which may benefit from some further archeo-anthropological research.

<sup>157</sup> For more discussion on language development, see Appendix C.

<sup>158</sup> This entire language group, ranging from Hindi and Persian to Norwegian and English, is believed to descend from the language of a tribe of nomads roaming the plains of eastern Europe and western Asia as recently as about 3000 BC.

<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?paragraphid=axx#axx>

This is the most widespread group of languages—spoken by around half the world’s population.<sup>159</sup> Sanskrit terminology is also used by several integral theorists and in other contemporary spiritual literature to characterize potential transpersonal human development.<sup>160</sup> It is possible that it contains nuanced meanings in relation to subtle body relationships and spiritual development that have not yet been adequately expressed in modern languages such as English.

### *Development of Spiritual Practice or Yoga*

Steiner’s major emphasis with this cultural period is that humans began to experience the loss of spiritual connection, the separation from their Cosmic/spiritual *homeland*, and the longing to go back to Spirit. He claimed that the ancient Indians were the first to develop practices to assist in the spiritual re-integration of human beings (Steiner, 1986a). This lineage exists to this day in India and many yoga masters have also taken their teachings to other cultures.<sup>161</sup> Steiner also noted that the Chinese culture of this time also contained great spiritual wisdom, which was even more ancient. The Chinese movement form of Tai Chi could also be regarded as having a similar purpose. However, its history was not purely integrative but martial—apparently originating from Indian yoga, but taking a turn towards boxing in the Chinese context.<sup>162</sup>

## **Summary and Relevance for Today**

In summary, before farming was fully established, before writing was developed, and before the building of city-states, these ancient humans had already developed a highly sophisticated schooling in spiritual practices.

Yoga was the name of the training [they] had to undergo in order to penetrate through the illusion to the spirit and primal source of being. . . . The Indian turned away from everything external and looked for a higher life only in world-renouncing ascent to the Spirit. (Steiner, 1986a, p. 99-100)

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<sup>159</sup> Data on the Indo-European Language Group, sourced from the National Virtual Translation Center of the Intelligence Services of the US Government

<http://www.nvtc.gov/lotw/months/december/IEFamily.html>

<sup>160</sup> For example both Steiner and Wilber foreground the Sanskrit term *Atman* for the Higher spiritual Self and both Steiner and László use the Sanskrit term *Akashic* to describe the universal information field (László, 2007; Steiner, 1904/1959; Wilber, 1996b).

<sup>161</sup> However, Steiner also claimed that, while yoga was an ideal practice for human development at that time, spiritual practices need to be adapted to keep up with the biopsychosocial developmental changes that have occurred through evolution. Gebser (1949/1985) also makes the point that “the Yoga techniques appropriate to the Orient are most likely not in accord with our consciousness structure” (p. 245).

<sup>162</sup> A Tai Chi center connected with the education faculty at the Middle Tennessee State University, claims: “In China yoga came to be developed into what is called *Saolin chuan* (“chuan,” briefly, means boxing). “However Tai Chi today in the West is mostly of the softer variety, “Unlike the hard martial arts, tai chi is characterized by soft, slow, flowing movements that emphasize force, rather than brute strength.” <http://www.mtsu.edu/~jpurcell/Taichi/taichi.htm> The ancient Chinese knowledge of the life currents and energies in the human body, are also demonstrated in the healing art of acupuncture.

Such perspectives—if researched at all in the Academy today—are generally sequestered away in faculties of religion or subbranches of ancient history. I propose that it is time to integrate such material with the biological and evolutionary psychology discourse. Like Steiner, Gebser and Wilber, Sri Aurobindo’s work is of great significance to a new evolutionary narrative that can assist us to evolve ourselves out of our cultural and planetary hiatus. Writing at the same time as Steiner (1914-1920), he made the following plea for the active development of “integral consciousness.”

An integral consciousness will become the basis of an entire harmonization of life through the total transformation, unification, integration of the being and the nature. (Aurobindo, 2000, p. 755)

This is the spiritual lineage that Steiner is referring to in this first post-glacial period. It continues on in the integral consciousness movement of our times, potentially providing a nourishing alternative cultural pre-history to the *primitivism* that still exists in many evolutionary biology narratives. I suggest that the revival of interest in Eastern spiritualities among Westerners in recent decades reflects a searching for some of this ancient spiritual wisdom that has been increasingly suppressed in the last three centuries by the narrowing of rationality and the excesses of materialism. While clearly my research poses more research questions than it answers, it does re-open the territory.

## **The Second Post-Glacial Cultural Period—The Persian *Magi* and the Fertile Crescent**

The peoples of this second period had a different task. . . . In their longings and inclinations they did not turn merely toward the supersensible, for they were eminently fitted for the physical sense world. They grew fond of the earth. (Steiner, 1910/1939, p. 203-204)

Steiner’s second post-glacial cultural period flourished from c. 5,000-3,000 BCE (Steiner, 1971a, p. 53). Archaeologically, this was the height of the Neolithic farming period. The geographical and cultural focus of this period was the region known as Mesopotamia, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, in the area that later became Babylonia and is now southern Iraq, from Baghdad to the Persian Gulf. This region is widely recognized as being the home of the earliest known civilization<sup>163</sup> and is still known today as the “fertile crescent.” It is notable that domestication of animals and farming of cereals had also begun by this time in Africa, with the Nubian culture of the Sudan having already developed some of the features of the later dynastic Egyptian culture, such as ceramics and elaborate burial tombs, culturally mediating between Egypt and the southern and western regions of Africa (Gatto, 2004).

Steiner called this second cultural period *ancient Persian*—because it developed in the region later known as Persia. The type of consciousness emerging in Steiner’s Persian period, resembles Gebser’s mythic consciousness, yet contains magical elements, supporting my notion of this

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<sup>163</sup> I am using the term civilization according to its conventional formal-academic usage, while being aware that it could be deconstructed.

being a transition phase. Gebser explicitly refers to the Mesopotamian region as being significant in the transition between the magic and mythical cultures, though with more emphasis on developments post-third-millennium: “This paralleling and overlapping of the still-magical and just-mythical attitude is particularly evident in the many illustrations of artifacts from the two early Sumerian cultures from the third millennium onward” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 109). Wilber clearly places this period clearly within his myth-membership stage. His characterization of what he calls “*mythical* cognition [is a] . . . mixture of magic and logic . . . which informs and structures language itself” (Wilber, 1996c, p. 98). In this period that he calls “low myth-membership” he particularly focuses on the socio-cultural developments.

From a broader geographical perspective, by the time Sumeria was a powerful and prosperous city-state—around 3,000 BCE—other regions of the world were also beginning to develop in a similar way, at least the Nile Valley of Northeast Africa, the Indus Valley of South Asia, the *Huang He* (formally called Yellow River Valley) of China, and coastal Peru in South America. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the apparently parallel cultural developments in these regions, however further comparative research in the future may be fruitful.

### **Key Features of the Second Post-Glacial Cultural Period**

Several key features were identified by Steiner to characterize the ancient Persian culture and consciousness as a further continuation of the Indo-European lineage of cultural and psycho-spiritual development. Both Gebser and Wilber identify these features of development as well, though neither identified a specific cultural period during this time.

- Sense of Polarity;
- Orientation to the Earth through agriculture;
- Formation of Proto-cities;
- Magic-Mythic Transition to Organized Religions.

#### *Sense of Polarity*

Steiner proposed that these ancient Persian/Sumerians developed the beginnings of the awareness of two dimensions—polarity and symmetry—whereas the earlier cultures lived within a sense of unity. Gebser (1949/1985) concurred that the mythical structure is “the expression of two-dimensional polarity. . . . the mythical man may be said to establish an awareness of earth’s counterpole, the sun and sky” (p. 66). Steiner also characterized this new awareness as a recognition of the twin natures of earth and cosmos—expressed as archetypes of Dark and Light—which became central to later Zoroastrian religious symbolism (Steiner, 1971a, p. 53).

#### *Orientation to the Earth through Agriculture*

Steiner linked this developing sense of polarity of the ancient Persians to the new orientation to the earth, compared with the ancient Indians. He noted though that they retained the sense that “external reality was an image of the Divine, which must not be turned away from but shaped anew. The Persian wished to transform nature by work” (Steiner, 1986a, p. 100). These indigenous Sumerians must have labored hard. They had to drain the marshes for planting crops;

and they developed early trade of their crafts including weaving, leatherwork, metalwork, and pottery.<sup>164</sup> Wilber draws attention to some of the cultural developments that arose as a result of the introduction of farming, including the production of *surplus goods* and their symbolization as *money*, in the form of gold, which developed into a *new immortality symbol* (Wilber, 1996c, p. 108).

### *Formation of Proto-cities*

All of these developments contributed to the gradual growth of large farming settlements. Wilber (1996c) claims that by 5,000 BCE “agricultural colonization had spread throughout the Tigris-Euphrates and Nile valleys, swelling the population of some cities to 10,000 inhabitants” (p. 110). There is academic contention around the lineage of the early Mesopotamians who initiated this agricultural revolution and built the first settlements. Contemporary archaeological research suggests that, prior to the Sumerians, the Ubaidians founded an elaborate development starting around 5,000 BCE, called *Eridu*.<sup>165</sup> Although the ancient text called the *Sumerian King List*<sup>166</sup> might be regarded more as mythological than historical, it is interesting to note its opening lines:

*When kingship from heaven was lowered,  
The kingship was in Eridu.*

*Eridu* is now known as *Abu Shah Rain*, located 196 miles southeast of Baghdad, Iraq. Archaeologists claim that it is the earliest known city of Sumer (Southern Mesopotamia),<sup>167</sup> lending support to the ancient Sumerian claim that *Eridu* was the first city in the world.

### *Magic-Mythic Transition to Organized Religions*

Although Steiner noted that this culture pre-dated what is generally regarded as the *historical* ancient Persia of Zoroastrianism, he claimed that it had a strong genealogical lineage with the later historical Persian culture that echoed it. He claimed that the leader of this original ancient Persian culture could also be referred to as Zarathustra<sup>168</sup> (Greek: Zoroaster) (Steiner, 1910/1939,

<sup>164</sup> From *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved June 1, 2007, from Britannica Concise Encyclopedia: <http://concise.britannica.com/ebc/article-9070297/Sumer>

<sup>165</sup> The Minnesota University e-museum archaeology website notes that *Eridu* was rediscovered in the sand dunes and excavated by Iraqi archaeologists between 1946 and 1949. It is considered a very important site showing a “long succession of superimposed temples portraying the growth and development of an elaborate mud-brick architecture.” These successive developments took place from 5,000-3,000 BCE. [http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/archaeology/sites/middle\\_east/eridu.html](http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/archaeology/sites/middle_east/eridu.html)

<sup>166</sup> The *Sumerian king list* is an ancient text in the Sumerian language listing kings of Sumer from Sumerian and foreign dynasties. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kings\\_of\\_Sumer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kings_of_Sumer)

<sup>167</sup> Binek, Tracy, [http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/archaeology/sites/middle\\_east/eridu.html](http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/archaeology/sites/middle_east/eridu.html)

<sup>168</sup> According to Steiner, Zarathustra foresaw a potential danger that humans could become too attached to the earth, and developed his teachings in relation to the “sublime Sun or Light Spirit, Ahura Mazda and the Spirit of Darkness, Ahriman” (Steiner, 1910/1939, p. 206). It is important to note that the type of dualism that occurred in this mythic period was more of the nature of complementary polarities, than

p. 205). Until recently, this claim of Steiner's may have appeared highly speculative or even fictitious. However, a recent book revisits claims of ancient Greek and Roman historians, Xanthus, Pliny, Eudoxus and Plutarch, in the light of recent archaeological evidence. It substantially supports Steiner's claim, that an earlier Zarathustra pre-dated the historical figure by several thousand years (Settegast, 2005).<sup>169</sup> At the very least, these unconventional views of Steiner and Settegast pose new questions about the history and development of this highly significant region. As an indication of the lingering magic consciousness, Steiner referred to the leading people of this culture as *the Magi*—who he claimed had retained some of the magical powers of the earlier times (Steiner, 1910/1939, p. 204). Settegast also makes reference to *the Magi*, regarding them as an Order said to have been founded by Zarathustra (Settegast, 2005). The dualism of Light versus Dark became a central teaching in Zoroastrianism, which arguably influenced the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam that also developed in this general geographical region.<sup>170</sup> Gebser also suggests that Zarathustra's dualism underlies Parmenides' (b. 540 BCE) notion of Being opposed to Non-Being, which intriguingly straddles the next transition from mythical to mental consciousness.<sup>171</sup>

## Summary and Relevance for Today

The convergences between our three narratives support my proposal that the developments of culture and consciousness in this second cultural period mark a significant phase in the transition between Gebser's magic and mythical structures of consciousness. I would also like to briefly draw attention to Friedrich Nietzsche's use of the Zarathustra archetype in one of his most famous books, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (Del Caro & Pippin, 1887/2006). Although it is beyond the space available to discuss this work, Nietzsche's aim does express an interesting mirror-reversal of the Persian theme of previously spiritually oriented humans becoming oriented to the earth. He begs the question. "In what way . . . can a human being now tied to the "earth" still aspire to be ultimately "over-man," U'bermensch?" (Del Caro & Pippin, 1887/2006, p. xviii).

As a postscript to this Persian/Sumerian narrative it is disturbing to consider that at the time of writing this paper, this region of the world—modern Iraq—is still a war zone. Tragically, as a result of the two Gulf wars, much of the ancient archaeological—and thus cultural—history of

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divisive dualism. David Boadella (1998) refers to Zarathustra's teachings, as "ecologically aware and non-dualistic" (p. 31).

<sup>169</sup> Based on extensive research Mary Settegast integrates this historical and archaeological evidence with the oral traditions of ancient Persia and argues that this *original* Zarathustra (circa 6,200-6,500 BCE) led his people through the transition from the nomadic to the agricultural life—including building settlements that developed into cities, creating and decorating fine ceramics, and eventually, within the same lineage, to developing some of the first writing—cuneiform writing on clay tablets (Settegast, 2005).

<sup>170</sup> Zoroastrianism and Parsiism. (2007). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved June 2, 2007, from Britannica Concise Encyclopedia:

<http://concise.britannica.com/ebc/article-9383384/Zoroastrianism-and-Parsiism>

<sup>171</sup> Gebser makes the fascinating point that Parmenides notion of Non-Being as essentially measureless and spaceless, is mythical, whereas his notion of Being is emphatically spatial; an incipient mental, measuring concept (p. 80). He also notes that Parmenides was responsible for the birth of linear time with his tripartition of time into past, present and future (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 178). For more detail on the latter, see Appendix A.

this *cradle of civilization* has been—and is still being—destroyed by looting and bombing (Berg & Woodville, 2004).<sup>172</sup> Ironically, the Zarathustrian polarity of light and darkness and its association with good and evil can be observed in a regressive dualistic form, in the subtext of this situation.

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<sup>172</sup> The US Government has recently donated \$100,000 to the funding of a new database being developed by the World Monuments Fund—in cooperation with the Getty Conservation Institute and UNESCO—to conserve and document Iraqi archaeological sites (Berg & Woodville, 2004). Thankfully, *Eridu* is one of the sites included in this program.

## 6. Myth and the Flourishing of Civilization: The *Noospheric* Journey of the Soul

The soul had formerly felt as if it were within the phenomena of nature. What it experienced in these natural phenomena . . . presents itself to the soul in the form of images that appeared in vivid reality. (Steiner, 1914/1973c, p. 30)

Whereas the distinguishing characteristic of the magic structure was the emergent awareness of nature, the essential characteristic of the mythical structure is the emergent awareness of soul. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 61)

The original, primal tribes had to find a way to transcend their *isolated* tribal kinship lineages . . . and mythology, not magic, provided the key for this new transcendence. (Wilber, 2000d, p. 175-176)

### Context for Emergence of Civilization

As the transition from magic to mythical consciousness reached its climax, the cultural shift took place from increasingly settled and complex agricultural villages to what are regarded as the world's first cities. The beginning of the third millennium BCE saw a major flourishing of cultural change and development across many regions of the planet. Archaeologically, the period to be considered here straddles the Bronze Age (3,500-1,200 BCE) and the Iron Age (1,200-700 BCE).

Gebser generally locates the emergence and development of the mythic structure of consciousness across this span (c. 3,000-800 BCE). Synchronously, this is almost identical to the timing of Steiner's third cultural period—the Egypto-Chaldean (c. 3,000-750 BCE). Wilber divides his myth-membership period into two: his low myth-membership period (c. 9,500-4,500 BCE) and his high myth-membership period<sup>173</sup> (c. 4,500-1,500 BCE) (Wilber, 1996, p. 110). The three narratives all point to the Bronze and Iron Age periods—though not naming them as such—as being highly significant in the development of a new movement of consciousness and cultural flourishing, with particularly strong convergence between Steiner's and Gebser's timelines. Notably Wilber's low-egoic period (2,500-500 BCE) also overlaps with this time-frame.

Teilhard de Chardin (1959/2004) also spoke of the significance of this period where settlements were being turned into cities. He claimed that this *socialization*, forced the pace of *hominization*,<sup>174</sup>—leading to a leap of development. He saw it as an important stage in the development of the noosphere—“the envelope of thinking substance” (p. 151). He described how these processes facilitated the subtle consolidation of the noosphere.

<sup>173</sup> Wilber's high myth-membership period is more aligned to Steiner's first and second post-glacial cultural periods.

<sup>174</sup> Teilhard links *hominization* with the emergence of the noosphere—during which time “the earth ‘gets a new skin’” (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959/2002, p. 183). The noosphere then develops through *socialization*—as discussed above—and the later, *planetization*, which he saw as beginning to emerge in his times and will be discussed later in the paper. (See Appendix B for more information).

Between them exchanges increased in the commerce of objects and the transmission of ideas. Traditions became organized and a collective memory was developed. Slender and granular as this first membrane might be, the noosphere there and then began to close in upon itself—and to encircle the earth. (p. 206)

Wilber (2000d) makes the significant point that the creation of cultural myths—through a type of primal creativity—enhanced this development.

The *original* breakthrough creativity—that allowed humans to rise above a given nature and begin building a noosphere, the very process of which would bring Heaven down to Earth and exalt the Earth to Heaven . . . and mythology, not magic, provided the key for this new transcendence. (p. 175-176)

A major cultural flourishing occurred in North Africa and the Middle East among the Chaldean, Babylonian, Assyrian and Egyptian people—the thirty dynasties of the high culture of dynastic Egypt spanned 2,400 years of this period (c. 3,000-600 BCE) (Shaw, 2000, pp. 479-483). However, synchronous cultural flowering also occurred in other regions as Teilhard de Chardin (1959/2002) noted:

From Neolithic times onwards the influence of psychical factors begins to outweigh—and by far—the variations of ever-dwindling somatic factors . . . with Post-Neolithic man . . . the basin of the Yellow River, with Chinese civilization; the valleys of the Ganges and the Indus, with Indian civilization, and lastly the Nile Valley and Mesopotamia with Egyptian and Sumerian civilization.<sup>175</sup> (pp. 208-210)

Teilhard de Chardin also noted later developments in Central America, and the South Pacific. Recent archaeological discoveries suggest other earlier civilization by the Inkas, in South America.<sup>176</sup>

## Terminology Issues

Gebser has foregrounded the term *mythical* to denote this structure of consciousness, while Wilber has foregrounded the term *membership* and added *myth* to it to honor Gebser's

<sup>175</sup> Teilhard de Chardin (1959/2002) also makes the interesting point that of these three major civilizations “the contest for the future of the world” was won by the more western zones of the Euphrates, the Nile and the Mediterranean (p. 211). He explains this in terms of China's lack of inclination and impetus for change, having—until recently—represented a “scarcely changed fragment of the world as it could have been ten thousand years ago . . . like the writing which betrays the fact so ingeniously” (p. 210). He also points to India—“the region *par excellence* of high philosophic and religious pressures”—having become lost in *metaphysics* . . . and although “ventilating and illuminating the atmosphere of mankind . . . with their excessive passivity and detachment, they were incapable of building the world” (p. 211). This reflects a rather competitive, strongly Eurocentric view of cultural differences, perhaps reflective of his cultural context.

<sup>176</sup> Recent archaeological discoveries at Caral in the Sepe Valley in Peru suggest that some pyramid shaped buildings and settlements of the Inka civilization may have been built as early as 2,500 BCE. <http://archaeology.about.com/od/ancientwriting/a/caralquipu.htm>

terminology. In Wilber's *myth-membership* stage—that he often calls simply *membership*—he focuses quite strongly on sociological and psychoanalytic features. Gebser's focus is more phenomenological, based on extensive research of artistic and literary artifacts. Steiner referred to the period in which the mythic picture consciousness developed as the Egypto-Chaldean period, in reference to the significant developments in culture and consciousness that occurred in those regions. A major divergence occurs regarding the different usages of the term “soul,” as discussed below.

## Key Features of Mythic Consciousness

Most of these key features are identified in all three narratives.

- The emergent awareness of the inward-turned world of the soul;
- The development of complex mythology, requiring imagination and a new degree of cognitive coherence;
- The development of astronomy, calendars and other complex mathematical systems;
- A new relationship to death and burial;
- The development of language systems including the first pictographic and logographic writing systems (See Appendix C for more details);
- The strengthening of a sense of cyclical temporality (See Appendix A);
- Membership of large organized social groupings, resembling cities.<sup>177</sup>
- Temple structures, especially pyramids. Although Egypt is most renowned for pyramids, this was also the primary form of temple architecture of Meso-American and South American Inkan civilization;
- The culmination of primarily matriarchal societies prior to the beginnings of patriarchy with the Greco-Roman civilization (Eisler, 2001).

I will now focus in a little more depth on the first four of the above features. The fifth and sixth are discussed in appendices and the remaining features must remain unexamined until subsequent research can be undertaken.

### The Inward-Turned World of Soul

Both Gebser and Steiner connected the emergence of mythical consciousness with the first awakening of the individual human soul from its magical enmeshment with nature and cosmos. Gebser—who pays particular attention to artistic detail—notices the gradual extrication of the human form from its natural surroundings. In an exemplary painting of a human figure in nature from Knossos (Crete) dating from the second millennium BCE, Gebser (1949/1985) notes the “placing [of] the upper torso against the “sky” [and that] the sky is simultaneous with the soul” (pp. 61-62). He supports this with Plato's statement “the soul . . . [came into being]

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<sup>177</sup> This is a strong emphasis in Wilber's characterization of the myth-membership period, thus he is a valuable source of further information (Wilber, 1996c, p. 97). He also emphasizes sociological issues, particularly in relation to changing gender roles and relationships, including the impact of agricultural surplus on the development of new, more specialized, social roles, e.g., priests, administrators, educators (p. 102).

simultaneously with the sky” (p. 45). Steiner’s conception of soul is based on a Platonic tripartite understanding of the human as having body, soul and spirit—the *soul*<sup>178</sup> as mediator between *body* and *spirit*. He also regarded the period from 3,000 BCE as being significant for the development of the earliest emergence of the human soul—that he called the *sentient* or *feeling soul*.<sup>179</sup>

By contrast, Wilber’s notion of soul is somewhat differently placed. He does not use the term soul until after all the structures of consciousness up to ego-mental are established, regarding *soul* and *spirit* as part of what he calls the “superconsciousness” in *Up from Eden* (Wilber, 1996c, p. 11). This conception also appears in his later works, where he does not use the term soul until the post-rational stages beyond vision-logic (Wilber, 2000b, p. 258, n. 22). However, Wilber’s use of the term *mind*, when he is referring to body, life, mind, soul, and spirit would appear to be similar to Steiner’s and Gebser’s use of *soul* in the present context. Gebser’s (1949/1985) position is that mythic consciousness paradoxically involves both an “inward-directed contemplation,” involving a new awareness of one’s own soul; and an outward-directed verbalization, through creating a myth about what has been inwardly visualized. This describes a circular motion of the “internal world of the soul; its symbol is the circle, the age-old symbol of the soul.” (p. 66) This internalization of soul enables an “internalization of memory,” as recollection, “in parallel with an externalization of utterance,” particularly through poetry<sup>180</sup> as inspired by the Muses (p. 192). Perhaps the composite term mind-soul could be an appropriate improvement in the taxonomy.

### The World of Myth Through Imagination

For Gebser the movement from magic to mythical consciousness involves a shift from a more vital centre to a soul centre that bears the stamp of the imagination. This aligns with Steiner’s position on the major developmental shift from the vital and emotional bodily systems being developed during the first and second cultural periods, and the third cultural period where the inner life of what he called the *sentient soul* was arising. He associated the latter with a sense-oriented, participatory, pictorial type of thinking that developed during the two thousand years prior to the emergence of abstract intellectual thought. Wilber (1996c) is somewhat more

<sup>178</sup> Steiner drew attention to significant historical-cultural changes whereby a new Church dogma—introduced at the Fourth Council of Constantinople in 869 CE—replaced the traditional Greek philosophical notions of the human being as being composed of body, soul and spirit with a reduced conception of human nature as a duality of body and soul, effectively banishing *spirit* from the map. (Steiner, 1932/1966c, pp. 41-42).

<sup>179</sup> While Steiner claimed that the first two previous cultural periods had enabled the development and consolidation of the vital and emotional bodily systems, he claimed that the third, fourth and fifth cultural periods consolidated three soul developments: the sentient soul, during the mythic period; the rational-intellectual soul, during the Greco-Roman period; and the consciousness-spiritual soul which has been emerging since the 15<sup>th</sup> century and, arguably, now appearing as what I am calling postformal-integral-planetary consciousness (Steiner, 1930/1983a, 1971a). Steiner also pointed to three future cultural periods where further movements of consciousness would be possible. This aligns with Wilber’s model of higher stages of development. However, this theme requires further research.

<sup>180</sup> This more creative poetry of the mythic period, inspired by the Muses, marks a further development of the process of rhythmical recitation of sacred poetry texts—created by the initiates during the magic period as an aid to the development of memory.

pragmatic about these developments. In this period he refers to the significance of language, through which “the verbal mind could differentiate itself out of the previous bodyself” (p. 99). He also pointed to the role of symbolic thinking in myth-making “through a network of intersubjective membership and communication” (p. 101).

While, from Gebser’s (1949/1985) perspective, the magic mode is dominated by impulse, instinct and affective reactions such as sympathy and antipathy, the mythical structure has a more mental orientation.

Latent predisposition to perspectivity, has an imaginary consciousness, related in the imagistic nature of myth and responsive to the soul and sky of the ancient cosmos. . . . The great cosmogonical images in the early myths are the soul’s recollection of the world’s origination. (p. 67)

In a similar vein, Steiner (1986a) noted the link between the awakening human soul and the world soul—or *anima mundi*—through the imagination, whereby the cosmos is still experienced as being ensouled.

The ancient Chaldean priests . . . were the custodians of profound wisdom, but for them these laws of nature were not merely abstract, nor were the stars merely physical globes. They looked on each planet as ensouled by a Being . . . a divine Being who gave it life. Thus the Egyptians and Chaldeans discerned that they were spirits living among spirits in a world of spirits. (p.101)

It is interesting that there is a renewed interest today in notions of *anima mundi*—or ensouled cosmos—among transpersonal psychologists and integral philosophers (Sardello, 1995; Tarnas, 2006). Perhaps it is an indicator of a shift beyond the marginalizing of the inner life that has occurred through the scientific privileging of the measurable world of externalities.

### **The Development of Astronomy and Calendars**

The ancient Sumerians were renowned for their mathematics and early calendars. Steiner suggested that the Sumerians and Babylonians had deep mathematical insights into the relationships between human and cosmic proportions (Steiner, 1982c, p. 73). Gebser and Steiner both noted the awareness of the soul’s polarity in the earlier Persian/Sumerian cultures and its parallel—the awareness of the sky, as a counterpole to the earth. Gebser also noted the centrality of polarity in the Chinese *T’ai-Ki* symbol—generally known as the Yin/Yang symbol (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 220). Steiner (1986a) indicated that the Persians’ awareness of the earth/sky polarity laid the ground for the deeper understanding of the Egyptians and Chaldeans who began to uncover the laws that were operating *between* the earth and sky.

[Humans] looked up to the stars and observed their movements and their influence on human life, and accordingly worked out a science which enabled them to understand these movements and influences. They brought the Heavens into connection with the Earth. (pp. 100-101)

It has been claimed that the Egyptian sciences were based on the legendary wisdom teachings of *Hermes Trismegistus*<sup>181</sup> who is reputed to have written *The Emerald Tablet*, a document on which the Hermetic sciences were based for thousands of years. Sir Isaac Newton<sup>182</sup> has actually translated, with commentary, *The Emerald Tablet*—often encapsulated in the phrase—*as above, so below*.

### **A New Relationship to Death and Burial**

One of the intriguing aspects of the Egyptian civilization was its relationship to death. Recent research in Sudan suggests that elaborate burial rituals were already operating in the earlier Nubian kingdom from at least 3,800 BCE (Gatto, 2004). However, the Egyptians certainly took these customs to new heights. Wilber, drawing on Joseph Campbell's research, refers to these customs—the mortuary cults, the mummies, the golden death masks—as being “heightened searches for symbolic or token or pretend immortalities” in response to the new “death-fear,” arising from their gradually dawning sense of individuality (Wilber, 1996c, p. 121). Steiner, on the other hand, makes quite a different interpretation for the death interest of the Egyptians. Referring to the Osiris-Isis myth, Steiner claimed:

The Egyptians desired in this way to turn their gaze to that element in the human soul which lives not only between birth and death . . . in their preservation of mummies, in their peculiar death-ceremonies—[they] turned the eye of the soul to that . . . eternal imperishable element . . . united in the Egyptian consciousness with the name of Osiris. (Steiner, 1971a, pp. 2-3)

Gebser (1949/1985) took this point further referring to the life and death poles of the soul. He observed that “the great Egyptian literature on death is an endeavor to master the death region of the soul” (p. 223). The increased focus on death and burial rituals and symbols has been much studied by cultural anthropologists (Barnard & Spencer, 1998). Although the elaborate Egyptian tombs are of great contemporary interest, it is worth noting that one of the most significant of the Egyptian myths—the Osiris myth—is not just about death, but also about resurrection (Campbell, 1993; Neumann, 1954/1995; Steiner, 1971b).

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<sup>181</sup> *Hermes Trismegistus* was a legendary Egyptian leader who is believed to have developed the Hermetic sciences—which could be called the first spiritual sciences—on which were based alchemy, astronomy, astrology. It is recently being rediscovered that scientists such as Johannes Kepler and Isaac Newton studied Hermetic sciences such as alchemy and astrology.

<sup>182</sup> Although Sir Isaac Newton is considered to be one of the fathers of modern science, his relationship with the Hermetic sciences, linked to ancient Egypt has been a well-kept secret. Like the marginalized writings of Johannes Kepler (See Appendix B), and Charles Darwin, that are being brought to light by integrally oriented evolutionary theorists (Conway Morris, 2007; Loye, 1998; Richards, 1992, 2002), Newton's little known works on astrology and alchemy are currently being catalogued as part of the *Newton Project* at Sussex University in the UK. See also B.J.T. Dobbs, "Newton's *Commentary on The Emerald Tablet* of Hermes Trismegistus: its scientific and theological significance", in Merkel and Debus, *Hermeticism*, 182-91. <http://www.newtonproject.sussex.ac.uk/prism.php?id=90>

## Deficient Manifestations of Mythic Consciousness

As mentioned earlier, Wilber (1996c) has a keen interest in debunking the romantic myths about the glories of the past. He reminds us that all was not romance and glory in this early period of civilization building. He describes some of the horrendous rituals that were part of the mythic cultures, including human sacrifice (p. 125). He also pointed to the darker side of the politics of “divine kingship” during the myth-membership period, during which new horrors arose, such as “slavery . . . exploitation . . . elitist class distinctions . . . And massive oppression of the many by the few (p. 178).

Gebser refers to the efficient form of the mythic consciousness when it was at its peak of development and full creative force was engaged to envision a primal image. He notes that as this primordial myth gets passed on it begins to lose its power and to fragment into a multitude of spoken myths. These myths—which passed on over time—are mere echoes of the original primordial visions. He sees this as the deficient phase of mythic consciousness.

This seems analogous to what often happens between the original inspiration of a new philosophy, great leader or spiritual teacher and what becomes of the later product of his or her inspiration. Invariably the original message—whether it is Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Steiner education, or integral theory—has the purity and power of an inspired vision or mission. Over time, the students or practitioners reduce the original message and develop a mythic version of it. This then becomes ossified into a new dogma as deficient mythic consciousness tightens its stranglehold.

## Summary and Relevance for Today

The power of myths is well known to the creators of mass media, and corporate marketing and advertising (Jenson, 1996; Klein, 2000). The suppression of healthy imagination that has come in the wake of centuries of dominance by increasingly narrow forms of rationality has created an imbalance—particularly observable in the images of the future of young people (Eckersley, 2002; Gidley, 1998c, 2002a; Giroux, 2003; Hicks, 2002; Hutchinson, 2002; Inayatullah, 2002; Novaky, 2000). Young people also feel that there is a spiritual vacuum in our society (Gidley, 2005a; Tacey, 2003) which many critical educational theorists and educational futurists argue is too often filled by negative and exploitative media images (Clouder, Jenkinson, & Large, 2000; Gidley, 2001d; Giroux, 2003; Healy, 1998; Hutchinson, 1994; Livingstone, 1998; Milojevic, 2005b; Pearce, 1992; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004). When imaginative mythic consciousness is not given scope for healthy expression, it is likely to break through in unhealthy ways, as Gebser has demonstrated.

Whenever we encounter an immoderate emphasis on the imagistic, the ambivalent, the psychic—an unbridled phantasy, imagination or power of fancy—we may conclude the presence of a deficient mythical attitude that threatens the whole or integrality. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 154)

This is exemplified in our mass media today, where extreme levels of violent imagery exemplify deficient mythic consciousness, representing an extremely troublesome form of

enculturation of our youth worldwide (Gidley, 2004c; Grossman, 2000; Grossman, Degaetano, & Grossman, 1999; Healy, 1998). Another predatory phenomenon relevant to the enculturation of youth via the appeal of the mythic imagination is cults. By contrast the power of the imagination can be used to enact positive enculturation, if the creative imagination is harnessed to the virtues of the Good, the Beautiful and the True. Educators, futurists, integral theorists, and some philosophers have begun to highlight the importance of rescuing healthy, positive, grounded imaginative-thinking from the limitations of a rationality too narrowly-defined, as will be discussed in the next section. The significant role of the healthy development of the imagination in educating for postformal, integral consciousness has been discussed elsewhere (Gidley, 2007a).

### **Transition from Mythical to Mental Consciousness—A Second Complex Aporia**

As individual egos began to break through and awaken, in parallel with the next movement of consciousness, the ancient wisdom that had lingered in the mythic imagination began to grow dim.

In myth the picture was experienced in such a way that one felt it to be in the external world as a reality. One experienced this reality at the same time, and one was united with it. With thought . . . [we] felt [ourselves] separated from nature. (Steiner, 1914/1973c, p. 16)

In addition, what was held in balance to a degree within the mythic sense of polarity became torn apart with mental dualism:

Duality is the mental splitting and tearing apart of polarity, and, from the correspondences of polarity, duality abstracts and quantifies the oppositions of antitheses. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 86)

There may be a need to clarify a potentially confusing, apparent timing contradiction with regard to the transition in northern Europe from mythical to intellectual-mental-rational consciousness—and subsequently to the beginnings of integral-planetary consciousness. According to Gebser, these two transitions occurred within a few centuries of each other (13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries). I will use Gebser's clarification of these issues as my guide. This is because he has provided extensive phenomenological detail on these periods in relation to his structures of consciousness, which I have foregrounded in my analysis. Steiner's view of these transitions is closely aligned.<sup>183</sup> Wilber's view is somewhat more contradictory and will be discussed in more detail below.

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<sup>183</sup> From my substantial research across dozens of Steiner lectures/volumes—aimed at locating and cohering his numerous statements on these matters—I am satisfied that his views were very closely aligned to Gebser's research on these European transitions (see reference list for major sources). This is not withstanding the possibility that a researcher with greater Steiner expertise than I have may point to Steiner documents at variance with my claim, given the sheer volume of his work on the evolution of culture and consciousness, some of which is not yet available in English.

In order to bring clarity, I will explicate three transitional situations discussed in the narratives. The descriptions that follow are not intended to present these transitions as if they were immutable fixed structures that were compelled to occur at these times. Rather my purpose is to tease out a rather complex series of steps in the narratives.

1. In addition to claims in this narrative there is a general consensus in the history of Western ideas that a major transition began around 500-800 BCE from mythical consciousness to intellectual-mental-rational consciousness—primarily in Greece and later in ancient Rome (Gangadean, 2006a; Habermas, 1979; Jaynes, 1976; Tarnas, 1991, 2006). The present narratives point to prior influences from surrounding regions such as Egypt, and Mesopotamia. Gebser notes:

This new conscious structure began to be evident when the consolidation of myth reached its height in the eighth century [BCE] the definite and full awareness of the new mutation expressed in the consciousness structure then new was fully effected in Plato. The two millennia, which followed, were devoted to consolidating the new consciousness, a process completed by 1480-1500 [CE, with] Leonardo's perfection of perspective. (p. 303)

While Steiner and Gebser are in agreement on this, there is contradictory material in Wilber's writings. In *Up from Eden*, Wilber refers to the latter phase of the myth-membership as ending around 1,500 BCE, and in addition he refers to the *egoic-stage* as having three sub-stages: "the low: 2500-500 [BCE]; middle: 500-1500 [BCE]; high: 1500 [CE] – present" (Wilber, 1996c, p. 188). Wilber's evidence for this is that Joseph Campbell claims that *the Hero myths* emerged approximately 2,500 BCE—the beginning of Wilber's *low egoic* period. However, in Wilber's second edition of *SES*,<sup>184</sup> (Wilber, 2000d), he agrees with Gebser (and Habermas) that the egoic-rational emerged "in the middle of the first millennium BCE, but it reaches its fruition with the rise of the modern state, roughly the sixteenth century in Europe" (p. 184).

2. The second transition—still within the mythic-to-mental transition itself—concerns the belated development of mental-rational consciousness in northern Europe—compared with Greece and Rome. Gebser claimed that the mythic consciousness had continued to operate in most of northern Europe for a much longer period of time than in southern Europe. Gebser (1949/1985) describes this situation as follows:

We must also remember a fundamental fact, namely, that the events of 500 [BCE] in Greece had to be repeated around 1250 [CE] by European [humans]; and [their] basis was considerably broadened because of three major achievements, all containing an element of incipient perspectivity: the Greek theory of knowledge, the Hebrew doctrine of salvation, and Roman legal and political theory. . . . This European perspectival-rational world represents, in this sense, only the deficient and most likely untimely phase of the exclusive validity of the mental-rational structure. (p. 74)

In Gebser's view, the apparent increasing intellectualism in Europe after this time, particularly throughout the European Enlightenment and beyond, was an overextension of the

<sup>184</sup> *SES* stands for *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*—the title of Wilber's most voluminous book.

deficient rational,<sup>185</sup> which in turn—Gebser (1949/1985) posits—is leading to its own demise. In one of the most polemical statements that I have seen in Gebser’s writing, he speaks of the dangers of the overextension of deficient forms of rationality.

The suicide of Western civilization . . . the consequence of the destruction of man’s inner being by the self-destruction of the divine in man, and by his rational denial of all the irrational and pre-rational aspects, by which he dispossessed himself of his own foundations (p. 357).

Wilber appears to be in agreement with this position, characterizing the European Enlightenment as being the peak of the development of rationality, and noting that in spite of its great contributions, this period also marked the beginning of its decline (Wilber, 2000d).

3. The third European transition—from Gebser’s mental-rational to his integral-aperspectival consciousness, beginning in the 15<sup>th</sup> century BCE—will be discussed at the end of the next major section of the narrative.

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<sup>185</sup> Gebser’s notion of the *deficient rational* will be discussed in the next section. It is however related to his notion that each new structure of consciousness has a cycle of emergence, consolidation and decline.

## 7. The Awakening Ego-Mentality: The Birth of Western Philosophy

Thought life is born in man at a definite time. It causes the extinction of the previous form of consciousness in which the world is experienced in pictures. (Steiner, 1914/1973c, p. 14)

The irruption of the mental structure . . . it divides and thus destroys the *image* of the world, which is replaced by a *conception* of the world. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 176)

Cognitive psychologists and anthropologists tend to use rationality to mean “formal operational cognition.”<sup>186</sup> (Wilber, 2000d, p. 179)

### Context for Emergence of Ego-Mentality

Between 700-800 BCE another major transformation of consciousness began to take place, with its most explicit and most articulated expression in Athenian Greece. From a formal academic perspective, this is the beginning of classical history in the west when literate cultures began to record their own histories.<sup>187</sup> (For more detail see Appendix A.) Contemporary philosopher and cultural historian Tarnas concurs with this perspective (Tarnas, 1991, pp. 16-19). Historian of consciousness Jaynes (1976) also emphasized the significance of the Greek culture in enabling this movement of consciousness.

The Greek subjective conscious mind, quite apart from its pseudostructure of soul, has been born out of song and poetry. From here it moves out into its own history, into the narratizing introspections of a Socrates and the specialized classifications and analyses of an Aristotle, and from there into Hebrew, Alexandrian and Roman thought. And then into the history of a world, which, because of it, will never be the same again. (p. 292)

Steiner, Gebser and Wilber identified the birth of western philosophy in ancient Greece as a turning point between mythical consciousness and mental-rational consciousness, as discussed. Steiner also referred to the period that began there as the fourth [post-glacial] cultural period—or the Greco-Roman period—beginning in Southern Europe and Western Asia approximately 750 BCE and developing over the next two millennia (Steiner, 1971a).

Although from a western perspective Greece is almost universally credited with the development of philosophy *per se*, this is a Eurocentric stance. Several perspectives need to be considered. Firstly, Steiner pointed out that, unlike the later time of Imperial Roman domination, early Greece was a very cosmopolitan region where “human beings of the most varied regions of the ancient world had gathered” and carried the ancient mystery wisdom on through Asia Minor, Greece and Italy, reshaping it into concepts and ideas through the emergence of western

<sup>186</sup> Wilber is referring to Piaget’s *formal operations*.

<sup>187</sup> There is at least a century-old philosophical critique of this perspective on history, most notably from Nietzsche, Steiner and Foucault. Teilhard de Chardin also critiqued the notion of dividing up History and pre-History on the basis of whether or not we possess written or dated documents, claiming that “there is no breach of continuity between the two” (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959/2002, pp. 206-207).

philosophy (Steiner, 1910/1939, p. 210). Secondly, in China and India, major philosophical developments indicating a shift in consciousness were also occurring during this period. Gebser (1949/1985) noted that, in China, the *I Ching* was revised from a book of oracles in use through the magic and mythical periods, into “mankind’s oldest book of wisdom” around 1,000 BCE, reflecting the beginnings of wakeful, mental consciousness” (p. 314). Also from at least the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE—the time of Lao Tse (580-500 BCE) and Confucius (551-479 BCE) until 221 BCE when the first empire began, there was an era of great cultural and intellectual expansion, known as the *Golden Age*<sup>188</sup> of Chinese philosophy. In India, as demonstrated previously, very advanced spiritual-philosophical systems of thought existed in earlier times which, by the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, were beginning to address such philosophical matters as the relationship between wealth and immortality—matters not examined by Aristotle until several centuries later in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (Sen, 1999, pp. 13-14). The Indian texts were not written down, however, until c. 300 BCE. Unfortunately, we still have little knowledge or understanding of the developments that may have been occurring in Meso- and South America. (For more information on the latter see Appendix C).

## Terminology Issues

For the movement of consciousness that arose in that period, Steiner primarily used the term *intellectual soul*. Gebser (1949/1985) invoked the term *mental* for his parallel structure of consciousness with its semiotically diverse roots. He notes that the Greek *menos*, the Latin *menis*, the English *man*, and the German *Mensch* all derive from the Sanskrit root *ma-* with one of its secondary roots being *man*. “From the root *man-* comes the Sanskrit word *manas*, which can refer to “inner sense, spirit, soul, understanding, courage, anger . . . and *Manu*”<sup>189</sup> (p. 76). He regards this as a richer characterization than the term *rational*, from *ratio*, which is related to calculation and division. He notes that *rationality*’s “directedness and perspectivity” is towards the notions “to reckon”, “to calculate,” “together with—unavoidably—sectorial partitioning” rather than the direction towards the ability to “think” and “understand” (p. 74). He used the term *rationality* primarily to characterize the *deficient* mental consciousness because of its partiality and tendency to quantification. Gebser appears to equate the term *intellectual*—though he rarely uses it—with the mental structure (p. 377) and *intellectualism* with its more deficient counterpart, *rationality* (p. 436). Wilber’s terminology for this stage appears to have undergone a transition: in his earlier works his usage was more aligned to Gebser’s, where he frequently used the term *mental-egoic* to refer to this stage and *rationalism* to refer to the “dehumanization of man” associated with the European Enlightenment (Wilber, 1996b, 1996c). In his later works he uses the term *mental* in a more general sense—as the adjective for mind—and favors the terms *rationality* or *egoic-rational* for the post-mythic stage (Wilber, 2000b, 2000d, 2006). He acknowledges that his later focus is more on the type of rationality that reached its fruition in sixteenth century Europe, whereas Steiner and Gebser spread their interpretive attention across the two millennia starting with Athenian Greece. Because Steiner favored the term *intellectual*, Gebser favored the term *mental*, and Wilber currently favors the term *rational*, for this mode of

<sup>188</sup> Reference to China’s Golden Age came from a course on Philosophy and Religion in China at the City University of New York. <http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/core9/phalsall/texts/chinrelg.html>

<sup>189</sup> The latter point about the linguistic roots of *Manu*, is consistent with Steiner’s narrative on *Manu*, discussed earlier.

consciousness, I mostly use the hyphenated<sup>190</sup> term *intellectual-mental-rational* for this movement of consciousness.

## Key Features of Intellectual-Mental-Rational Consciousness

Because of the temporal and spatial convergence of various events, this new consciousness became hybridized with several other characteristics:

- The awakening of the independent ego, or individualism—the heroes;
- The birth of rational philosophy in Greece, through Thales, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle;
- The inner-directness towards self-knowledge;
- The beginnings of the Axial age with the birth of several major religions;<sup>191</sup>
- The shift from picture-based writing to the more abstract writing using the Greek alphabet (See Appendix C);
- Beginnings of formal mathematics with Pythagoras;
- The development of the world's first democratic city-state in Athens in 500 BCE, followed by the formalization of politics and legislation;
- The origins of formal education in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE with Plato's *Academy* and Aristotle's *Lyceum* sowing the first seeds of higher education.

Because the narrative is now dealing with the period of formal history, there is voluminous material that could be referred to for each of the points above, but it is beyond the scope of this narrative to cover this in detail. I will focus on the first four features, as these are significant in all three narratives. The abstraction of writing is indicated briefly in Appendix C. The mathematical, political and educational developments could be seen as broader contexts for the consciousness shift.

### The Awakening of the Independent Ego

Wilber makes a significant contribution, which could not have been made in Steiner's or Gebser's work, both of which pre-dated much of contemporary psychology and critical social theory. In fact, this is one of the places where Wilber (1996c) seems to dive deeper than usual—in his elucidation of ego development in relation to consciousness. Perhaps this is because—as he correctly notes—the meaning of the term *ego* is wildly contentious today. He characterizes mental-egoic consciousness in the following way.

It marked a transcendence over the dimly conscious, still somewhat prepersonal, mythic, and diffuse structure of the membership stage. It opened up the possibility of truly rational and logical thought . . . the thought processes themselves start to become objects of

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<sup>190</sup> By using the compound hyphenated term *intellectual-mental-rational* I am drawing on the postformal philosophy of complex thinking developed by Morin. He often uses such compound terms to denote complex integration of concepts (Morin, 2005a, 2005b).

<sup>191</sup> Two other major religions—Hinduism and Judaism—originated over a thousand years prior to the Axial Age. Others will also be discussed below.

awareness . . . which eventually results in “formal operational thinking,” or logic, as Piaget showed (p. 189).<sup>192</sup>

He (Wilber, 2000d) draws attention to the many uses of the term *ego* in contemporary discourses, identifying the following perspectives:

- The “New Age” notion of ego as “separate self sense, isolated from others and from a spiritual Ground” (p. 236);
- The contemporary psychoanalytic notion—based on Freud—of the ego as being “the principle that gives unity to the mind . . . a fundamental organizing pattern” (p. 236);
- The philosophical distinction between “the empirical ego, which is the self insofar as it can be an object of awareness and introspection, and the Pure Ego or transcendental Ego (Kant, Fichte, Husserl), which is pure subjectivity (or the observing Self), which can never be seen as an object of any sort. . . . [whereby] according to such philosophers as Fichte, this pure Ego is one with absolute Spirit . . .” (p. 236);
- Somewhat paradoxically, Wilber contrasts the Piagetian sense of *egocentric*—an early stage, before the *ego* as “self” or “subject” has differentiated itself from the world—with the *mature ego stage*, which enables formal operations (p. 237);
- The Habermasian “ego identity, a fully separated-individuated sense of self” (p. 238).

Wilber (2000d) then concludes that he most often uses the term *ego* similarly to Freud, Piaget and Habermas, “a rational individuated sense of self, differentiated from the external world, from its social roles (and the superego) and from its internal nature (id) (p. 238).

Steiner’s usage of the terms *Ego* or *I* also appears to integrate aspects of the psychoanalytic *organizing principle*, the Piagetian *mature ego*, and the Habermasian *ego-identity*, but with the understanding that its intrinsic nature is divine in the Fichtean *Pure Ego* or *Higher Self* sense. Wilber’s New Age description would equate with Steiner’s term *egotism*. Gebser’s (1949/1985) usage of the terms *ego* or *I* bear some similarity to Wilber’s and Steiner’s characterizations. He certainly identifies the centrality of ego awareness as an organizing principle that gives direction to consciousness. “This effector, or agent, the bearer of consciousness, is the ego. With this we are fully in the mental structure, the anthropocentric structure where consciousness becomes centered” (p. 89). Gebser adds that the *core* or *nucleus*—“in all likelihood identical to the presence of origin . . . forms, shapes and directs each and every individual human being” (p. 134). For this *core* he prefers to use the term “the *itself* [which] “can become visible in the reflexivity of the ego without succumbing to the autism of a self” (p. 134). Gebser also appears to use the term *egotism* in a similar way to Steiner.

Finally, all three refer to the significance of the sun mythologeme<sup>193</sup> in relation to the development of the ego during this period. Gebser (1949/1985) notes the sun mythologeme in

<sup>192</sup> Wilber seems to be referring here to the third of the three major components of Piaget’s *formal operations* which could be summarized as: *hypothetico-deductive reasoning*, *scientific-inductive reasoning* and *reflective abstraction* (Piaget, 1955).

<sup>193</sup> Gebser may have coined the term *mythologeme*, as it has not been possible to find a formal definition of it. Based on the way he uses the term and also other usages of the suffix *-eme*, e. g.,

both China and Greece (pp. 70, 79). Steiner writes extensively on the myths of the early culture periods leading up to—and including—the beginnings of Christianity which point to the relationship between a spiritual notion of the Sun and humanity. Wilber (1996c) discusses in substantial detail what he calls the *solarization of the ego*, in particular in relation to the hero myths (p. 227-251).

### The Birth of Philosophy in Greece

Steiner (1971a) pointed to the significant relationship between the awakening individual ego and the new intellectual-mental-rational forms of thought in which mental knowledge came to special prominence—“the time began in which man mainly sought to grasp the world through understanding and this relationship to the world brought him thoughts” (p. 54).

Thinking gradually passed over to abstractions . . . in the work of Thales, with whom one generally begins the history of philosophy. (p. 25)

This had to come about since otherwise [humans] could not have attained freedom and a full consciousness of the ego. (p. 19)

Tarnas (1991) points to the significant contribution of particular individuals in this project: “The Greek sense of confidence in the power of human thought to comprehend the world rationally, a confidence begun with Thales, now found in Aristotle its fullest expression and climax” (p. 60). Gangadean (1998), concurs, regarding the significance of individual Greek philosophers, while also pointing to the underlying *universal* nature of what he calls, *first philosophy*. Although perhaps a contested notion in postmodern times, this is a theme that recurs today as we search for *universals* through the *particularities* of the diverse approaches to integral thought.

And Plato and Aristotle broke new ground historically in inaugurating a formal science of the Universal Logos of natural reason, a birthing of first philosophy. (p. xvii)

Wilber (1996c) refers to two particular aspects of Aristotle’s philosophy that reflect the refining of the social arena of the earlier myth-membership self. He summarizes the Greek *polis* in its original idealistic sense, “as being a *shared human community* . . . based on unrestrained *communication* (via language).” Secondly he refers to *praxis*, which in its traditional Aristotelian sense is “purposeful, enlightened, moral behavior pursued in the company of polis” (p. 167). Wilber notes current usages that have reduced and debased *polis* to “politics” and *praxis* to “moralism” or simply “practice” (p. 168).

Gebser points to the struggle of the Greek mind to overcome the vitality and dynamism of the soul. Even in Aristotle’s teachings, the soul, is still vital and determined by: “memory, perception, cognition and movement.” Gebser (1949/1985) notes “even at the mental inception of Western philosophy the original numinous and dynamic character of the concept of soul is still effective” (p. 197).

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a *phoneme* is the smallest unit of speech that distinguishes meaning; a *grapheme* is the fundamental unit in written language; I am assuming he is using *mythologeme* to denote the fundamental *unit of mythical meaning* that can be used in various myths.

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### The Inner-Directedness Towards Self-Knowledge

In what I consider to be a peak of convergence in their writings, Steiner, Gebser and Wilber all point to the significance of the awakening ego in order for the individual to begin the process of self-development. Synchronously, they all identify the consummation of this event, in the famous inscription, “*Know thyself*,” on the temple of Apollo in Delphi. A detailed hermeneutic analysis of the similarities and uniqueness of their comments about this marker of inner-directed mental consciousness are discussed and evaluated in the final section. Gebser (1949/1985) also noted that although up to this point the process of writing had either been from top to bottom—as in Chinese—or from right to left, this inscription brought with it a reversal in the direction of writing. It was written from left to right. Gebser speculated that this was a key marker of the directedness of the individual ego (pp. 75-78).

An extensive hermeneutic examination of the original meaning of this term *gnothi seauton*, “Know thyself” has been undertaken by Foucault and delivered in some of his last lectures (1981-1982)—*The Hermeneutics of the Subject*—at the *Collège de France* (Foucault, 2005). He argues, based on historical and archaeological evidence, that the original meaning and usage of the term by Socrates and many other philosophers of Antiquity, was much more rich and spiritually oriented than contemporary philosophy gives credit for. Foucault refers to the intimate relations between *gnothi seauton* (know yourself) and another significant term *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self) within which our interpretation needs to be contextualized. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss Foucault’s point in depth. However, of relevance to this research is the Greek notion of “care of the self,” which Foucault explained as “spirituality,” in the sense of disciplined practices of the soul, such as meditation, purification and other transformative practices to prepare oneself to have access to the truth. Foucault (2005) comments,

So, throughout Antiquity (in the Pythagoreans, Plato, the Stoics, Cynics, Epicureans, and the Neo-Platonists), the philosophical theme (how to have access to the truth?) and the question of spirituality (what transformations in the being of the subject are necessary for access to the truth?) were never separate. (p. 17)

Foucault (2005) added that this code of morality—care of the self—that arose out of Greek philosophy in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, was further developed over the next thousand years, particularly through Christian spiritual disciplines associated with soul preparation for acquiring knowledge. He then raised the obvious question: “Why did Western thought and philosophy neglect the notion of *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self) in its reconstruction of its own history?” (p. 12) His explanation is that what he called *the Cartesian moment* functioned in two ways, “by philosophically requalifying the *gnothi seauton* (know yourself), and by discrediting the *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self)” (p. 14). He claimed that this was the point where “the history of truth enters its modern period” (p. 17). Based on Foucault’s insight, I want to ensure that my macrohistorical narrative does not overlook the separation of our philosophical history from our spirituality. The contemporary need for the reintegration of this split is discussed in the next major section on postformal-integral-planetary consciousness.

## The Beginnings of the Axial Age

Another major cultural development was occurring during this period (c. 800 BCE-1,500 CE) throughout the major centers of civilization at the time—Ancient Greece, the Middle East, India and China. Perhaps somewhat paradoxically, in parallel with the development of intellectual-mental-rational consciousness—the most abstract structure of consciousness—several of the world’s major religions also began, including the some of the first monotheistic religions. Although Hinduism<sup>194</sup> and Judaism<sup>195</sup>—which could be seen as parent religions to many of the others—had already developed in the previous millennium, there was a flourishing of new religions over the next thousand years. The beginning of this period has been called the *Axial Age* by Karl Jaspers (Erickson, 1999). Wilber (2000d) refers to this phenomenon as the rise of the “rational religions.” Gebser (1949/1985) also draws parallels between aspects of the mental structure and the origins of several religions, making the additional link between the emergence of mental thinking and patriarchy.

In China, Confucius introduces patriarchy only slightly later than Lycurgus in Greece [around 500 BCE]; and . . . in Persia, Zarathustra asserts dualism which . . . underlies Parmenides’ notion of a Being opposed to Non-Being. (p. 79-80)

A broader contextualization of the duration of Jasper’s Axial Age suggests a longer period of religious emergence that includes even more of the major world religions. In addition to the religions that arose during the six hundred year period that Jasper theorized (800-200 BCE), Hinduism and Judaism, founded in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE, were still extant at that time. If we continue on into the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium CE, where, according to Steiner, Gebser and Wilber, the intellectual-mental-rational-consciousness continued to grow and spread, then Christianity, Shinto and Islam also arise.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium BCE

- Hinduism in India (2,000 BCE)
- Judaism in Near East (Moses c. 1,300-1,200 BCE)

### 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE

- Zoroastrianism in Persia (Zoroaster 628-527 BCE)
- Jainism in India (Mahavira 599-527 BCE)
- Taosim in China (Lao Tse 580-500 BCE)
- Buddhism in India (Buddha 563-483 BCE)
- Confucianism in China (Confucius 551-479 BCE)

### 1<sup>st</sup> Millennium CE

- Christianity in Near East (Jesus Christ BCE 1-33 CE)
- Shinto in Japan 100 CE
- Islam in Arabia (Mahammad 570-632 CE)

Clearly if we went back even further we would need to take into account Paganism and Animism—which are spiritual movements generally associated with the Upper Paleolithic and

<sup>194</sup> Hinduism is generally believed to have begun around 2,000 BCE.

<sup>195</sup> Judaism is linked to the life of Moses c. 1,200-1,300 BCE.

Neolithic periods. While it is beyond the scope of this paper, further research could be undertaken on the relationship between the development of world religions and the evolution of consciousness (Benedikter, 2005; Bouma, 2006; Clayton, 2006, 2007; Clayton & Simpson, 2006; Esbjörn-Hargens & Wilber, 2006; Tacey, 2003; Wilber, 2006). It is worth noting that the religions of India and China also began as integrated spiritual-philosophical systems,<sup>196</sup> much as the Greek and early Christian spiritual-philosophical systems began, according to Foucault, as discussed above. This *formative* complementarity of philosophical knowledge and spiritual self-care only became a *deformative*<sup>197</sup> split in Europe with the *Cartesian moment* as Foucault indicated. It might be fruitful to consider whether a similar split has also occurred between Indian philosophies and religions or those of Chinese origins.<sup>198</sup>

It is also interesting to note that throughout this two thousand year period of development of ego-based thinking, the emergence of these religions provided several *spiritual punctuations*. I will briefly refer to three that have each introduced into the world in a unique way the teachings, power and message of Love and/or Compassion perhaps as a counter-weight to the increasing dominance of head-knowledge. I will attempt to interpret them *according to their own traditions*: the Buddha, according to a common reading of Buddhist philosophy, represented the highest development that a human being could reach—spiritual enlightenment, and in the last stages of his *ascent* he modeled and taught Wisdom and Compassion; the Christ, according to a common reading of Christian theology, represented an embodiment of the Divine, descended from Heaven/Cosmos/Sun,<sup>199</sup> and in the last stages of his *descent* he modeled, taught and embodied Wisdom and Love; the Prophet Muhammad, according to a common reading of Islam, represented a messenger of God, “the paradigm of ethical and moral behavior” (Inayatullah & Boxwell, 2003, p. 178) taught and modeled Compassion and Mercy prior to his *ascent*. These messages of love and compassion have become increasingly isolated from the egoic path of knowledge reaching a peak of separation in Kant’s differentiation of the knowledge spheres (Wilber, 2000d, p. 401). The emerging need for a reintegration of love-heart with wisdom/head is discussed in the next major section.

Steiner, Gebser and Wilber have all written on the missions of the various religions, and all point to the need for the re-integration of spirituality with the other knowledge domains, but it is

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<sup>196</sup> For example, some of the original Buddhist texts offer insights into the thinking mind that are at least as enlightening as much contemporary western psychology (Zajonc, 1997). Confucian philosophy formed the basis of the Han Chinese Empire creating “economic, political and cultural unity out of disparate ethnic groups” (Swimme & Tucker, 2006, p. 8) two thousand years ago, prior to the Roman Empire.

<sup>197</sup> The terms *formative* and *deformative* are used by David Boadella—in a similar way to Gebser’s use of efficient and deficient, or Wilber’s use of healthy and pathological—to discuss the different polar faces of religion and spirituality (Boadella, 1998, pp. 30-31). I find them to be very suitable terms in this context.

<sup>198</sup> If not, this may indicate either that they have remained in a mythic relationship to religion and philosophy, or that they have developed the mental structure of consciousness, but without its subsequent divisive deformation. Of course, even this statement itself is a gross over-simplification. This could be the subject of further research.

<sup>199</sup> While the traditional, exoteric Church Christianity refers to Christ descending to earth from *Heaven*, esoteric Christian traditions, such as Rosicrucianism, anthroposophy, and creation spirituality, connect Christ with the *Sun* mythologeme and/or the *Cosmos* (Fox, 1988).

beyond the scope of this paper to discuss this topic further. Wilber's most recent book proposes an integral approach to religion as a path to evolving consciousness (Wilber, 2006).

## Deficient Manifestations of Intellectual-Mental-Rational Consciousness

Steiner (1971a) pointed out that this “head and thought” civilization was in some ways more perfect and complete during the Greek period when humans still had a relationship to the surrounding world. “It is only what developed from it as a decadent condition that became materialistic” (p. 55). The beginnings of this decadence was evident as early as 221 BCE in early Imperial China, which went through a destructive, totalizing suppression of diversity similar to that of the Roman Empire a few centuries later. What had blossomed as a cultural flourishing in Greece, contracted with the Roman Empire: the invention of bureaucracy, the rule of law with its sense of righteousness and power, the Romanization of Christianity, and the masculinization of culture, particularly the advancement of war machinery exponentially supporting the desire to conquer, colonize, and convert (Eisler, 1987).

Both Steiner and Gebser emphasize the deficient nature of excessive abstraction. Steiner (1971a) notes “humanity had to go through the period of abstractions . . . But [the abstract ideas] *must* be united again with reality” (p. 31). Gebser (1949/1985) decries the excesses of abstraction: “In its extreme form of exaggerated abstractness, it 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” (p. 88). Gebser expands on this notion as follows.

Today, while the integral is overdetermining and dissolving the mental-rational consciousness, the mental capacity of thought is being mechanized by the robots of calculation—computers—and this is being emptied and quantified. (p. 538)

Wilber (1996c) pointed to the *monumental* price that humans had to pay for the “monumental growth in consciousness” that arose with the ego. He cites Campbell as referring to this period of development as “the great reversal” (p. 305). In Wilber's terms: “The ego, then, lies at the extreme point of vulnerability, half-way between the Eden of the subconscious and the true Heaven of the superconscious” (p. 305). He identifies four major factors that in his view contributed to “a sense of the Fall.” These were existential guilt, neurosis, “feelings of alienation . . . from Spirit” and “egoic *hybris* (hubris)” (pp. 306-308).

## Summary and Relevance for Today

Gebser (1949/1985) describes how the human ego “emerges and increases from mutation to mutation, culminating in the deficient mental phase with its overemphasis of ego and its pendulation between isolation and rigidification (egocentricity)” (p. 151). He comments:

Wherever we are caught up in the labyrinthine network of mere concepts, or meet up with a one-sided emphasis on willful or voluntaristic manifestations of attempts at spasmodic synthesis . . . we may assuredly conclude the presence of a deficient mental, that is, an extremely rationalistic source. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 154)

Both Steiner (a century ago), and Gebser (fifty years ago), fore-sensed the looming planetary catastrophe if we do not wake up and change our thinking.

If [we do] not vitalize [our] thoughts, if [we] persist in harboring merely intellectualistic thoughts, dead thoughts, [we] must destroy the earth. . . . The destruction begins with the most highly rarified element . . . ruining . . . the warmth-atmosphere of the Earth. . . . and if [our] thoughts were to remain purely intellectualistic, [we] would poison the air, ruining in the first place, all vegetation. [Eventually, far in the future] it will be possible for [us] to contaminate the water. (Steiner, 1972b, pp. 90-91)

It is somewhat horrific to realize that in the short space of a century, what Steiner predicted might happen over a long period of time—he was speaking of thousands of years—is well underway towards the catastrophe he foreshadowed—most notably “ruining . . . the warmth-atmosphere of the Earth” with global warming. Gebser (Gebser, 1949/1985) also fore-sensed the problems that are arising today.

The crisis of our times and our world is in a process—at the moment autonomously—of complete transformation, and appears headed toward an event which, in our view can only be described as a “global catastrophe” . . . Either we will be disintegrated and dispersed, or we must resolve and effect integrality. (p. xxvii)

Even two hundred years ago, Hegel’s message, as interpreted by Tarnas, seems to portend the impending crisis.

As Hegel suggested, a civilization cannot become conscious of itself, cannot recognize its own significance until it is so mature that it is approaching its own death. (Tarnas, 1991, p. 445)

Many contemporary scholars also highlight the urgency for the type of change in consciousness that the next section foregrounds (Elgin, 1993; Gangadean, 2006a, 2006b; László, 2006; Montuori, 1999; Morin & Kern, 1999).

## **Transition from Intellectual-Mental-Rational to Postformal-Integral-Planetary: The Challenge of the Hour**

Gebser and Steiner describe this transition as having its birth between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in Europe, where the new consciousness is struggling to emerge through the complacency of the over-ripe old consciousness structures. Gebser (1949/1985) summarizes this situation.

When spatial consciousness was finally consolidated around 1480-1500 [CE] it was from that time onward liberated for new tasks. Waking, diurnal consciousness had been secured . . . After this achievement modern European [people] believed that . . . [they] had accomplished all that could be accomplished and [were] content to remain in [this] state of achievement. . . . but . . . a decline sets in because of this self-satisfaction, and, beginning with the Renaissance, mental consciousness increases in deficiency and deteriorates into

rationalism. . . . At the same time, however, the new mutation begins its course which becomes gradually but increasingly visible over the following centuries [and] . . . will enter the general awareness at the moment when the deficient attitude reaches its maximum of rational chaos—a moment we are reaching with finality during the present decades (p. 303).

In Steiner's (1986a) view, the manner in which modern science developed—at least up to his time—was an overextension of *head*-knowledge to the extent that it was not permeated with *heart*-knowledge. While earlier forms of science which were more in tune—albeit not fully consciously—with the cosmic laws, modern science discovered the workings of these laws of nature “of gravity, of heat, of steam, of electricity” (p. 102) and used them to manipulate the world. Steiner pointed to his times as the turning point where humans, having reached “the highest point of [our] power to transform the physical world. . . . From now onwards [we] will become more spiritual again” (p. 102).

Wilber's position on this transition is less clear. Although he writes substantially on vision-logic—his term for the new consciousness after rationality—he makes few statements regarding its beginnings. There is one direct statement that I have located where he (Wilber, 1996c) notes that “the centaur<sup>200</sup> was first reached by a significant number of individuals with the flowering of humanistic understanding of man, perhaps as early as the 1600's in Europe (Florence, especially) but peaking with present-day humanistic-existential psychology” (p. 340, note\*). In his later work Wilber (2000d), draws on Habermas indicating the idea that the collective development of ego-identity in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Europe, led to concepts of legal, moral, and political freedom. He describes the impact of this development on culture and society, citing Habermas, as facilitating notions of “global forms of intercourse” and early conceptions of *world citizenship* (p. 191). While this suggests planetary consciousness, Wilber does not explicitly bring this through.

The following section discusses literature on the multi-faceted features of emergent consciousness.

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<sup>200</sup> Wilber uses the term *centaur* to denote the body-mind integration of vision-logic.

## 8. Postformal-Integral-Planetary Consciousness—the Emergence of Reintegration

Let us call what shines forth in the soul as eternal, the *consciousness soul*. . . . The kernel of human consciousness, that is, *the soul within the soul* . . . is then distinguished from the intellectual soul, which is still entangled in the sensation, impulses and passions. . . . Only that truth is permanent, however, that has freed itself from all flavor of such sympathy and antipathy of feeling. . . . That part of the soul in which this truth lives will be called consciousness soul. (Steiner, 1904/1971e, pp. 24-25)

*Transparency (diaphaneity) is the form of manifestation of the spiritual. . . . Integral reality is the world's transparency, a perceiving of the world as truth: a mutual perceiving and imparting of truth of the world and of man and all that transluces both.*" (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 7)

As vision-logic begins to emerge, postconventional awareness deepens into fully universal, existential concerns: life and death, authenticity, full bodymind integration, self-actualization, global awareness, holistic embrace . . . In the archaeological journey to the Self, the personal realm's exclusive reign is coming to an end, starting to be peeled off a radiant Spirit, and that universal radiance begins increasingly to shine through, rendering the self more and more transparent. (Wilber, 2000b, p. 105)

### Context for Emergence of Postformal-Integral-Planetary<sup>201</sup> Consciousness

Steiner, Gebser, and to a lesser extent Wilber—as discussed previously—refer to the first glimmerings of the emergence of a new movement of consciousness in the cultural phenomena of 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century western Europe. For Steiner, the early 15<sup>th</sup> century marks the beginning of what he calls the fifth [post-glacial] cultural period. Tarnas (2006) agrees that the European Renaissance ushered in a new era. He pinpoints “the time span of a single generation surrounding the year 1500,” beginning with Pico della Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man* in 1486, as the context for the birth of the *modern*<sup>202</sup> *self*, and the birth of the *modern cosmos*<sup>203</sup> (p. 4). In an earlier work, Tarnas (1991) noted that during this period, when translations of the original Greek philosophical works became available for the first time,

<sup>201</sup> By using the compound hyphenated term *postformal-integral-planetary* I am drawing on the postformal philosophy of complex thinking developed by Morin. He often uses such compound terms to denote complex integration of concepts (Morin, 2005a, 2005b).

<sup>202</sup> The terms *modern*, *modernism* and *modernity* are used in various ways in different contexts and it would require another article (at least) to unravel the different meanings. Steiner also used the terms *modern era* and *modern world conception* to describe the period Tarnas refers to, and also saw it as a foundation for the new emergent consciousness. I believe that Tarnas is here referring to the healthy aspects of the modernity project, which in recent centuries have become increasingly tainted and overshadowed by unbalanced, unhealthy aspects of deficient rationality.

<sup>203</sup> Tarnas (2006) poetically alludes to the universal Sun mythologeme to connect these two transformative events: “the Sun, trailing clouds of glory, arose for both, in one great encompassing dawn” (p. 4).

humanist philosophical syncretism also began. What arose was a revisiting of the “ancient Greek balance and tension between Aristotle and Plato, between reason and imagination, immanence and transcendence, nature and spirit, external world and interior psyche” (p. 219). Apart from a sprinkling of individual contributions, the next major flourishing of the new integrative spirit was expressed through German idealism and Romanticism in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. This arose most notably via Goethe,<sup>204</sup> Schiller, Hegel, and the young poet-philosophers of the Jena Romantic School: Schelling,<sup>205</sup> Novalis, the Schlegel brothers, Holderlin. Wilber claims that although the idealists were accessing forms of consciousness beyond the formal-operational, rational-mental mode, they did not offer injunctions for others to develop such consciousness, and have thus been dismissed as “mere metaphysics” (Wilber, 2000d, p. 537). This latter assertion needs to be contested, based on a recent study by Schellingian scholar, Jason Wirth, reviewed by Michael Schwartz (2005).<sup>206</sup> This also raises the whole question of whether Wilber’s claim in this regard is valid for any of the German idealists or Romantics. There was a strong influence of both Hermeticism and Christianity, particularly in its esoteric form through Rosicrucianism in Goethe and many of the German philosopher-poets of this period. More scholarship is needed in this under researched issue. What is clear, however, is that although they pointed to the notion of a new stage, structure or movement of consciousness they did not formalize it. This apparently had to wait until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for the contributions of Steiner, Sri Aurobindo and Gebser—subsequently pursued by Wilber and the additional research discussed below.

It is difficult to do justice to the new consciousness in the space available here, since its emergent nature places it in a unique situation compared with the major movements of consciousness that have already arisen and become consolidated (archaic, magic, mythical and mental). This presents several challenges in academic contextualization. Firstly, signs of its emergence can be perceived *within* various disciplines, most notably adult developmental psychology, postformal educational approaches, the new sciences, postmodern philosophy and spirituality, postmodern poetry-music-film—and also *between* disciplines, through the holistic, integral and transdisciplinary urge to integrate knowledge. A major challenge in cohering and theorizing this new consciousness is the diversity of conceptualization between the different disciplines. For example, although research from adult developmental psychology makes

<sup>204</sup> Goethe is often referred to as the father of German Romanticism.

<sup>205</sup> Note should also be made of the contribution in this circle of Caroline [née Michaelis], who was first married to Augustus Schlegel and later to Schelling—although 12 years his senior—who both inspired them and engaged them in challenging dialogue throughout this period: “Even our brief glance at Schelling’s character must take into account the remarkable woman whose counsel and affection made a great part of his most productive years possible. I doubt whether Schelling, even as philosopher, can be well understood apart from Caroline. She herself was the idol of the whole romantic circle” (Royce, 1892/2001, Lecture 6, Part IV, ¶ 181). See also Richards (2002).

<sup>206</sup> Discussing Wirth’s research, Schwartz (2005) notes:

it is not that Schelling did not have a fundamental practice—Wirth argues convincingly that he did, which ‘included the cultivation of the life of sensitivity, of a spiritualized relationship to nature and to the tradition’ (113)—but rather that this practice was peculiar to Schelling, ‘private’ one might say, in line with modernity’s public/private divide in such matters, and hence has largely gone unknown to readers of his texts, rather than this practice being part a tradition of time-tested techniques sustained by ongoing community, or its being responsive to a common cultural ethos that research that identifies new stages of consciousness development fundamental practice is requisite for authentic philosophical life. (pp. 2-3)

scientific claims to have firmly established four stages of development beyond *formal operations* (Commons, Trudeau, Stein, Richards, & Krause, 1998), postmodern philosophers who are evidently *enacting* some of these higher stages did not conceptualize it in such ways. Recent research has made significant inroads into building conceptual bridges in this area (G. Hampson, 2007). My addition to Hampson's seminal philosophical contribution to bridging integral and postmodern conceptualizations is to contextualize the adult development research on *postformal* thinking, *integral* theory, the critical *planetary* discourse and postmodern philosophy—and many other discourses—within the broader movement of consciousness that I am theorizing here.

I propose a theoretical bifurcation between contemporary research that *actually identifies* new stage(s) of consciousness development—either individual or socio-cultural—and research that *enacts new stages of consciousness* without necessarily conceptualizing it as such.<sup>207</sup>

### Contemporary Research that *Identifies* New Stage(s) of Consciousness

- Adult developmental psychology research that identifies several stages of *postformal* psychological development<sup>208</sup> (Arlin, 1999; Campbell, 2006; Cartwright, 2001; Commons et al., 1990; Commons, Trudeau, Stein, Richards, & Krause, 1998; Cook-Greuter, 2000; Kegan, 1994; Kohlberg, 1990; Kramer, 1983; Labouvie-Vief, 1990; Riegel, 1973; Sinnott, 1998; Yan & Arlin, 1995);
- Research from a range of disciplines that identifies an emergent stage in socio-cultural evolution, often referred to as *integral* or *planetary* (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Combs, 2002; Cowan & Todorovic, 2005; Earley, 1997; Elgin, 1997; Feuerstein, 1987; Gangadean, 2006a; Gebser, 1970/2005; Goerner, 2004; Montuori, 1999; Morin & Kern, 1999; Murphy, 1992; Neville, 2006; Nicolescu, 2002; Ornstein & Ehrlich, 1991; Ray, 1996; Russell, 2000; Scott, 2000; Swimme & Tucker, 2006; Thompson, 1991; Wilber, 2000b).

One of the gaps I have discerned in the literature is that—in spite of rhetoric about integrality and inclusion—much of this research operates within disciplinary boundaries without reference to the research undertaken in parallel disciplines. Wilber's work is clearly an exception to this and this is one of his significant contributions to the contemporary literature. Part of my endeavor in proposing this bifurcation is to increase understanding of the relationship between these contributions as *two* faces of the *one* evolution of consciousness.

### Contemporary Research that *Enacts* New Stage(s) of Consciousness

- Philosophical developments, including critical theory, global reason, hermeneutics, integral theory, phenomenology, postmodernism, poststructuralism and process philosophy (Benedikter, 2005; Deleuze & Millett, 1997; Derrida, 1995; Foucault, 2005; Gangadean, 1998, 2006b; Gare, 2002; Habermas, 1992; Hampson, 2007; Keller &

<sup>207</sup> This bifurcation is a rough guide and the two categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive. To further this proposition would require more research.

<sup>208</sup> The next issue of the journal *World Futures: the Journal of General Evolution* will be a special triple issue integrating the latest research on postformal reasoning.

- Daniell, 2002; Kristeva, 1986; Lyotard, 2004; McDermott, 2001b; McDermott, 2004; Morin, 2005a; Ricoeur, 1986);
- Scientific developments such as quantum physics, Einstein’s theory of relativity, chaos and complexity sciences, and emergentism in evolution (Combs, 2002; Deacon, 2003; Goodenough & Deacon, 2006; László, 2007; Russell, 2000, 2002; Swimme, 1999; Thompson, 1991; Zajonc, 2004);
  - Postmodern approaches to spirituality and religion (Benedikter, 2005; Boadella, 1998; Clayton, 2006; Esbjörn-Hargens & Wilber, 2006; Scott, 2007; Tacey, 2003; Wilber, 2006);
  - Postformal educational approaches, such as critical, futures, holistic and integral (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2005; Ferrer, Romero, & Albareda, 2005; Freire, 1970; Gidley, 2005b, 2007; Giroux, 1992, 2005; Hart, 2001; Kessler, 2000; Kincheloe, Steinberg, & Hinchey, 1999; MacLure, 2006b; Marshak, 1997; McDermott, 2005; Miller, J. P., 2000; Miller, 2005, 2006; Milojevic, 2005a; Montuori, 2006; Morin, 2001a; Neville, 2000; Noddings, 2005; Palmer, 2007; Slaughter, 2002; St. Pierre, 2004; Subbiondo, 2005; Thompson, 2001);
  - The manifestation of integrality through the arts of music; architecture; painting; literature; film; and new forms of movement (Cobusson, 2002; Deleuze & Conley, 1992; Derrida, 2001; Gebser, 1949/1985; Gidley, 2001e; Kristeva, 1982; Lawlor, 1982; Montuori, 2003; Rose & Kincheloe, 2003);
  - The implications of the information age, particularly the world wide web (Gidley, 2004c; Grossman, Degaetano, & Grossman, 1999; Healy, 1998; Pearce, 1992; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004; Thompson, 1998);
  - Creation of knowledge-bridges through, for example, Wilber’s “methodological pluralism” (Wilber, 2006); interdisciplinary, cross-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and transdisciplinary research (Grigg, Johnston, & Milson, 2003; Nicolescu, 2002; Paul Ricoeur, 1997; van den Besselaar & Heimeriks, 2001; Volckmann, 2007); including new fields such as cultural studies, futures studies and integral studies.

## Terminology Issues

It is evident from the above that in addition to Steiner, Gebser and Wilber, many other researchers have endeavored to understand, characterize and communicate the new consciousness. Paradoxically, their contributions to understanding and communicating this phenomenon demonstrate both universal similarities and unique particularities. There is a profusion of terminology in the field—both between and within disciplinary boundaries. The major terms being used are:

- *Postformal*—to denote new developmental stages. Adult developmental psychologists have been undertaking research into postformal thinking for several decades, identifying up to four stages of development beyond Piaget’s formal operations (Arlin, 1999; Campbell, 2006; Cartwright, 2001; Commons et al., 1990; Commons, Trudeau, Stein, Richards, & Krause, 1998; Cook-Greuter, 2000; Kegan, 1994; Kohlberg, 1990; Labouvie-Vief, 1990; Sinnott, 1998; Yan & Arlin, 1995). The term *postformal* is also being utilized by several educationists (Horn, 2001; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1993; Kincheloe, Steinberg, & Hinchey, 1999; Rose & Kincheloe, 2003). Kincheloe and

Steinberg (1993) refer to post-formality as the socio-cognitive expression of postmodernism<sup>209</sup> (p. 309);

- *Integral*<sup>210</sup>—there are now several different schools of thought that use the term integral, which it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss in detail. This section will be mainly concerned with the usages of Gebser and Wilber, but my own usage of the term is primarily according to the usage of Gebser, which, in my view, most adequately contextualizes the other usages. Other terms relating to the new consciousness, such as Gebser's *aperspectival*; Wilber's *vision-logic*, *centaur* and *AQAL*; and Steiner's *consciousness soul* or *spiritual soul* will be clarified where appropriate;
- *Planetary*—to denote a critical counterbalance to the more politico-economic term: globalization, as mentioned in the introduction. The term, *planetary*—which denotes a more anthro-socio-cultural and ecological framing is gaining increasing currency as a term to characterize important features of the new consciousness, particularly for those theorists who have a critical sensibility in the light of our complex current planetary situation (Earley, 1997; Gangadean, 2006a; Miller, 2006; Montuori, 1999; Morin & Kern, 1999; Nicolescu, 2002; Swimme & Tucker, 2006).

Gebser used the term *integral-aperspectival*<sup>211</sup> to refer to the gradual transformation through awareness, concretion and integration of all the previous structures of consciousness that we have been exploring—archaic, magic, mythic and mental—into a new structure of consciousness.

The *aperspectival* consciousness structure is a consciousness of the whole, an integral consciousness encompassing all time and embracing both man's distant past and his approaching future as a living present. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 6)

Gebser<sup>212</sup> and others credit Sri Aurobindo with being the first to draw attention to a new movement of consciousness arising in his time (Anderson, 2006). In his earliest writings on evolution, included in his first publication *Karmayogin*, Sri Aurobindo draws attention to a deeper, more ancient lineage behind modern evolution theory than Charles Darwin, or even the

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<sup>209</sup> *Postmodernism*—a term to denote a critical or deconstructive philosophical perspective in relation to certain features of modernism. While postmodernism is not generally regarded as a new stage, structure or movement of consciousness, I note Hampson's recent paper pointing to the construct awareness of Derrida (Hampson, 2007). I support the notion that much of French philosophical postmodernism or deconstruction could be regarded as an expression of aspects of the new consciousness.

<sup>210</sup> See earlier note introducing the term *integral* in relation to related terms, such as *holistic* and *integrative*.

<sup>211</sup> The appropriateness of Gebser's use of the term *aperspectival* has been supported by the psychological research on higher postformal stages, such as the *metasystematic* and *paradigmatic* stages, in which a person is not attached to time, interests, groups, or their own perspective but are able to coordinate many perspectives simultaneously, i. e. consciousness of the whole (Commons, Trudeau, Stein, Richards, & Krause, 1998).

<sup>212</sup> Gebser (1949/1985) discovered Sri Aurobindo's writings only *after* the first German publication of his *Ever-Present Origin* in 1949, and he claimed in the Preface to the second edition, in 1966, that: "Sri Aurobindo was the first to propound in detail the thought that the fundamental and signal event of our time was the present-day transformation of consciousness" (p. 102).

German idealists (Aurobindo, 1909). He draws on the seminal evolutionary writings of the ancient Indian sacred texts, the *Upanishads*.<sup>213</sup> A close scrutiny of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century writings of Steiner and Sri Aurobindo points to the likelihood that the latter met and was influenced by Steiner during these seminal times, though I am still researching this possibility.<sup>214</sup>

My research indicates, however, that as early as 1904, Steiner had already identified an emergent movement of consciousness,<sup>215</sup> both ontogenetically—as an aspect of individual development—and phylogenetically—arising in humanity as a whole (Steiner, 1904/1959, 1986a). He spoke of the awakening of *consciousness soul* or *spiritual soul* in the fifth [post-glacial] cultural period that began in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century CE and would continue to develop on into the future (Steiner, 1986a pp. 97-105). He also claimed that this new consciousness would be expected to strengthen in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and beyond. He noted that the true nature of the self, the *I*, “reveals itself in the consciousness soul . . . An inner activity of the I begins with a perception of the I, through self-contemplation.” (Steiner, 1910/1939, p. 31) Hence his use of the term “Consciousness Soul, [in which] the Ego is then able to transform its inner experiences into conscious knowledge of the outer world.” (Steiner, 1930/1983a, pp. 23-24) This reflective self-contemplation resembles Wilber’s (2000d) “vision-logic [that] . . . finds its own operation increasingly transparent to itself” (p. 193).

Wilber draws on Gebser and Sri Aurobindo among others, as well as the developmental psychology research on postformal thinking, so his work is a remarkably sweeping synthesis, though by no means complete, or accurate in all the details of its sources, as he himself admits (Wilber, 2000a, p. xii). He notes that what unites all these perspectives is that they all point to something that goes beyond formal, modernist, abstract, rational thinking. He has coined the term *vision-logic* to describe this stage—an appropriate term because of its inherent dialectical nature.

Where perspectival reason privileges the exclusive perspective of the particular subject, vision-logic *adds up all the perspectives*, privileging none, and thus attempts to grasp the integral, the whole, the multiple contexts. (Wilber, 2000b, p. 167)

In summary, Steiner’s major contributions were: he was the first to identify in writing, as early as 1904, a new consciousness emergence,<sup>216</sup> and to write and lecture *extensively* on the evolution of consciousness, building on ancient Indian, Greek *and* particularly, German idealist/Romantic lineages; and secondly, he developed and published a comprehensive series of practices/injunctions designed to awaken the new consciousness in humanity—particularly

<sup>213</sup> The *Upanishads* are the ancient Indian sacred texts referred to in the earlier section on Ancient India.

<sup>214</sup> During the decade between 1902 and 1912 they both had some connection with the Theosophical Society in England before both writing critically about its operations, at approximately the same time. Further research is being undertaken for a later publication.

<sup>215</sup> Steiner also genealogically identified much earlier Vedanta Indian and ancient Greek lineages of evolutionary notions, which is beyond the scope of this paper to explore.

<sup>216</sup> This information, based on extensive research, is correct to the best of my knowledge; however, I am very open to hearing contra-indications on this matter, which I consider to be of some importance in establishing the sound foundations of the knowledge base of both integral theory and the evolution of consciousness discourse.

through education, contemplative practices and the arts (Steiner, 1905/1981b, 1904/1993 1926/1966b, 1930/1983a, 1950, 1904/1959, 1964a, 1909/1965, 1966a, 1971a, 1982b, 1986a).

Gebser's major contributions were: firstly, to begin to academically formalize the emergent integral structure of consciousness;<sup>217</sup> and secondly, to observe and note its emergence in the world in various disciplines and discourses in the first half of the last century (Gebser, 1949/1985, 1970/2005, 1996a). Tragically, both Steiner's and Gebser's outstanding contributions have been largely ignored by the Anglophone academic world, as mentioned in the rationale for this research.

Wilber's major contributions so far have been: firstly, to synthesize, contemporize and popularize much of the earlier research;<sup>218</sup> and secondly, to theorize a framework—the most recent form of which is AQAL<sup>219</sup>—designed to assist with the application of his integral theory to a range of disciplinary fields (Wilber, 1996b, 1996c, 2000a, 2000b, 2000d, 2004, 2006). Thirdly, Wilber has popularized the need for injunctions, or *integral life practices*,<sup>220</sup> already emphasized by Steiner and Sri Aurobindo and more recently in the USA by George Leonard and Michael Murphy—not to mention millennia of spiritual and religious practices across numerous traditions. I acknowledge that this latter contribution of Wilber's provides some counterweight to critiques about his cognicentrism.

An important point in considering this new movement of consciousness is that unlike the previous structures, most of which tended to have a geographic locale—although not necessarily a single one—the new emergence is, by its own nature, planetary, cosmopolitan. This will become more evident below and is further developed in Appendix B. It is important to distinguish such a *planetizing*<sup>221</sup> noospheric movement—which emphasizes the more inner-oriented developments of psychology and culture, with respect for individual and cultural diversity—from the notion of *globalization*<sup>222</sup>—primarily a politico-economic movement based on the agendas of multi-national corporations, but tacitly carrying with it—like a *Trojan horse*—a largely modernist, materialistic, mono-cultural worldview. It is critically important to question

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<sup>217</sup> Although Gebser was clearly not familiar with Steiner's extensive research in the area of evolution of consciousness, his characterizations of integral consciousness bear a remarkable similarity to Steiner's writings on consciousness/spiritual soul, just a few decades earlier. The strong links between their writings has already been demonstrated throughout this paper.

<sup>218</sup> Wilber's omission of any substantial consideration of Steiner's extensive research on evolution of consciousness, other than a few brief comments, has been a primary impetus for my research.

<sup>219</sup> For readers new to Wilber's work, AQAL refers to all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states and all types, these being the five major dimensions of his theoretical framework (Wilber, 2004).

<sup>220</sup> Wilber was influenced by the *Integral Transformative Practices* developed by integral practitioners, George Leonard and Michael Murphy. <http://www.itp-life.com/>

<sup>221</sup> Teilhard de Chardin coined the term *planetization* to characterize his perspective of the new consciousness that he envisioned emerging in the noosphere (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959/2002, 1959/2004).

<sup>222</sup> Although globalization ostensibly assists with the equalizing of wealth across the globe by opening up a free market economy worldwide, the proposed outcomes have been the reverse. "On a global scale . . . there is increasing inequality between the 'developed' nations (where 20% of the world's population consumes 80% of world production) and those that remain undeveloped" (Morin & Kern, 1999, p. 17).

whether contemporary integral theory has been colonized by Americocentrism, or Eurocentrism, or whether it fully embodies a *planetary* sensibility in all its cultural diversity.<sup>223</sup> A fully integral theory of planetary consciousness would transcend and include the politico-economic notion of globalization. The latter could be regarded as an attempt to dominate cultural worldviews and consciousness around the planet with outmoded characteristics of the previous stage of consciousness development.

In the theory of emergent consciousness that I am developing through the journey of this narrative, the term *planetary*<sup>224</sup> refers to the critical awareness of the impending planetary crisis. It also implies that no race, nation, language group, religion, ideology, academic discipline or single brand of integral theory can claim ownership of the new movement of consciousness. Unless the integral theory in relation to the evolution of consciousness arises out of such epistemological and cultural *diversity*, it would hardly qualify for the descriptor *integral*.

To honor and integrate the diversity of the three major notions that inform the several growing tips of the evolution of consciousness discourse, I propose the composite term *postformal-integral-planetary consciousness* as a conceptual bridge.

I am aware that this section may suffer from some of the folds, doubling and circling that Foucault struggled with in his concept of the “immanent transcendental,” where the “forces of the outside . . . fold back upon themselves and affect themselves as the affect of self upon self, enabling the creation of ‘new forms of subjectivity’” (Robinson, 2007, p. 21). Demonstrating the paradoxical circularity of the new consciousness, Foucault adds: “indeed the end of philosophy . . . is the return of the beginning of philosophy. . . . The unfolding of a space in which it is once more possible to think” (Foucault, 1966/1994, p. 342). Additional more extensive work is in preparation that builds on this gestalt of fragments. Sri Aurobindo pointed 50 years ago to the difficulty in writing about integrality:

Integrality must by its nature be complex, many-sided and intricate; only some main lines can be laid down in writing, for an excess of detail would confuse the picture. (Aurobindo, 1997, ¶ 152, p. 359)

## Key Features of Postformal-Integral-Planetary Consciousness

One of the biases that this research seeks to address in the literature is that much of the research establishing *postformal* thinking has been framed and presented from a formal, mental-rational mode. While this formal scientific theorizing has clearly contributed a great deal to the discourse by giving it credibility within the academy—which is still largely operating from this mode—it is important that this does not set a biased template for acceptability of research in this area. A second—and related—bias is that within much postformal and integral research there is a privileging of cognicentric content and writing styles, potentially further marginalizing other

<sup>223</sup> For more discussion of this issue see (Anderson, 2006).

<sup>224</sup> While technically the term *global* could be used here instead of *planetary*, I am concerned that its semiotic links with *globalization* may taint its meaning. Also I wish to honor the substantial emergent literature on the rise of planetary culture and consciousness.

types of postformal/integral research that may reflect and seek to integrate other modes of expression:

- Affective (Loye, 1998; Nava, 2001; Noddings, 2005; Sinnott, 2005; Zajonc, 2005b);
- Aesthetic (Deleuze & Conley, 1992; Derrida, 2001; Gidley, 2001e; Rose & Kincheloe, 2003; Roy, 2006b); or
- Participatory modes (Ferrer, Romero, & Albareda, 2005; Hampson, 2007; Hart, 2000).

The initial focus below on the *reintegration of the whole person* is a core theoretical focus of this research. As indicated, humans have become *brain-bound* during the establishment of the intellectual-mental-rational mode. An integrative imperative to awaken artistic and participatory modes of consciousness comes through strongly in both the content and style of Steiner's and Gebser's writings—and in Wilber's conceptual notion of the *Big Three* and his *Integral Life Practices*. In summary, from this perspective, the move beyond mental-rationality requires an integration of the search for *Truth*—via scientific and philosophical epistemologies; with *Beauty*—via artistic/aesthetic sensibilities; and with *Goodness*—via participatory embodiment and critical enactment of the truth claims that we profess. I propose that this is a foundational point—often overlooked—that could ground postformal-integral-planetary consciousness in a *concretion*<sup>225</sup> of all consciousness modes, rather than a primarily conceptual abstraction of what integrality might be.

This new movement of consciousness is highly complex—with *complexity* itself being one of its features. The following themes have arisen from the three narratives and with due consideration of the postformal, integral and planetary literature listed above. My process here attempts a further transdisciplinary cohering of theoretical contributions so far, thus broadening and deepening the current discourse.

- Reintegration of the whole person—originary spiritual presence, magic vitality, mythopoetic imagination, mental directedness—embodied/enacted through integral transparency;
- Integration of dualisms, such as spirituality and science, imagination and logic, heart and mind, female and male;
- Transcending of egotism;
- Transcending linear, mechanical, clock-time through concretion of time-awareness (See Appendix A);
- Planetization of culture and consciousness (See Appendix B);
- Linguistic self-reflection and the re-enlivening of the word.

In the space available the first three points above will be briefly explored and the following two have been discussed in some depth in the appendices. The final point is the subject of ongoing research in collaboration with Gary Hampson, intended for future publication.

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<sup>225</sup> Gebser uses the term *concretion* to mean an experiencing in fully awake consciousness of all the previous structures in the same moment.

## Reintegration of the Whole Person

For Gebser, integral-aperspectival consciousness is not experienced through *expanded* consciousness, more systematic conceptualizations, or greater quantities of perspectives. In his view, such approaches largely represent over-extended, rational characteristics. Rather, it involves an actual re-experiencing, re-embodying, and *conscious re-integration* of the living vitality of magic-interweaving, the imagination at the heart of mythic-feeling *and* the purposefulness of mental conceptual thinking, their presence raised to a higher resonance, in order for the integral transparency to shine through. Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga with its threefold path of *knowledge, love* and *action* and the integral education model that was inspired by it, reflects Gebser's type of integration (Aurobindo, 1909). These, in turn, parallel Steiner's notion of the development of consciousness soul through an education that integrates the thinking/head (knowledge), the feelings/heart (love), and the hands/will (action) (Steiner, 1927/1986c, 1909/1965). Wilber's *Big Three*—based on Plato's Truth, Beauty and Goodness—would appear to be representing similar archetypes (Wilber, 2000d). Further research would be needed to establish more rigorous theoretical links. In an endeavor to embody this approach, the following is not designed to summarize, evaluate or even synthesize the extensive research on the various postformal cognitive features identified by adult developmental psychologists, or to integrate the multiple perspectives of thought in various fields, but to attempt to *embody* and *enact* the type of integrality that Gebser himself enacted.

## Integration of Dualisms

A central notion of integral-planetary consciousness is the overcoming of dualisms (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 386). This borrows from Foucault's critical awareness of power relations and what Derrida (1998) called violent hierarchies—those pairs of binary oppositions that have been driven apart through centuries of Cartesian dualism. This section will briefly explore four of these pairs that have been identified as significant and in need of reintegration in the new consciousness.

One of the strands of integral theory is particularly concerned with the reintegration of **spirituality and science**—or science and religion/theology. The beginnings of the reuniting of science and spirit are a reflection of the new consciousness movement and point towards increasingly integrated future cultural developments (Bohm, 1980; Clayton & Simpson, 2006; Conway Morris, 2007; Esbjörn-Hargens & Wilber, 2006; László, 2007; Nicolescu, 2002; Russell, 2000; Scott, 2007; Swimme, 1999; Swimme & Tucker, 2006; Wilber, 1998, 2001d; Zajonc, 2004). There is, as to be expected, some contestation as to which epistemology the integration might be framed within. From László's integral perspective, science must be at the basis of integral theory. In his recent book setting out his *Integral Theory of Everything*, László (2006) critiques Wilber's (2000a) *Theory of Everything*.

[Wilber] speaks of the “integral vision” conveyed by a genuine TOE. However, he does not offer such a theory; he mainly discusses what it would be like, describing it in reference to the evolution of culture and consciousness—and to his own theories. An actual, science-based integral theory of everything is yet to be created. (p. 11)

Yet for Wilber, this privileging of science over the other disciplines is at the basis of his claim that László's TOE is partial (Wilber, 2006). A possible explanation for this difference of view is that László and Wilber may have different concepts of what the term *theory* actually means. For László it clearly has a basis in formal scientific epistemology, whereas for Wilber the term *theory* may be being used more broadly—as it often is in the humanities and social sciences. Perhaps it is useful to think of theory-development itself as having developmental stages. It is also important to recognize that different disciplines do have different types of truth claims. Clarification of such issues is an important part of the establishment of *integral theory* and would be assisted by a more collaborative effort in theory-building (Murray, 2006). Admittedly, László agrees with Wilber that such a theory would need to take into account "life, mind, culture and consciousness" as parts of the world's reality, yet his own science-based theory does not address them in great detail (László, 2007). This is not uncommon in scientific theories, which focus on providing premises and axioms that can be generalized. A point to note here is that Wilber, László—and others—may also have different interpretations of the concept of *science*. It is important to distinguish in such a dialogue between the ideology of scientism<sup>226</sup> and the broader notion of the empirical<sup>227</sup> basis of experience. The latter could theoretically include Goethe's *delicate empiricism* (Holdrege, 2005; Robbins, 2006); William James' *pragmatism*—originally designed to empirically research the *something more* beyond physical realities (Gitre, 2006; McDermott, 2001); scientific studies on effects of meditation, yoga and para-psychological phenomena (The Dalai Lama, Benson, Thurman, E., & Goleman, 1991); and Steiner's (1986a) spiritual science. Many integral scientists are working to attempt to broaden the embrace of science (Goerner, 2004; Russell, 2002; Scott, 2007; Swimme, 1999; Visser, J., Barach, John, & Visser, 2007; Zajonc, 2004).

Wilber (1998) also points to the need to reintroduce *wonder* into the gap between science and religion, noting that, "if Spirit does exist, it will lie in . . . the direction of wonder, a direction that intersects the very heart of science itself" (p. ix-x). He has devoted a book to the reintegration of science and religion (Wilber, 1998), and also published a recent book chapter on the subject (Esbjörn-Hargens & Wilber, 2006). Steiner pointed to an important paradox: On the one hand the earlier, more macrocosmic, sciences—e.g., the hermetic-alchemical-scientific writings up to the 14<sup>th</sup> century—were superseded by the more materialistic view of modern science. On the other hand, he claimed that our times have the potential to be highly favorable to spiritual development, based on what we can bring through from within ourselves.

<sup>226</sup> The term, *scientism* has a variety of interpretations, but is meant here in its perjorative sense—as the view that scientific theory and methods are the only applicable ones regardless of the field of inquiry. As integral scientist, David Scott, notes, "Learning must overcome the dualisms created by scientism of the earlier era—dualisms of mind and matter, of science and religion, truth and meaning, facts and values." <http://www.learndev.org/BOP-AECT2002.html>

<sup>227</sup> The term *empiricism* has also been narrowed in a similar process. The etymology of the word empirical demonstrates its earlier, broader usage. First recorded in 1569, from L. *empiricus*, from Gk. *empeirikos* "experienced," from *empeiria* "experience," from *empeiros* "skilled," from *en-* "in" + *peira* "trial, experiment." The original referred to "a school of ancient physicians who based their practice on experience rather than theory." <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=empirical&searchmode=none>

What can make this epoch great must be brought about from the forces of the spiritual life, world-knowledge, world-conception. [We are] shut off from the heavenly forces . . . confined in the materialistic period. But . . . [we have] the greatest possibility of making [ourselves] spiritual . . . a spiritually free humanity. (Steiner, 1971a, pp. 56-57)

Steiner claimed that it would become increasingly possible to build on the intellectual faculties developed in humanity in the recent past—to begin as individuals to consciously develop more spiritual powers of *Imagination*, *Inspiration* and *Intuition* (Steiner, 1910/1939, p. 306). While Gebser does not particularly refer to the science-spirit dualism, he does stress that overcoming all dualisms is central to integrality. Steiner’s coinage of the dialectical term *spiritual science* as the descriptor for his entire spiritual epistemology indicates the priority he gave to bridging the science and spirituality split (Steiner, 1986a).

The second binary strand to be considered is **heart-mind**—related to the reintegration of the heart in thinking, particularly through reverence, awe, wonder and love. This feature is arising with some strength now in the postformal—particularly the holistic—education literature (Hart, 2000; Kessler, 2002; Miller, J. P., 2000; Miller, R., 1990, 2000; Nava, 2001; Noddings, 2005; Palmer, 1998; Zajonc, 2005a). The following extract is a good example of this warmth-imbued holistic education discourse.

A spiritual worldview is a *global* paradigm . . . an *ecological* paradigm. . . . Ultimately, a spiritual worldview is a *reverence for life*, an attitude of wonder and awe in the face of the transcendent Source of our being. (Miller, 1990, p. 154)

This encapsulates the *heart* of an integral-planetary consciousness where the horizons between holistic and integral theories fuse and we struggle for the most suitable language—language that is least likely to be colonized for other purposes. It is an authentic postformal spiritual response to the cold, *heartlessness* of the contemporary neo-fundamentalist hybrid of *politics-economics-scientism*. The latter is best exemplified in the *audit culture* currently colonizing mainstream western education and educational research agendas (Denzin, 2005; Giroux, 2003, 2005; Johnson, 2005; MacLure, 2006a, 2006b). Teilhard de Chardin (1959/2004) made the observation that humanity has been building its composite brain, and that perhaps it is now time to find its collective heart, “without which the ultimate wholeness of its powers of unification can never fully be achieved” (p. 172). The Greek term for this was *thymos*—the courage of the heart—a quality that the Greeks considered to be part of the essence of soul (Boadella, 1998, p. 9). This courageous call to bring the heart back into education was already made by early 20<sup>th</sup> century educational pioneers, most notably for this discussion, by Steiner.<sup>228</sup> In fact, he pointed to the importance of bringing *love* and *devotion* into all our knowledge seeking. He claimed that these two combined create *reverence*, which he argued is vital for moving into the new consciousness rather than merely extending abstract intellectualism *ad infinitum*. Steiner explained that the emphasis on *head-knowledge* that has been a necessary part of the development of human freedom needs to be warmed and enlivened by *heart-knowledge* in the present cultural period (Steiner, 1971a, p. 84).

<sup>228</sup> Other educational pioneers such as Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827), Friedrich Fröbel (1782-1852), and Steiner’s contemporaries Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) and Maria Montessori (1870-1952), also stressed the integration of the whole child.

Love and devotion are thus the right guides to the unknown, and the best educators of the soul in its advances from the Intellectual Soul to the Consciousness Soul. Whereas . . . the striving for truth educates the Intellectual Soul, *reverence* educates the Consciousness Soul, bringing more and more knowledge within its reach. But this reverence must be led and guided from a standpoint which never shuts out the light of thought. (Steiner, 1930/1983a, p. 60) (emphasis added)

Gebser makes little reference to *love* in *The Ever-Present Origin*, but makes the following understated link between love and the apersonal, elsewhere (Gebser, 1970/2005).

The apersonal can only be perceived by an apersonal, egofree human. This is, by the way, not only an Indian or East-Asian wisdom but also a Christian: it is a universal basic condition and necessity of humankind. Whoever complies to them, experiences a strengthening of his vitality and an improvement of extensive capability of love, which is presently more than ever necessary in our threatened world dissipating the human; but this need not particularly be emphasized. (Online text)

Gebser (1949/1985) primarily connects the heart and its rhythms with mythical consciousness. However, he gives two examples of philosophers struggling to experience the integral-aperspectival consciousness, citing Pascal's "logic of the heart" and Heidegger's "invisible, innermost heart . . . which for all of us is beyond quantitative calculation and can freely overflow the limits into the whole, the open." (p. 411) Both of these suggest that reintegration of the heart, like reintegration of other mythic qualities, is an important feature of Gebser's conception of integral.

Wilber occasionally refers to terms such as *heart*, *love*, *devotion* and *reverence* in his published books. He includes *love* in one of his definitions of spirituality, but considers this a fairly unsatisfactory definition (Wilber, 2000b, p. 133). His major conceptual engagement with the notion of *love* is through his discussion of Eros and Agape (Wilber, 2000d). Referring to what he calls "Plato's *Eros*," and "Christian *Agape*," he claims, citing Charles Taylor's (1989) *Sources of the Self*, that "the two together make a vast circle of love through the universe." Wilber then continues to discuss how this actually works in individual development.

In individual development, one *ascends* via Eros (or expanding to a higher and wider identity), and then *integrates* via Agape (or reaching down to embrace with care the lower holons), so that balanced development transcends but includes . . . Agape and Eros are united only in the nondual Heart. (Wilber, 2001a, p. 349)

Given the linearity of Wilber's model as discussed in Appendix A, where nondual experience is not possible until all other development has preceded it, one wonders where that might leave Wilber's theory in relation to heart-mind integration at any of the levels *lower* than the very top of his model. Although he stresses body-mind integration through his *centaur* metaphor, it is unlikely that this is intended to equate with heart-mind. This may be a major theoretical divergence between Steiner and Wilber in light of the centrality Steiner gives to the cultivation of love and reverence as educative forces for the consciousness soul (Wilber's vision-logic). Steiner's position on this is also consistent with his overall philosophy which—based on my

reading—appears to be nondual all the way through, although he does note that notions of dualism, particularly concepts of separation between spirit and matter, did arise and become artificially exaggerated through the two millennia of intellectual development. He regarded this as a necessary part of the development of the rational intellect as part of ego-development on the way to ego-freedom. However, he stressed the urgent need for the reintegration of this split, beginning with the emergent consciousness soul. Hence his call to bring heart and love back together with mind and knowledge (Steiner, 1971a, p. 84).

Another significant dualism to be overcome is between **imagination and logic**. Wilber's term—*vision-logic*—is a pre-eminently dialectical term that reintegrates the *vision* of postformal imaginative thinking with the *logic* of formal thinking. It archetypally represents a key feature of what the new consciousness stands for. In a rather lengthy quotation, Wilber attempts to explain in some detail how vision-logic—that he also refers to as network-logic—operates. Wilber (2000b) describes a process closely resembling hermeneutic circling which clearly involves an integration of a type of logic with a type of “big picture” vision in order to gradually arrive at a higher more integrated level of understanding.

A logic of inclusion, networking, and wide-net casting is called for; a logic of nests within nests. Each attempting to legitimately include all that can be included. It is a vision-logic, a logic not merely of trees but also of forests. Not that the trees can be ignored. Network-logic is a dialectic of whole and part. As many details as possible are checked; then a tentative big picture is assembled; it is checked against further details, and the big picture readjusted . . . For the secret of contextual thinking is that the whole discloses new meanings not available to the parts, and thus the big pictures we build give new meanings to the details that compose it. (p. 2)

For Gebser, the reintegration of the imagination is primarily related to what he would call the conscious awareness and concretion of the mythical structure. Steiner (1984b), on the other hand, has a rather complex characterization of the significance of imagination. He certainly sees it as a crucial factor in the emergent consciousness. In a similar manner to Wilber's *vision-logic* he refers to two major features that need to be activated for consciousness soul to develop: “a clear perception of the sense world” that he notes has been assisted by the empirical sciences, and the unfolding of “free imaginations side by side with the clear view of reality” (Lecture 2). For Steiner, the conscious cultivation of the *Imagination*—resembling Schelling's notion of the *intellectual imagination*—is a crucial early step in psycho-spiritual development (Steiner, 1905/1981b). A resurgence of interest in imagination is evident in both educational (Abbs, 1994; Broudy, 1987; Egan, 1990; Eisner, 1985; Gidley, 2001e, 2003, 2004b; Giroux, 1998; Hutchinson, 1993; Neville, 1989; Nielson, 2006; Nuyen, 1998; Sloan, 1992; Takaya, 2003) and postmodern philosophical circles (Abbs, 1994; Deleuze & Conley, 1992; Derrida, 2001; Kearney, 1998; Lyotard, 2004; St. Pierre, 2004; Whitehead, 1919; Wilber, 1990).

Finally, the overcoming of the deficient dualism of **female and male**<sup>229</sup> is required, according to all three narratives, in order to experience integrality of consciousness. As we have seen, the earliest consciousness structures primarily arose in matriarchal cultural settings, while the

<sup>229</sup> Though, paradoxically, they all favor the male gender in their pronoun usage—this was standard writing convention in Steiner's and Gebser's times, but not so Wilber's.

emergence of the intellectual-mental-rational structure in the first millennium BCE, with its egoic focus, paralleled the beginnings of patriarchy at least in Greece, Rome and China. The new consciousness will not be a return to matriarchy as some might suggest, rather a new form of sovereignty that Gebser (1949/1985) called the *integrum*.

As matriarchy was once succeeded by patriarchy, patriarchy should be succeeded by the “*integrum*,” as we have designated it. In this integral world neither man nor woman, but rather both in complement as human beings, should exercise sovereignty. (p. 151)

Wilber (1996c) suggests that the new dragon we must fight—the ego structure itself—requires a new Hero Myth. He suggests that the new hero will be “mentally androgynous, psychic, intuitive *and* rational, male *and* female—and the lead in this new development most easily can come *from* the female, since our society is *already* masculine-adapted” (p. 270). Steiner also made numerous comments in various lectures to the effect that the polarizing that had developed between male and female would gradually reduce so that men and women could begin to work together in new ways. He noted that the cultivation of the arts and particularly men and women working together creatively could assist this process. It is possible this will lead to a gradual re-feminization of culture through a re-awakening of imaginative, artistic, relational forms of postformal reason, including a re-focusing from *outer* space to *inner* space. Eisler (2000, 2001) discusses what such a new gender partnership model might look like for education.

### Transcending of Egotism

What is common to the understanding of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber in regard to the emergent consciousness—but by no means in all the developmental psychological or philosophical views that posit postformal stages, is the relationship between post-formal, integral consciousness and the opening to spiritual awareness. This may be seen to reflect the shift from what Wilber calls *small ego* to *pure Self*; what Steiner refers to as the shift from *egoism/egotism* to *higher ego*—that part of the human being from which she consciously transforms herself; and what Gebser (1949/1985) refers to as the shift from *egotism/egocentricity* to *ego-freedom*.

Only the overcoming of the “I,” the concomitant overcoming of egolessness [deficient magic] and egotism [deficient mental-rational], places us in the sphere of ego-freedom, of the achronon and transparency. (p. 532)

Gebser (1949/1985) links this with the Christian notion of *transfiguration* (p. 531). In a sense, Gebser is referring to the ability of the human *I* to transcend itself. In apparent contradiction, Steiner stressed the divine spiritual aspect of the *I*.

Indeed with this designation “I,” we stand before that innermost being of [humanity] which can be called the divine element . . . [As] active being[s] [we] must . . . take hold of [our] own evolution. [We] must raise [ourselves] to higher stages than the stage<sup>230</sup> [we have] already reached; [we] must develop ever new forces, so that [we] may approach continually towards perfection. (Steiner, 1930/1983a, p. 20)

<sup>230</sup> It is worth noting that Steiner uses the terminology of *stages*, here, as used in the contemporary adult psychology literature.

This apparent contradiction may be illuminated by the notion of the “I-I”—the ego that reflects on itself—also known as the Witness, which Wilber (2000d) derives from Plato’s “the Spectator of all time and existence” especially via Fichte, in the West, and the Hindu Vedanta in the non-West (pp. 332, 670-672, n. 19).

This paradoxical nature of the human sense of *I* is referred to by Benedikter (2005) as the *double I* emerging in the late philosophical works of several French, postmodern philosophers.

The late Derrida is very near to the “real presence” of a meta-formal, meta-linear “double consciousness,” of the “paradoxical unity of two consciousnesses in one.” . . . Words which are spoken (subjectively) and observed (objectively) at the same time. Words, which are experienced by the inner *and* by the outer side *at the very same moment* of happening. Thus, the late Derrida is near the experience of the “two I’s in one” of all the enlightened mystics of the traditions. (Online article)

This echoes some of Steiner’s (1910/1939) words about the *I* and its double reflective nature in relation to the consciousness soul.

The true nature of the I reveals itself only in the consciousness soul. . . . through a certain inner activity . . . if the I wishes to observe itself . . . It must first through an inner activity, draw its being out of its own depths in order to have a consciousness of itself. An inner activity of the I begins with a perception of the I, with self-contemplation. (p. 31)

Wilber (2000c) also characterizes the significance of the relationship between mature ego development and spiritual development. Referring to the great spiritual teachers and world leaders from earlier periods, he states:

To the extent these great teachers moved the gross realm, they did so with their egos, because the ego is the functional vehicle of that realm. They were not, however, identified merely with their egos (that's a narcissist) . . . "Transcending the ego" . . . means we do not "get rid" of the small ego, but rather, we inhabit it fully, live it with verve, use it as the necessary vehicle through which higher truths are communicated. . . . the ego is not an obstruction to Spirit, but a radiant manifestation of Spirit. (p. 278)

In the following three features it is interesting to note that there is a slightly different emphasis given to each of these by Steiner, Wilber and Gebser.

### **Transcending of Linear, Mechanical, Clock-Time**

What Gebser calls the *concretion of time* is for him arguably the most significant marker of the emergent integral-aperspectival consciousness. He refers to Picasso’s cubist, multi-faceted, portrait paintings to illustrate.

Only where time emerges as pure present and is no longer divided into its three phases of past, present and future, is it concrete. To the extent that Picasso from the outset reached

out beyond the present, incorporating the future into the present of his work, he was able to “presentiate” or make present the past. (p. 26)

Steiner and Wilber also problematize linear time as a construction of intellectual-mental-rational consciousness, and, like Gebser, discuss several alternative notions of time in relation to earlier movements of consciousness as will be discussed further as well. *Concretion of time* is a difficult concept to grasp, hence the extended discussion in Appendix A.

### **Planetization of Culture and Consciousness**

Wilber (2000d) appears to stress the importance of global and planetary awareness as an important feature of integral consciousness and claims that it is expressed through his vision-logic.

As rationality continues its quest for a truly universal or global or planetary outlook, noncoercive in nature, it eventually gives way to a type of cognition I call vision-logic or network-logic. . . . And it is vision-logic that drives and underlies the possibility of a truly planetary culture (p. 190-191).

The term *planetization* was coined by Teilhard de Chardin in the middle of the last century and may well be a concept whose time has come (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959/2004). Both Steiner and Gebser spoke against narrow nationalistic ideologies, which they saw as being residues of deficient rational consciousness. Gebser (1949/1985) thought that instead of being fixed conceptions, nations could be “dynamic efflorescences of a larger cultural context” (p. 291). The extensive work by Edgar Morin and others on the planetary era provide significant contributions to an understanding of this feature (Benedikter, 2007; Gangadean, 2006a; Montuori, 1999; Morin & Kern, 1999; Nicolescu, 2002; Swimme & Tucker, 2006). (See also Appendix B).

### **Linguistic Self-Reflection and the Re-Enlivening of the Word**

The enlivening of language was unquestionably a major focus for Steiner in facilitating the birth of the new consciousness, beyond abstract rationality. Steiner (1930/1983a) stressed the need to awaken the artist in us when it comes to language if we hope in the future to be able to express our experiences of the emerging spiritual awareness.

We have to create . . . an immediate connection between *what* we want to say and *how* we want to express it. We have to re-awaken the linguistic artist in us in all areas. . . . Each sentence will be seen as a birth, because it must be experienced inwardly in the soul as immediate form, not simply as a thought. . . . Spiritual science . . . will become capable of decanting the thought in such a way into the sound structure that our language too can again become a means of communication of the experiences of the soul in the supersensible. (p. 15-16)

Plato’s *Republic*, especially the dialogues with Socrates, marked the end of poetry and image as primary ways of languaging the world, and the beginning of the formalization of philosophy as the new epistemology for the intellectual-mental-rational consciousness. In a recursive,

parabola-shaped, re-integration, Gebser claims that the new consciousness is to be birthed through poetry, yet a new kind of *conscious* poetry.<sup>231</sup> Wilber also identifies the role of language in the new consciousness. However, unlike Steiner and Gebser, he does not emphasize the *centrality* of artistry in languaging. Clearly there are significant links here with Derrida's (2001) poststructuralism and Cook-Greuter's (2000) *construct awareness*, as proposed by Hampson (2007).

## Deficient Manifestations of Integral Consciousness

As discussed earlier there is a divergence between Steiner's, Gebser's and Wilber's overall notions of deficiency or pathology in relation to movements of consciousness, which particularly plays out in respect to the current emergence. Both Gebser and Steiner referred to the gradual emergence of a new consciousness over the last five hundred years but with increasing intensity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They both also spoke of the growing problems of over-abstraction, egotism, fragmentation and disconnection from Spirit, relating these phenomena to an overextension of intellectual-mental-rational consciousness. Their characterizations of the new consciousness do not tend to point to deficiencies at this stage—the major concern being that the grossness of the dominant mode will override and mask the subtle appearance of the new transparency. However Gebser (1949/1985) did note in one of his charts that integral consciousness, still in its early stages, may manifest in a deficient form as “void (atomizing dissolution)” (p. 142). The associated explanation appears to connect this with the overextension and exhaustion of the mental structure rather than with the integral structure itself. He gave the following example: “‘artists’ . . . who are merely atomizers, surrender themselves by distorting and disjointing form, instead of rendering into form what has been placed as a task into their care” (p. 506, note 19). Gebser (1949/1985) also discussed the difficulties in attempting to present information about the integral consciousness—in the sense that it allows the originary presence to become transparent.

Increasingly deficient attitudes seek refuge in syncretisms . . . or encyclopedic compendia . . . Presentiate wisdom becomes accumulated knowledge; when summarized and compiled, it yields a new sum, but no new wisdom. Wisdom is reduced from a quality of being to a quantity of possession (p. 44).

Wilber's approach is less consistent as he has moved beyond his earlier position where his *vision-logic* paralleled Gebser's *integral-aperspectival* and thus Steiner's *consciousness soul*. In the last five to six years he has come up with a proliferation of *structure-stages* beyond mental-rational (in the phylogenetic, cultural evolution stream) and its parallel, formal operations (in the ontogenetic, psychological development stream). In his latest publication (Wilber, 2006) he locates, between *rational*<sup>232</sup> and *integral*, a new stage—*pluralistic*—that he incorrectly identifies as one of Gebser's worldviews (glossy insert between pages 68-69). Based on this misappropriation of Gebser's model he further develops his conception of this pluralistic stage, which he associates with postmodernism, as a somewhat deficient, in-between stage, on the way

<sup>231</sup> In the context of Gebser's and Steiner's views on consciousness evolution, poetry as an artistic condensation of language opens the awareness to a simultaneous experience—*concretion*—of all the consciousness structures.

<sup>232</sup> As mentioned earlier “rational” is Gebser's term for *deficient* mental.

to integral. Wilber conflates his new *integral* with Gebser's *integral* without any reference to the fact that Gebser does not include a *pluralistic* structure before integral and with very little evidential justification for his *pluralistic stage*, particularly from the cultural phylogeny perspective (Hampson, 2007). The problem here is that Wilber appears to be conflating *individual* psychological developmental stages (ontogeny) with Gebser's structures of consciousness—which are actually more in line with the current literature on *cultural* evolution (phylogeny). Given that Wilber is aware of this distinction and clearly quite familiar with the current evidence from adult developmental psychology on the existence of at least four psychological stages beyond formal operations (Commons & Richards, 2002; Commons, Trudeau, Stein, Richards, & Krause, 1998; Cook-Greuter, 2000, Torbert, 2004), it would be conceptually more coherent for him to confine himself to this research to establish his pluralistic stage, rather than attribute a stage to Gebser that the latter did not actually identify.

### **The Infancy of Integral Consciousness—a Macrohistorical Reflection and Proflection<sup>233</sup>**

Only by realizing the new mutation as an integral bearing or attitude and not as a quantifiable “enrichment” can man preserve himself from a complete loss of what it means to be human. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 306)

One of the key propositions that I wish to draw from the above material is that the major movements of consciousness we have been exploring—particularly those that link to cultural shifts in the post-glacial age—appear to take approximately 2,000 years to become consolidated within human culture. These macro, time-cycles have been linked to the astronomical event called the *precession of the equinoxes* (Bocchi & Ceruti, 2002; Steiner, 1971a; Ulansey, 1994). (See Appendix A) The influence of such a long-term event-cycle can be demonstrated when we observe the historical development of the thinking that in academic discourse we take for granted. As demonstrated, this mental-rational shift only began to emerge in Greece between 600-800 BC, arguably reaching its culmination approximately 2,000 years later in Europe

If we consider that the new consciousness movement showed its first *cotyledons*<sup>234</sup> at the same period that the previous consciousness was reaching its peak, it becomes evident that this new consciousness, although it has been gradually emerging within leading individuals for 500 years, is only in its relative infancy. An analogy would be to compare what mental-rational thinking was like just 500 years after Plato and Aristotle compared to what it became in Descartes, Kant or Hegel. What is unique, however, about the new consciousness is that it is part of its multifaceted nature to be pluralistic, interconnected, multiperspectival, inclusive—indeed planetary—in its scope. So rather than a few leading-edge philosophers discussing ideas in

<sup>233</sup> I am using the underused term *proflection* as a future-oriented contrast to *reflection*. *Reflect* was first used as a verb in 1402 from Latin *flectere* “to bend” meaning “to bend back” or “turn back” the sun and not until two hundred years later in the sense of “to turn one's thoughts (back)”—first attested 1605. In honor of Gebser's sense of time concretion, my *proflection* means, “to turn one's thought forward.” <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=reflection&searchmode=none>. This also links to Future studies (Slaughter, 1999).

<sup>234</sup> *Cotyledons*—for those who are not gardeners—are the very first baby shoots that peek out of a germinating seed.

Plato's Academy in Athens, it is possible, through the interconnected world that has been created through advances in technology, for this new consciousness to become fully planetary in reach. If we can awaken this integral transparency, even now as it is in its infancy, imagine how much more wise, loving and creative our consciousness might be across the planet in another thousand years.

The following statement by Friedrich Nietzsche in his *Beyond Good and Evil* is as good a set of criteria as any that I have found, for evaluating how successful a new philosophy-theory-approach might be. It seems an appropriate note on which to end this section.

To what extent is it life furthering, life supporting, species supporting, perhaps even species cultivating? (*Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, ¶ 4). (Steiner, 1895/1960)

## **Transition to the Farther Reaches**

There is an apparent major point of departure between Gebser's integral-aperspectival mode—as the culmination of consciousness development, from his view—and both Steiner's and Wilber's notions of several potential further stages/movements of consciousness—within both individual development and cultural evolution. This is a challenging, under-researched area—particularly in relation to future, general cultural evolution. I suggest the situation is not as clear-cut as it might first appear. A preliminary discussion is explored in Appendix A, under the section heading *Gebser's Integral vs. Wilber's Transpersonal Levels*. I intend to undertake further research in this area, but until such research has been completed, I consider the notion of future movements beyond those discussed here to be a very complex issue, to say the least. Suffice to say that, in my view, the most important development that needs to occur at this point in planetary time is, for all of us who are working in our various ways to nurture postformal, integral or planetary consciousness, to continue and increase our collaboration to assist the planet-wide awakening of emergent new features of consciousness.

## 9. Rewinding Loose Threads: Re-minding us of our *Origin*

Reading the article once through is like walking around the base of a mountain.<sup>235</sup> (Starr & Torbert, 2005, p. 96)

The last stage of weaving a tapestry is to search the near-finished artifact for loose threads. It is the same with noospheric tapestries. This paper set out to facilitate a broadening and deepening of the evolution of consciousness discourse, particularly within integral theory. It sought to expose gaps in the literature and to open new questions in relation to how they might be addressed. The structure was provided by an interwoven theoretic narrative constructed from the evolution of consciousness narratives of Steiner and Wilber, in the light of Gebser's structures of consciousness. It endeavored to integrate—without syncretizing—their unique integral perspectives. Many smaller threads from other discourses were also interlaced into the narrative as I created my *theoretic bricolage*, embracing the broadest picture, enriched by the deepest meanings. This evolved into a macrohistorical journey from cosmic origins through the emergence of archaic, magic, mythical, and mental-rational consciousness and into the present time in which postformal-integral consciousness was shown to be emerging as a transdisciplinary, planetary phenomenon. Three side journeys were also taken through depth-dives into multiple conceptions of time (Appendix A); macrocosmic conceptions of space (Appendix B); and the relationship of palaeoart to the evolution of literacy (Appendix C).

I will now briefly summarize:

- **Summary of the Research:** Focus and Findings;
  - Broadening the *general* evolution of consciousness discourse;
  - Deepening the *integral* evolution of consciousness discourse;
  - *Integration* of Integral Views
- **Reflecting on the Narrators:** The Map, the Territory and the Guide. This section responds to the third research focus—*integration* of integral perspectives;
- **Reflecting on the Journey:** How Meta was the Narrative? This section responds to the first research focus—broadening the *general* evolution of consciousness discourse. It revisits the key terms in the title of the narrative;
- **Reflecting on the Language:** This section responds to the second research focus—deepening the *integral* evolution-of-consciousness discourse, particularly through demonstrating the reflexively participatory and artistic/aesthetic qualities in Steiner's and Gebser's language;
- **Epilogue:** We are Children of the Cosmos on our Way Home.

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<sup>235</sup> This quote is from Starr and Torbert's (2005) recent article on triple-loop learning. Like hermeneutic circling, the reflexivity in double and triple loop learning enables deepening of understanding.

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## Summary of the Research—Focus and Findings

### Broadening the *General* Evolution of Consciousness Discourse

There is a large body of literature on evolution theory that appears not to have heard of integral approaches to knowledge building. The preliminary meta-analysis of this literature demonstrated the following tendencies.

- *Minding the gaps and biases:* Most of the general evolution literature is biology-based, and much of it is based on a scientific ideology—biased against epistemological and methodological approaches outside standard scientific methods. There is also premature closure on the possibility of developmental or evolutionary movements beyond formal thinking, either individually or culturally. These gaps and biases reoriented my focus on the following issues.
- *Focusing on the marginal:* Philosophical and spiritual approaches are particularly marginalized in the general evolution discourse. These perspectives are also marginalized within most of the consciousness studies research. These discourses also largely overlook the integral approach and generally avoid the critical issue of our planetary crisis—surely of evolutionary significance.
- *Theorizing beyond science narratives:* At the next level of analysis, it was found that additional literature beyond the scientific evolutionary discourse was growing, and included research from psychology, language studies, philosophy and the arts. Much of this however was still limited by disciplinarity.
- *Theorizing beyond disciplinary boundaries:* Much of the literature that emerged at this level of the search was either primarily science-based interdisciplinary research or transdisciplinary research, informed by integral theoretic narratives such as those of Steiner, Gebser, Sri Aurobindo, László or Wilber. This literature, overall, theorized stages or structures beyond Piaget's formal operations.
- *Theorizing beyond formal operations:* Two bodies of literature appeared on the horizon: literature that directly identified at least one stage beyond formal operations; and literature that appeared to enact such a stage, though not necessarily conceptualizing it as such. A second bifurcation within the former was between postformal psychological development and socio-cultural evolution, which were largely operating in isolation. Wilber (1996b, 1996c) wrote significant seminal material on both of these territories and furthermore proposed a new, more complex model of the discredited ontogeny-phylogeny argument. This spawned a new body of integral writing on the evolution of consciousness. However, there were still gaps.

In order to address these gaps and biases, I decided to focus on the marginalized transdisciplinary and integral literature to uncover what, if anything, may have been missing there.

### Deepening the *Integral* Evolution of Consciousness Discourse

A unique feature of postformal-integral-planetary consciousness is that we can co-create it. The challenge is how to do that. Many of the gaps referred to in biologically based evolution

literature or alternative single discipline approaches have begun to be addressed—quite substantially—by Wilber, followed by others, through a more integral approach to the evolution of consciousness. However, this literature too has gaps and biases, which my research has sought to address.

- *Minding the gaps and biases.* Integral research is a growing corpus—particularly in the USA—with much of it either directly or indirectly addressing the evolution of consciousness. Most of it also addresses the phenomenon of Wilber’s integral theory. Regardless of whether it is embraced, dismissed or critically engaged, it is a force to be reckoned with in integral theory creating. Wilber’s theory is arguably the broadest conceptually; and is extraordinarily inclusive of earlier and contemporary theorists. However, there are limitations. His omission of Steiner’s evolutionary research and some of his questionable usage of Gebser’s research are both addressed in this paper. Notwithstanding his conceptual honoring of the Big Three—Truth, Beauty and Goodness—much of his theoretic narrative appears to privilege cognitive development. Many other integral theorists make significant contributions to evolution of consciousness theory, yet most of their work reflects the residue of disciplinary boundaries, particularly the boundaries set up by science. Much of it is thus also cognicentric and primarily framed and presented in formal academic—rather than *postformal* styles. The following points address what might be needed to *deepen* integral theorizing beyond these limitations.
- *The marginal of the marginal:* Without intending to be tautological, I became interested in what Wilber and other leading integral theorists—themselves marginalized in the dominant evolutionary literature—had omitted or biased. In terms of people and content Wilber had largely omitted Steiner’s huge body of relevant material, and had also in my view underrepresented the significance of Gebser’s work in several major areas. I have demonstrated that the following two key aspects of a fully integral theory of the evolution of consciousness have been able to be addressed in significant new ways by conceptually integrating into the integral discourse Steiner’s research and a closer look at Gebser’s actual text.
- *Participatory engagement:* This research has identified two kinds of participatory engagement that could potentially serve to enrich the current integral theoretic narrative on evolution of consciousness. The first is via embodied reintegration of the whole person (Ferrer, Romero, & Albareda, 2005). The second is via reflexive enactment of the modalities being theorized (Hampson, 2007). My research has attempted to engage both these modes of participation and also to contribute theoretically to the importance of both. It is organized so that it reflexively enacts the theme that it addresses—movements of consciousness. It also both theorizes and enacts the integration of many parts of my *whole person*.
- *Artistic/aesthetic sensibility:* The paper also enacts vital, imaginative and spiritual—as well as cognitive—dimensions through artistic/aesthetic creativity. This is done through orienting particular sections in a particular way, e.g., Appendix C particularly focuses on the aesthetic dimension. Also I have attempted to bring an aesthetic, poetic sensibility through in much of my languaging, based on Steiner’s and Gebser’s claims that this is a core characteristic of the new consciousness. Other integral theorists also recognize its importance (Hampson, 2007; Neville, 2000; Roy, 2006b; Thompson, 1998).

### **Integration of Integral Views**

The third major focus of this research—which is intimately linked with the above-mentioned points—is my passion to *integrate the integrals*. I have attempted this in several ways.

- *Integrating the theoretic narratives of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber*: In addition to deepening the narrative by balancing cognitive with participatory and aesthetic modes, the dense and difficult text of Steiner’s and to a lesser extent Gebser’s is balanced by Wilber’s use of the *vernacular*—people can read him and understand what he is saying.
- *Providing conceptual bridges* for the interpretive communities of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber to better understand each other’s approaches.
- *Providing a conceptual bridge* between discourses that directly *identify* new stage/s of consciousness (e.g., adult developmental psychology) and discourses that *enact* characteristics of that consciousness (e.g., critical theory, new sciences, process and poststructuralist philosophies).
- *Providing conceptual bridges* between the integral and postformal literature and the emergent critical literature on the ecology of our planetary crisis and the realization of its connection with the way we humans think;
- *Exploring the potential relationship* between László’s Akashic Information field and Steiner’s spiritual-scientific research methodologies. While no conclusions could be drawn from such a cursory attempt, I have put this on the table as a future research project.

### **Reflecting on the Narrators—The Map, the Territory and the Guide**

In her recent research on integral art, Roy (2006b) has introduced the metaphor of *gap-diving* from the map into the territory that one is researching as a way of deepening our appreciation and understanding. She also notes the gap between the AQAL integral map and Gebser’s integral-aperspectival, echoing Gebser’s call for a new form of statement. The following discussion reviews the approaches of our three narrators. To what extent do they map the territory? To what extent do they dive deeply into it? To what extent are we guided in our journey into new consciousness? In the following section, I will be discussing the different contributions of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber in terms of the notions of *map*—in relation to Wilber; *territory*—in relation to Steiner; and *guide*—in relation to Gebser.

#### **The Map**

*When you discover Wilber, you discover everyone . . .*<sup>236</sup>

Wilber appears to provide the biggest, most comprehensive, map. His more elementary books introduce readers to vast bodies of material from a very broad range of disciplines and perspectives, and organize the information in ways that are not too difficult for the average non-

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<sup>236</sup> A comment made to me by a young man who had found the discovery of Wilber’s writings to have a transformative effect on him during a period of existential angst, leading him on to the reading of many other writers.

academic reader to understand (Wilber, 1996a, 2000a). His more academic books provide much more depth in many areas, yet the emphasis is still on the organization of the material into maps and charts (Wilber, 2000d, 2000b). The quantity of work he has written is vast and most of it is fairly accessible. However, his depth sounding of the territory itself is lacking in some areas. There is a significant bias toward Eastern spiritualities, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, while largely overlooking major Western<sup>237</sup> esoteric traditions, such as Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry and anthroposophy, to name a few; and some serious distortions, e.g. postmodernism, Derrida (Hampson, 2007). Wilber refers to hundreds of original or secondary sources. Those finding his work useful as a map or guide to spiritual, philosophical or psychological territories are encouraged to consult the primary sources for a deeper understanding of the territory he maps. He also encourages his readers to go to the territory themselves.

The major focus of Wilber's books, particularly since the mid-nineties,<sup>238</sup> is, first and foremost, to conceptually develop and *map* the most comprehensive theoretical framework of integral knowledge and understanding of humanity, nature and Kosmos. He refers to his own work, unabashedly, as mapping. The following long quote, from the foreword to Visser's (2003) book about his work, is an encapsulation of this perspective.

Every one of my books has at least one sentence, usually buried, that says the following: “. . . It is a sharing of what I have seen; it is a small offering of what I have remembered; it is also the Zen dust you should shake from your sandals; and it is finally a lie in the face of the Mystery which only alone is.”

In other words, all of my books are lies. They are simply maps of a territory, shadows of a reality, gray symbols dragging their bellies across the dead page, suffocated signs full of muffled sound and faded glory, signifying absolutely nothing. And it is the nothing, the Mystery, the Emptiness alone that needs to be realized: not known but felt, not thought but breathed, not an object but an atmosphere, not a lesson but a life.

There follows a book of maps; hopefully more comprehensive maps, but maps nonetheless. (p. xv)

Wilber's integral approach has added a significant breadth of content to the evolution of consciousness narrative—much of which was scientific and disciplinary prior to his seminal contribution through *Up from Eden* (Wilber, 1996c). He has conceptually integrated much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Anglophone literature that was written after Steiner's death and even after publication of Gebser's *Ever-Present Origin*. He draws attention to a vast body of literature. He attempts to theorize a framework that can make sense of all the *partial* approaches—to create a genuine *theory of everything* (Wilber, 2000a). He admits that all attempts at such an integral vision “are marked by the many ways in which they fail. The many ways in which they fall short, make unwarranted generalizations, drive specialists insane, and generally fail to achieve their stated aim of holistic embrace” (p. xii). In spite of this dilemma, he appears to commit himself in every book to the “ever-receding dream” of a holistic quest (p. xxii). Also, somewhere in each book, usually in the preface or introduction, and often scattered throughout as well, he points to spiritual *territory* that he claims is *beyond words*. Reynolds (2004) cites Wilber from *A Brief*

<sup>237</sup> This may be a contextual explanation for his omission of most of the work of esoterically-informed, pioneering, integral philosophers from Europe, such as Goethe and Steiner.

<sup>238</sup> The major phases of Wilber's work will be further elucidated below.

*History of Everything*: “The task of philosophy, as it were, is not simply to clarify the maps and correct their deviations from reality but to *elucidate* these deeper currents from which thought couldn’t deviate if it wanted to” (p. xv). Situated as he is in a context of American culture—where fast foods, accelerated learning and a general addiction to an ever-speedier pace of living is the norm—Wilber writes at a hurried pace. In his race to write he does not appear to stop and check for accuracy of details—to edit for redundancies, nor to reflect on and refine his language. That is his major weakness and perhaps also his strength. As a result he is read, loved and revered by many, but he is critiqued by many as well.

In summary, providing readers take seriously the fact that the self-declared nature of Wilber’s work is to make conceptual maps, and providing readers also check his major sources for accuracy, and especially that they dive into the *territory* themselves, then his work can provide a valuable service. Alternatively, if AQAL-integral—or any other integral approach—were to take on the character of a dogma, or an ideology, it could threaten the whole integral project, fragmenting it in its infancy. But it cannot be denied that on the slowly awakening, integral-planetary path, in the hallowed footsteps quietly trodden by Steiner, Gebser and Sri Aurobindo, it is Wilber who, as the *Master of Ceremonies*, proudly introduces the integral project to the world stage in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### The Territory

Steiner is, in my view, unquestionably the most comprehensive of the three when it comes to entering, from the depth perspective of spiritual research, into multiple fields of life in considerable detail—education, agriculture, medicine, art, architecture, philosophy, science, comparative spirituality, and socio-economic organization among others. However, a major weakness is that for many contemporary people—even highly educated, motivated researchers—he is largely inaccessible. His writing, in addition to being complex in both content and style—which he did not actually separate in the way I just have—exudes the tenor of the highly intellectual, philosophical life of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Germany. His work covers vast conceptual and spiritual terrain but he does not simplify it with any *easy-read* guidebooks. There are no “three easy steps” to reading Steiner – it is just hard work.<sup>239</sup> Because of this the great conceptual treasures he has to offer may continue to go largely unnoticed to the scholars—particularly Anglophone scholars—of today and tomorrow as they have for the last century. By endeavoring to introduce him in association with Wilber and Gebser, I am hoping to lead readers to consider sourcing his primary writings. However, I think it would be helpful to approach them as if one was reading a sacred text with the type of hermeneutic sensitivity that is needed in such a case. I believe it may then be possible for the depth of the message to be transmitted.

Steiner’s work, rather like Wilber’s, developed through different phases.<sup>240</sup> From 1883 to 1903 his writing was primarily philosophical (including major writings on Kant and Fichte, as

<sup>239</sup> Another issue to consider is that part of Steiner’s approach was that it was not just about cognition and knowledge, but involved life practices—such as disciplined thought exercises, or contemplation practices, and engagement with the arts. He claimed that such practices, in addition to cognitive work through study/research, assisted the development/evolution of consciousness.

<sup>240</sup> The major phases of Steiner’s work will be further elucidated below.

well as editing Goethe's scientific writings and helping to organize the Nietzsche<sup>241</sup> archives). The second phase of Steiner's work—from 1904—was devoted to the struggle to communicate the findings from his spiritual-scientific research. This is the period when he commenced his writing and lecturing on the evolution of consciousness. In this second period, Steiner's work is pre-eminently concerned with gap-diving into the territory—of the spiritual images, currents and ground, beneath and beyond the sensory world—the deeper currents that philosophy needs to elucidate as Wilber indicates above. In the following long quote, he made it clear that his communications about these matters were not mere reproductions of earlier sacred texts—although he had read and studied these—nor ungrounded metaphysical speculations, but grounded *perceptions*. In the following text Steiner (1910/1939) is arguably foreshadowing Wilber's notion of the *pre-trans fallacy*.<sup>242</sup> He notes the significance of the “completely conscious mind” in contrast to “autosuggestion or the unconscious.” He also refers to his “clear, discerning consciousness” at every step in his process of arriving at advanced perceptions.

My knowledge of things of the spirit is a direct result of my own perception, and I am fully conscious of this fact. In all details and in the wider views I have always examined myself strictly to whether I have made every step, as my perception advanced and developed, so that a completely conscious mind accompanied those steps. Just as the mathematician advances from thought to thought without the intervention of autosuggestion or the unconscious, so must spiritual perception advance from objective imagination to objective imagination without anything living in the soul but clear, discerning consciousness . . . the results of my perception . . . were, at the beginning, “perceptions” without words to designate them. . . . Later I sought in the ancient designations of the spiritual in order to find verbal expressions for what was until *then* wordless. . . .  
However, I sought *always* for the possibility of expressing myself *only after* the content I wished to clothe in words had arisen in my own consciousness. (pp. xiii-xiv)

It appears to me from this statement that Steiner is also demonstrating postformal reasoning through self-reflexivity about his process “I have always examined myself strictly;” and the dialectical term “objective imagination.” A careful study of this text can leave the reader in little doubt that Steiner is speaking about a postformal reasoning process that could not easily be confused with magic or mythic processes, which he himself clearly identifies as earlier movements of consciousness. Steiner also emphasized that the abilities that he developed to perceive in this manner were not unique to him or a few individuals, but would become increasingly available to anyone who wished to undertake the necessary cognitive and spiritual development and discipline. He claimed that the epistemology that he developed and presented in his books and lectures was not in any way in contradiction to the methods of science, but in fact needed to be founded on—and yet go beyond—the rigors of intellectual thinking and the accuracy of perception of the empirical sciences.

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<sup>241</sup> In the early 1890's, because of his experience with the Goethe-Schiller archives in Weimar, while editing Goethe's scientific works, Steiner was invited by Frau Foerster-Nietzsche, the sister of the ailing Nietzsche, to spend several weeks arranging the Nietzsche archives in Naumberg. After his meeting with the ill Nietzsche, and having studied his philosophical works for six years, Steiner was inspired to write a book in critical appreciation of Nietzsche's significant, yet misunderstood spiritual contribution to world philosophy (Steiner, 1895/1960).

<sup>242</sup> Wilber's *pre-trans-fallacy* and similar notions of Steiner and Gebser is discussed in Appendix A.

At a certain high level of [our] cognitive power, [we] can penetrate to the eternal origins of the things which vanish with time. . . . then [we] can *see* in events what is not perceptible to the sense, that part which time cannot destroy. (Steiner, 1904/1959, p. 39)

The deeply spiritual nature of his work did not sit well with the materialistic current of his times. Although there were many academics and professionals who were inspired by his work and applied it to numerous practical fields of life—including education, agriculture, medicine, science, psychology, architecture, and all the arts—like Wilber, he was critically attacked from many quarters.<sup>243</sup>

In summary, Steiner dived into the *territory* itself, and in contrast to Wilber, he did not spend time or energy providing maps of it or of his work. His intention was to be true to the *invisible* worlds he tried to represent and he admitted frequently that “only a faint conception of this chronicle can be given in our language” (Steiner, 1904/1959, p. 39). He proposed that we need to develop new language which is not so bound to the sensory world, and which can rediscover the *Spirit of language* in all its living force.

The very words and turns of phrase in themselves take on something of a spiritual nature. They cease to be mere signs of what they usually ‘signify’ and slip into the very form of the thing seen. And then begins something like living intercourse with the Spirit of the language. (Steiner, 1929, p. 1)

This statement, especially the second sentence is remarkably similar to the sensibility of Derrida’s deconstruction of language (Derrida, 2001). A question for further research concerns the extent to which some of Steiner’s work foreshadowed poststructuralism. There are also clearly important connections between Steiner’s words and Cook-Greuter’s postformal stage that she calls *construct aware* (Cook-Greuter, 2000). Significant theoretical connections have recently been made between Derrida’s deconstruction and Cook-Greuter’s *construct aware* stage (Hampson, 2007).

And yet, there is no question that without a *guide*, his spiritual findings in their written forms are challenging for many readers today.

## The Guide

Gebser’s writing also developed across two major phases: the first phase being primarily artistic, the second cultural-philosophical. This unique development has led to the seamless infusion of artistry into the text of his philosophical work. His major contribution to this narrative has a mediating flavor to it. His obvious temporal mediation between Steiner and Wilber is an elegant metaphor for a deeper, less tangible, mediation between them. Steiner’s focus is the *territory* beyond Kant’s knowledge barrier, with little cartographic assistance on the

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<sup>243</sup> As well as threats on his life from the National Socialist Party, from which he had to escape to Switzerland, his first magnificent architectural creation—the first Goetheanum—which took ten years to build—was burned to the ground by arson just before its completion in 1922. It was suggested by those close to him that he never recovered from the shock of this attack and died three years later at 64, still in the prime of his life’s project.

long and arduous journey to the perceptions he describes. By contrast Wilber's focus is to *map* the multiplicity of components—rarely entering the deeper territory—in some ways upholding the Kantian split between his different writing styles. What Gebser offers is something in between these two rather extreme emphases. He unquestionably dives deeply into the concrete particularities of phenomena, providing thick descriptions of the structures of consciousness he identifies. However, his cultural philosophy of consciousness, although complex and challenging to read, is also structured in a way that does provide guidance to the reader. He takes a systematically layered approach to unfolding the development of each structure and also provides much additional information from many different perspectives in order to gradually deepen the understanding. His *Ever-Present Origin* is a uniquely structured book as it can be read in many different ways. It seems to express the spherical nature of integral-aperspectival consciousness itself. It is my observation that Gebser succeeded, not only in formalizing and exemplifying a new consciousness through his numerous examples across most fields of knowledge, but also, in providing a new model of how to write integrally. He managed to balance the rigorous scholarship required to stand firmly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century academic context with poetic artistry to reveal the potential vitality, imagination, conceptual direction and spiritual awareness that awaits us in the coming times as we awaken into integral consciousness.

Since our insight into the energies pressing toward development aids their unfolding, the seedlings and inceptive beginnings must be made visible and comprehensible. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 4)

## Summary

Whereas Wilber's comprehensive mapping spearheads a popular movement towards a more integral approach to everything, his glossing over details in some of his texts needs to be balanced by the reader's own deep dives into the territory he maps. Whereas Steiner's deep, insightful dives into spiritual wisdom can be found across dozens of books and literally thousands of lectures, it can be a lifetime's work to interpret and cohere his major contribution to a topic such as we are discussing here. Gebser, however, provides sufficient structure for the reader to become conceptually oriented, while also diving deeply into each of the major territories that he has chosen to elucidate.

## Reflecting on the Journey—How Meta was the Narrative?

In our current era that must contend with the deligitimation of the grand narratives of modernity, we are left with few options for providing new narratives of hope for our children and our future. We may continue to cling to old undeconstructed metanarratives in a traditional, mythic manner as if the great German and French philosophers, such as Nietzsche, Lyotard and Derrida were irrelevant. We may extend our rationality into rationalization, creating new *reconstructed* metanarratives, arguing that they are bigger and better and more reconstructed than either modernity and postmodernity has on offer. We may throw out the threading of narratives altogether, pluralize our perspectives, and allow each particularity to speak of its own uniqueness. Or we may, as Whitehead, cited in Gare (2002), recommended, “produce a variety of partial systems of limited generality” (p. 49). I have chosen to opt for the latter, not in a syncretizing way that would homogenize their differences, but rather to dive into their unique

particularities. By bringing them into conversation with each other, through a hermeneutic *merging of horizons*,<sup>244</sup> the commonalities authentically disclosed themselves—as unity in diversity. By keeping close to the actual text of the narrators, and engaging in thick description, a type of noospheric ethnography emerged. By thus slowing down the pace of my analysis, I have thwarted any tendency to rush into abstraction or quick generalities, or to manufacture a perfectly synthetic product. I have enjoyed the individual idiosyncrasies of content, style and texture, as if each bump and wrinkle were a sign that this tapestry is indeed woven of noospheric raw silk.

### **How Macrohistorical? Concretion of Time—Reintegrating Appendix A**

According to Gebser, his notion of *concretion in time* is a core characteristic of integral-aperspectival consciousness. It is a difficult concept to grasp, hence the decision to attach a rather extensive appendix on its explication. (Much of the conceptual discussion of time is explicated in Appendix A). This narrative has sought both to scan vast time periods and also to draw particular attention to different conceptions of time. It has first expanded time by stretching it back to its earliest beginnings and secondly it has condensed time by demonstrating that ancient times can be re-experienced and future times can be sensed in a concretion of consciousness, once one moves beyond linear, mechanical time. Through discovering Gebser's attention to time, I was also drawn to investigate Steiner's and Wilber's conceptions of time. This research has greatly deepened my own understanding of time, which I have endeavored to communicate. More research on the relationship of this notion to other features of postformal thinking is suggested.

### **How Planetary? Concretion of Space—Reintegrating Appendix B**

Gebser claimed that the concept of space became increasingly more significant throughout the establishment of the mental-rational mode of consciousness and that it has been over-extended at the expense of awareness of time. An ecological view of space has been presented in Appendix B that begins with a recognition of traditional unitive conceptions of the place of humans in the cosmos, notably exemplified in the Hermetic aphorism “as above, so below.” This is contrasted with the more abstract conceptions of space arising from the intellectual-mental-rational mindset especially since the Copernican revolution. The exploration and gradual dominance of the spatial dimension of the earth is shown to have progressed through various stages, such as colonization and globalization. The recent privileging of exploration of *outer space* by modernist science is contrasted with the attention on *inner space* of integral conceptions. The significance of cultivating noospheric diversity is highlighted. A number of cosmo-centric concepts are discussed as a way of raising awareness of the larger spatial ecology—in particular, a more cosmopolitan approach to integral theory is proposed as a safeguard against Anglo- and ethno-centrism.

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<sup>244</sup> *Merging of horizons* was a phrase coined by hermeneutic philosopher Hans Georg Gadamer (1960/2005, 1986a, 1986b).

## Was it a “Beautiful Tapestry of Integral Intent?” Palaeoart Art as Language— Reintegrating Appendix C

When vision-logic matures into its middle and late phases, pluralistic relativism increasingly gives way to more holistic modes of awareness, which begin to weave the pluralistic voices together into beautiful tapestries of integral intent. Pluralistic relativism gives way to *universal integralism*. (Wilber, 2000d, p. xi)

Inspired by this quote of Wilber’s I have endeavored “to weave the pluralistic voices” of Steiner, Gebser, Wilber and others into a “beautiful<sup>245</sup> tapestry of integral intent.” Gebser connected the magic consciousness structure with the emergence of the early artistic abilities of humans, claiming that the early forms of cave-art were an expression of magic consciousness. Steiner’s narrative also emphasizes the importance of the artistic/aesthetic dimension of human nature—both in terms of early history and also, like Gebser, as a core characteristic of facilitating the development of new movements of consciousness. Wilber honors its importance in theory, but his approach does not give it the priority given by the others—particularly in relation to emergent consciousness. Appendix C is intended as a cursory glance at some of the implications of re-examining aesthetic sensibility in the origins of human consciousness. My overall narrative style has also privileged artistic/poetic writing at times over more formal styles. Consideration of the reintegration of poetic sensibility into integral academic writing is an area for future research. My conclusion is that an increased theoretical focus on the artistic *history*—and *futures*—of humanity may throw additional light on the evolution of consciousness.

### How *Fascinating* was the *Narrative*? Reintegration of Myth through Theoretic Narrative

Gebser proposed that the mythic imagination was the predominant quality of what he called the mythical structure of consciousness, which preceded the emergence of the mental mode. The major component of this paper is a long, epic, cyclical narrative. It has been woven from textual material from the three narrators, that has been interwoven with relevant academic threads. A great deal of imagination has been required on my part throughout this research to hold all the pieces of the three narrative threads together in my imagination while creatively weaving them into the larger narrative. This process required far more than a pre-rational imagination. It also required considerable mental, conceptual effort to develop a structure of academic value as well as general interest; to discern and evaluate their connections—or disconnections; to keep the narrative on track; to decide which additional literature to include/exclude; and particularly to evaluate my whole process at the end. This process has clearly enacted an integration of mythic consciousness with mental-rational consciousness at the next recursive level. Such an integration suggests Geber’s *integrality*, Steiner’s *Imagination*, and Wilber’s *vision-logic*. I propose that the cultivation of imagination could play a larger role in integral academic writing, providing the energy for creating new narratives for our futures. It has certainly been a fascinating journey for me, but whether it has for you—the reader—is now out of my hands.

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<sup>245</sup> I have attempted to introduce where appropriate into this extended academic research project an aesthetic sensibility, without—I hope—falling too far into the baroque excesses of some forms of ludic postmodernism.

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**Summary: How Integral? Did it Shine?**

From a formal perspective the narratives of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber on the evolution of consciousness could be seen as rival integral schemes. I have attempted to show how the honoring of all three in their uniqueness can actually strengthen rather than weaken the entire integral project. Wilber is an excellent starting point for those seeking for something more than the fragmentation, shallowness and materialism of the current globalizing *monoculture*, pointing them to more integral, holistic perspectives. His maps provide pointers to a vast territory of research. Those who seek to go deeper would discover great riches by reading the original texts of the key sources that Wilber builds on: especially Gebser, but also Whitehead, Teilhard de Chardin and many others. However, an even greater depth of insight into the spiritual territory that underlies the recursive-progressive movements of consciousness is just waiting there—considerable effort not withstanding—for those who venture into the challenging waters of reading first-hand, Steiner or Sri Aurobindo. I have substantially brought together into academic conversation, for the first time, three outstanding contributors to the evolution of consciousness—who never met in real time. Their writings have, for the most part, been seriously marginalized by the mainstream, Anglophone, academic world, and it is to be hoped that this travesty is beginning to be transcended.

**Reflecting on the Language—Transition from Steiner to Gebser to Wilber**

In bringing this paper to a close, I now wish to reflect on the challenge for all four authors (including myself) of appropriately languaging our characterizations in a way that succeeds in communicating the flavors and textures of new ways of thinking—without succumbing to the limitations of the dominant academic mode. The narrative has demonstrated a contentious perspective that *Spiritual Presence* has been part of the very fabric of the human story from our birth out of mysterious cosmic circumstances, to our current emergence into a more conscious, self-reflective, spiritually aware, postformal-integral-planetary consciousness. In spite of whatever cultural, linguistic, historical, gender or other opacities we may be shadowing, each of us—Steiner, Gebser, Wilber and myself—in a unique way strive to render our sense of *Presence* transparent—through interweaving images, concepts and integrations—into words and sentences, articles and books. The following sections are my summary evaluations of how well each has succeeded, based on the research presented in this artifact. I propose that the linguistic task is to attempt to embody the features of the new consciousness in the actual language used to speak about it. There are arguably several challenging hindrances to a deep, authentic communication of the new consciousness movement(s) both within and outside the Academy. While the broader academic context is still largely formal, secular and dominantly scientific, the broader culture of the day is pragmatically geared to poli-speak, edu-speak, sport, *reality* TV shows and sound bytes. How do we create the new languages required to intensify our consciousness in such extreme contexts?

**Gnothi Seauton: “Know Thyself,” From Three Voices**

I propose—based on my hermeneutic analysis—that there is a transition in linguistic expression between Steiner, Gebser and Wilber, perhaps reflecting the larger cultural contexts. Before discussing the language of each in more depth, I will demonstrate the differences in their

linguaging styles through three fragments of text referring to the same information: Steiner in 1914, Gebser in 1949, and Wilber in 2000. Each refer to the famous inscription *gnothi seauton*, “*Know thyself*,” on the temple of Apollo in Delphi as being a significant marker of the new intellectual-mental-rational consciousness emerging at that time. Let us begin with Steiner’s (1914/1973) considerations.

This ancient oracle wisdom speaks as if it contained the challenge for the progress of world conception that advances from the conception in images to the form of consciousness in which the secrets of the world are seized in thought. Through this challenge man is directed to his own soul. . . . The leading spirits of Greek civilization . . . were to develop thought in the soul into a world conception. (pp. 33-34)

Steiner’s words are pre-eminently philosophical—dense, weighty, yet imaginative. It is possible to sense that he is picturing a grand vista of images in which the inscription is a deep cryptic riddle. He speaks with reverence and awe of the significance of this event to the inner development of human conceptions of the world—from images to the activity of thought. His voice is careful, heavy with responsibility. Being the first in his times to speak openly about the evolution of consciousness, he strove to communicate what was still veiled to the world.

Three to four decades after Steiner, Gebser (1949/1985) referred to this same Delphic inscription as an exhortation to emergent mental-egoic consciousness.

The lapidary sentence gracing the temple of the sun god, itself a manifestly spatial articulation of singing columns and stones, even today has lost none of its vitality: *gnothi seauton*, “*Know thyself*.” (p. 78)

Gebser’s languaging is pre-eminently poetic—artistically enacting integrality. The dialectical phrase “lapidary sentence” sets the artistic-conceptual tone, with every subsequent word chosen for its poetic resonance. His philosophical message is transmitted within the artistry rather than “explained.” He confidently captures, condenses and integrates magic vitality, mythical imagination, mental direction, and concretion of time—his words shining with originary presence. My interpretation is that he is enacting a subtle linguistic *evolution* of Steiner’s message and style.

Now we will fast-forward another fifty years to the other side of the Atlantic Ocean to see what Wilber (2000d) has to say.

From Socrates’ Delphic: “*Know thyself*” to the exhaustive introspections of Hume and Locke and Descartes and Kant (and Nagarjuna and Garab Dorje and Chih-I and Fa-tsang), the common theme heard over and over and over again: look within. (p. 184)

Wilber’s languaging is pre-eminently pragmatic—prosaic, direct, syncretic. This is a “no frills” statement of a message he seems tired of repeating. He uses a characteristic style<sup>246</sup> of listing numerous philosophers—east and west—who have gone before him apparently making

<sup>246</sup> Although this is one of Wilber’s typical styles he does have other more philosophical and also more poetic/spiritual writing styles as will be demonstrated below.

similar points. His voice seems to reflect the tone of his culture, where an over-extended rationality seems to have squeezed out and exhausted: vitality, imagination, and the shine of spiritual presence—leaving an empty, echoing, pointing-out instruction—21<sup>st</sup> century American Zen perhaps?

### **A Broader Overview of Language Styles**

#### *Steiner*

As demonstrated throughout the paper Steiner's language style overall is very deliberate, particular, and for the most part, quite verbose and labored. Because of the intensiveness of his spiritual-scientific research over decades, he lived in two parallel worlds: his inner world of perception of the *Akashic* information field and the physical-life-world where he worked tirelessly to communicate his research. His writing is a continuous, mostly seamless, dialectic between his knowledge of human qualities, world events and nature, and his deep spiritual insights into the invisible currents behind all this. His language is always a careful and conscious struggle to bring through these insights, conscious that from the perspective of the highly materialistic cultural context that he inhabited, those inner worlds that he himself claimed to have experienced were either regarded as *non-existent* or were dualistically bracketed—in the Kantian sense—as *unknowable*. His endeavors—through his lectures and writings—received mixed responses. At his death he believed he had failed. To this day his enormous contributions to the integralizing of the noosphere have been largely overlooked in academia, arguably because of the esoteric content and relative opaqueness. It is worth noting that in addition to his cultural philosophical and spiritual-scientific writings, Steiner was also a poet, playwright, and visual-sculptural-architectural artist. To my observation there remained a degree of differentiation between his philosophical, his spiritual-scientific, and his poetic writings. However, much of the text used in this research is a modified philosophical style used to assist in presenting the results of his spiritual research. This style is exemplified in the following example.

The deepening of knowledge depends on the powers of intuition which express themselves in thinking. In the living experience which develops within thinking, this intuition may dive down to greater or lesser depths of reality. . . . But under no circumstances should this diving down into the depths to reach reality be confused with being confronted by a perceptual picture of greater or lesser breadth, which in any case can only contain half the reality, as determined by the organization of the cognizing being. (Steiner, 1894/1964b, p. 105)

The following fragment is an example of his poetic style.

So I will turn my heart and mind  
Toward the Soul and Spirit of words  
And in my love for them wholly  
Experience myself.

I hope through this paper to have achieved in a small way a clearing of the opacity of some of his writings, an unveiling of the integral intent of his work, and an opening up of his significant

potential contribution to the 21<sup>st</sup> century noospheric conversations. By bringing Steiner's words into hermeneutic conversation with Gebser's, Wilber's and my own, my intention is to render transparent the wealth that still lies—largely hidden—within.

### *Gebser*

The transition from Steiner to Gebser is a wonderful example of how a relatively short chronological time can mark a dramatic movement in the noosphere. Between the first appearance in 1904 of Steiner's seminal essays and lectures on the evolution of consciousness (Steiner, 1904/1959, 1986a), and the first German publication of Gebser's key work in 1949, the evolutionary writings of Bergson<sup>247</sup> (1911/1944) and Sri Aurobindo (1909, 2000) had also appeared. The rich cultural, philosophical and spiritual flourishing of the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been documented by Tarnas (2006, p. 362, 401). Gebser appears to have drawn on this material, either explicitly or intuitively<sup>248</sup> in his detailed exposition of the new consciousness structure. He had also immersed himself in a deeply artistic culture in early 20<sup>th</sup> century France and Spain and was already a published poet before beginning his work on structures of consciousness. Gebser's writing, rather like Steiner's is deliberate, particular, and dense. His scholarly attention to detail and endnoting suggest great care and, like Steiner, a similar struggle to reconcile the original spiritual presence—the ever-present origin—with the drive to communicate what he calls his *a-waring-in-truth* or *verition*. Gebser's (1949/1985) unique claim is that in order to fully enact integral consciousness one needs first to consciously experience all the previous structures.<sup>249</sup> Through the nuanced prose-poetry of much of his writing, he succeeds in bringing the uniqueness of the structures to our awareness, not just through concepts, but also right into the fabric of his language—through the intensified consciousness of every word.<sup>250</sup>

Just as every person represents and lives the entire mutational sequence of mankind through his structures, so too each word reflects its mutational exfoliation within language itself. . . . the original meaning . . . is still luminous throughout the unfolding changes of

<sup>247</sup> The point here is not to suggest in some kind of competitive manner that Steiner was first to discover or invent these ideas—as occurs in many scientific discoveries. He was always careful to draw attention to the genealogical lineages of his own concepts and those of others—ideas often going back thousands of years, and yet taking new form, transformed by time and history. In this light he (Steiner, 1914/1973c) points to the earlier philosophical lineage behind the following claim of Bergson in *Creative Evolution*: “It is as if a vague and formless being, whom we may call, as we will, man or superman, had sought to realize himself, and had succeeded only by abandoning a part of himself along the way . . . the animal world, and even the vegetative world” (p. 423). Steiner said that this thread can be traced back to Nietzsche's notion of the *superman*, as paraphrased by Steiner, “The animal bore man in itself; must not man bear within himself a higher being, the *superman*?” (p. 409). Steiner also noted in some of his earliest lectures on evolution of consciousness (Steiner, 1986a) that the genealogy of these ideas could even be traced back to the hermetic scientist Paracelsus (1493-1541). Paraphrasing a key idea of Paracelsus, in regard to how he viewed the animal world: “I carried all that within myself and cast it out from my own being” (p. 72).

<sup>248</sup> See introductory section for note on Gebser's “flash-like intuition” that inspired his research for the next 17 years on this topic.

<sup>249</sup> A similar point has been formalized by developmental psychologist Robert Kegan (1994).

<sup>250</sup> This appears to relate to what Hampson playfully calls *nanotextology* (Hampson, 2007).

meaning taken on or attributed over the years. Every word, after all, is not only a concept or a fixed equivalent in writing; it is also an image and thus mythical, a sound and thus magic, a root and thus archaic, and thus by virtue of this root meaning, still present from origin. . . . If we remain cognizant of this origin and employ the words in a manner that manifests their integrity, they will at least lend the luster of the wholeness to those phenomena which they denote. Then, too, our sense of hearing, our heart, and our mind must be equally awake. (pp. 123, 127)

My evaluation of his cultural philosophical writing is that he largely achieves an enactment of integral consciousness, as he understands it. He both characterizes and enacts the structures of consciousness. In my view he has, inadvertently, continued Steiner's project though in a more finely interwoven, subtly nuanced manner as demonstrated in many examples throughout this paper. However, like Steiner, Gebser is not widely read or cited in the Anglophone academic world, and may also be challenging to read for many non-European contemporaries, including academics. His original text<sup>251</sup> is far more than its content.

### *Wilber*

There are two major transitions that occur between Gebser's and Wilber's writing, one temporal and one spatio-geographic. It is interesting to note that the cultural flourishing that occurred between Steiner and Gebser does not appear to have carried through directly into *our* times. There is little doubt that it was sabotaged by the two world wars. The misuse of evolutionary metaphors and abuse of espoused spiritual knowledge by the Nazis cast a pall over European notions of spirituality and also evolution, development and progress. In core Europe,<sup>252</sup> German critical social theory was followed by French postmodernism and deconstruction. These could be interpreted<sup>253</sup> as attempts to clear the decadent residues of the previous structures of consciousness where remnants of old mythic consciousness lingered in the metanarratives of religion and science, and deficient rational thinking was overextended in the secular ideologies of scientism and economism (Benedikter, 2005). When French postmodernism took root in noospheric soil in the USA, it appears to have hybridized with other aspects of North American culture such as a reduced form of pragmatism, consumerism, and a lifestyle-culture that seems to parallel a superficial, non-contemplative, appropriation of ideas for its own ends. Wilber seems to scapegoat postmodernism as the cause of many of the problematic aspects of North American culture, rather than seeing the type of postmodernism that evolved there as being a reflection of the shallowness of the surrounding cultural context.<sup>254</sup> Wilber's writing can also be seen as reflecting different phases and also different styles within those. His earlier writing, prior to SES, established him as something of an authority on transpersonal issues. He caught the 70's wave of

<sup>251</sup> Of course, both Steiner's and Gebser's writings have been translated from the German, which I have not had the pleasure of reading. Undoubtedly there are also subtle nuances that have been lost in the translation.

<sup>252</sup> Core Europe is a term used philosophically to refer to French and German philosophy (Benedikter, 2005).

<sup>253</sup> This is my interpretation of Benedikter's philosophical analysis of the late works of several—mostly French—postmodern philosophers, whom he indicates were reaching beyond deconstruction to a *productive void*, pointing to a new postmodern spirituality.

<sup>254</sup> For more on the Americanization of postmodernism in Wilber's integral see Hampson (2007).

idealistic new ideas on consciousness, spirituality, feminism, eco-romanticism, and East-West integration. He tackled these with vast quantities of research, a fairly traditional academic style, a powerful intuitive vision and a great deal of optimism (Wilber, 1977, 1990, 1996b, 1996c). His book *Eye to Eye* (Wilber, 1990) is full of such writing. Referring to the writings of St Bonaventure the Christian mystic, he identifies:

*The eye of flesh*, by which we perceive the external world of space, time and objects; *the eye of reason*, by which we attain a knowledge of philosophy, logic and the mind itself; and *the eye of contemplation*, by which we rise to a knowledge of transcendent realities. (pp. 2-3)

He concludes this section with the optimism characteristic of his earlier writings.

We of today are in an extraordinarily favorable position: we can preserve the utterly unique position of possessing and championing a balanced and integrative approach to reality—a “new and higher” paradigm—one that can include the eye of flesh and the eye of reason and the eye of contemplation. (p. 37)

From the perspective that I am viewing language here—that is, with an emphasis on style rather than content, his writing could be viewed in two more phases.<sup>255</sup> From the time Wilber (2000d) started writing again after what he called his “ten-year writing hiatus”<sup>256</sup> (p. ix), he underwent a major period of academic creativity during which he made significant contributions to the enriching of integral theory (Wilber, 1996a, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d, 2001a, 2001d). He noted that, in the ten-year intervening period “extreme postmodernism had rather completely invaded academia in general and cultural studies in particular” whereby he felt constrained by not being able to use terms such as “development, hierarchy, transcendental, universal” (Wilber, 2000d, p. ix).<sup>257</sup> Although he honored what he saw as the very important truths of postmodernism—constructivism, contextualism, integral-perspectivalism, pluralism and multiculturalism—which he claimed were driven by *vision-logic*—he nevertheless expressed anguish, anger and sadness at what he saw as “the shallowness that pervades postmodernism” (p. xxiii). This feeling expressed itself as a new polemical style that seems to have pervaded much of his writing since then. In his own self-reflection he noted this new development, “in all of my first twelve books, stretching over two decades, there is not a single polemical sentence” (p. xxiii). He then argued that a “little polemical rattling” was a necessary challenge, given that “these ideas had been studiously ignored for decades” (p. xxiv). Nevertheless, his writings during

<sup>255</sup> This is not to discount the perspective that Wilber takes on his own writing in describing it as Wilber 1 to 5. However, these stages appear to refer primarily to the development of the content of his writing rather than the style. I would like to especially acknowledge the contribution of Hampson’s notion of *nanotextology*, and the many hours of dialogue we have shared on this, to my deeper understanding of this content/style distinction within language.

<sup>256</sup> During this period the only book that he wrote was *Grace and Grit*, the story of his young wife Treya’s death through her struggle with cancer.

<sup>257</sup> I propose that this attitude of Wilber’s is largely a misunderstanding of a key message of the French postmodern impulse. It is not so much that you can no longer use words like “development, hierarchy, transcendental, universal,” but rather that one has to work much harder conceptually to contextualize just *how* one is using them.

this next phase—up to the early 2000s—were vast in their reach, containing a substantial quantity of research across a wide vista of knowledge areas. His writing stimulated considerable discussion and research in transpersonal psychology, and numerous fields of research that he endeavored to integrate under *integral studies*. The main style for these works—exemplified in *SES*—is an easily readable narrative, interweaving a vast range of areas of research, much of it documented with copious endnotes, threaded together with polemical argument and rhetoric. Using his method of orienting generalizations, he includes many broad syncretic statements such as that quoted in the section above about the Delphic Oracle. His work seems to achieve a relative simplification of many complex concepts, by using fairly plain language, repetition, and emphatic stylistic gestures in order to introduce his ideas to a wide readership, as much outside, as inside, the academy. In this phase, his writing can be persuasive and emotional, thus drawing extreme responses of sympathy or antipathy. The following emotive statement discussing the “Enlightenment mind,” is fairly typical of this style.

So the way up—any form of Ascent beyond Reason—was viewed as not just a bad idea, but as a literal crime against nature, a crime *against* the Great Chain and its allotted spot for men and women. . . . The theme of the modern age thus became . . . do not look up, do not transform, but follow downward-looking Science . . . The two paths of Ascent and Descent at this point had utterly and totally separated, dissociated, divorced, anemic and fractured, with no point of contact, no point even of discourse, let alone integration. (Wilber, 2000d, p. 424)

By contrast with the above polemical rhetoric, he periodically intersperses his arguments with a more poetically flowing style, generally when he speaks about spiritual matters.

The integral vision, having served its purpose, is finally outshined by the radiance of a Spirit that is much too obvious to see and much too close to reach, and the integral search finally succeeds by letting go of the search itself, there to dissolve in a radical Freedom and consummate Fullness that was always already the case, so that one abandons a theory of everything in order simply to be Everything, one with the All in this endless awareness that holds the Kosmos kindly in its hand. (Wilber, 2000a, p. 141)

Following the publication of several books around the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Wilber seemed to go into another, shorter, publishing hiatus.<sup>258</sup> Between 2000 and 2006, his writing was only published online as a series of Extracts. Much of this writing, while beginning to formalize important new dimensions to Wilber’s integral theory—particularly his contribution of *integral methodological pluralism*—is somewhat informal, and underdeveloped from an academic<sup>259</sup> perspective. These pieces mostly speak with an authoritative voice without apparent need to

<sup>258</sup> Much of Wilber’s time and energy in recent years has been focused on overseeing the plans to apply his theoretical work into a number of disciplinary fields through his Integral Institute and planned Integral University, notwithstanding also his serious health challenges.

<sup>259</sup> By *academic* here, I do not merely mean a *straw man* modernist or postmodernist academic, but a well-researched, accurately sourced, thoroughly integrated, postformal integral academic approach. Some attention to this before publication of these extracts would have lent much greater support to his whole project. A lack of attention to scholarship in these later works does not assist the collective undertaking of deepening the entry of integral consciousness into the academy on a planetary scale.

provide sources. Not as well researched or referenced as his earlier writing, *The Extracts*, overall retain the more rhetorical, polemical style of the second phase (Wilber, 2005a, 2005b). This style has also carried over into his latest book (Wilber, 2006).

Finally, it seems to me that most of Wilber's writing points to his commitment to an ascended spiritual path which has both dualistic and linear components until it reaches its ultimate stage of non-dual. In my view, this ascended theme, lends to his integrality a strongly conceptual orientation, rather than an artistic or participatory emphasis. There is also a marked stylistic divergence between his more philosophical and more spiritual writings, perhaps reminiscent of the Kantian differentiation between philosophical reason and the *unknowable*.

## Summary

The above analysis indicates a major tension in adequately communicating insights into the complexities of the emergent consciousness. The two poles of the tension are:

- The struggle to be accurate and authentic to the voice of the new facets of consciousness that are emerging; and
- The desire to be understood by a worldly context that is insufficiently familiar with what is being communicated.

While Steiner and Gebser have clearly emphasized the former, this has led to their writing at times being obscurely dense, and thus not being widely read or comprehended. They have thereby compromised their readership and popularity, most probably as a conscious choice. Steiner's position is that it is the *actual effort* that is required to read difficult spiritual and philosophical material that brings about the transformation. Wilber, on the other hand, has opted for what may be called a path of least resistance. His emphasis appears to be on reaching and communicating with the widest possible audience thus his stylistic focus is on making the most difficult concepts appear simple and easy to grasp. A notable example is Extract G: Part 1: *Introduction: From the Great Chain of Being to Postmodernism in Three Easy Steps* (Wilber, 2005b). In this way, Wilber's compromise is with the detail and accuracy of the *territory*, much of which cannot be adequately conveyed through such over-simplification. From my viewpoint, it would appear that Gebser has most successfully achieved a balance of the two poles of authentic integrality of style, and readability. Yet not everyone would agree.

How do I evaluate my own languaging? Having reached a view that Gebser's writing reflects an advanced model of integral consciousness in its very texture, I have been inspired to develop my own writing with a similar balance of content and artistic style. My intention has been to write in a style that not only clearly conveys the conceptual content of what I want to say, but that is also life-enhancing, imaginative, and transparent. I will have to leave it to the reader to fully evaluate how successful it has been. But I will finish here with a few lines of self-reflection. In relation to my choice of metaphors, I am aware that terms, such as *evolution*, *progress*, *growth* and *development*, commonly used in Steiner's time, were later problematized, and even avoided, by Gebser in his writing about consciousness, as a result of their misuse during the excesses of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe. As discussed previously, Wilber's response was to discuss the objections and critiques of cultural evolution metaphors, then to reintroduce them in his

reconstructed manner. I have attempted a different approach, drawing on my authentic experiences and observations as a mother and an educator. While not denying the socio-cultural abuses related to the unilineal, Eurocentric framing of the notions of *progress* and *development* in late modernity, I seek to recast them in organic-collaborative rather than hegemonic-economic terms. As a whole people on a whole planet we could progress and develop, not just economically but psychologically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. I also wish to reconnect the notions of *growth* and *evolution* with their biological-metaphoric roots. In the context of our only planetary home in crisis, it is vital to emphasize life-enhancing metaphors—rather than mechanistic, technicist or digital metaphors. I have witnessed first-hand with children the life-creating processes of growth and development—the unfolding of life and consciousness—in all its uniqueness and universality, its complexity and its poetry. In this paper, I have sought to honor metaphors of birthing and nurturing of new life; of co-creating; of artistically inspiring and guiding; of encouraging—and challenging—the noospheric integral conversation. So here I sit: weaving warm, colorful tapestries to nurture the crowning infant of integral consciousness; loving *all* the children who express it; and, with reverence for the fullness of Cosmic time, holding a hand-cupped candle in the wind—to guide the stragglers home.

### **Epilogue—We are Children of the Cosmos on our Way Home**

In actual fact the same inner connection once existed between the Earth and the neighboring Cosmos as that between an unborn child with the body of the mother. (Steiner, 1973b, p. 54)

The earth is not just a star among other stars but a star *with* other stars. Any sweeping changes on earth . . . not only occur “here” (on earth) but also “there.” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 297)

Kosmic evolution is now producing theories and performances of its own integral embrace. (Wilber, 2000b, p. 194)

This narrative began with our earth being born out of our solar system, galaxy and universe, which László says was birthed from a Metaverse—the mother of all universes: the ever-present origin perhaps? This points the way to a return, not as a going back to a lost paradise but, as Morin (2005a) suggests, to a *retro-meta* re-creation—a recursion that re-integrates all previous revolutions. “Within the irreversible and disintegrating movement of time, RE constructs a rotating time that is reiterative but eventually progressive” (p. 262), or as Gebser suggests “a sphere in motion.”

As indicated above, Steiner wrote almost a century ago, that life on earth is intimately bound up with cosmic processes. Gebser and Wilber also noted the intimate relationship between the earth and the cosmos/Kosmos. As we transition from formal, instrumental, ego-mentality and begin to awaken to new vital-organic, imaginative, postformal, spiritual understanding of life on earth, our concepts of the cosmos will begin to transform as well. A wonderful beginning is being made on this process in Edgar Morin’s discussion of *cosmosophy* (De Siena, 2005). (For more discussion on cosmosophy, see Appendix B) In an integrative, poetical image, Morin

places his ecological philosophy of human and earthly existence firmly within a living Cosmic context, re-minding us what life is. It is a recursive echo of Steiner's quote above.

The transformation of a photonic stream born from sparkling solar vortices [in which] we living, and as a consequence, human children of waters, of the Earth, and of the Sun, are twigs, if not fetuses, of the cosmic Diaspora, crumbs of solar existence, a tiny sprout of earthly existence. (De Siena, 2005, p. 422)

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**Jennifer Gidley** is a Psychologist, Educator and Futures Researcher. Since founding and pioneering a Rudolf Steiner School in Australia during the 1980s she has continued her interest in integral philosophies via study of Wilber's, Gebser's and other integral approaches, including holding Executive and Advisory roles in the Integral Education group. She is a Research Fellow at the Global Dialogue Institute, Haverford College, Philadelphia, an associate of the Community for Integrative Learning and Action (CILA), Massachusetts, and a member of the World Futures Studies Federation. She has researched and published widely on youth futures, educational transformation and consciousness, including co-editing two books: *The University in Transformation: Global Perspectives on the Futures of the University* (Bergin & Garvey, 2000) and *Youth Futures: Comparative Research and Transformative Visions* (Praeger, 2002). She is currently completing a PhD on the evolution of consciousness, through the Centre for Children and Young People, Southern Cross University, Australia.

[jgidley@scu.edu.au](mailto:jgidley@scu.edu.au)

# Appendix A: From Time to Time: Retro-Meta-1 Reflections on Time(s)

## Introduction

To the perspectival age time meant nothing but a system of measurement or relationships between two moments. . . . Time, however, is a much more complex phenomenon than the mere instrumentality or accident of chronological time. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 285)

My cognizance of the complexity of the discourses on time—cultural, scientific, philosophical, feminist, historical, theological—*in-tim*-idates me. Yet, inspired by the criticality of our present planetary moment *in time*, I feel beckoned into developing a tentative temporal template<sup>2</sup> for my evolution of consciousness research.

The imperative to contextualize the *default* notion of time is twofold. First, a lack of contextualization may lead to my work being misconstrued as being “just another modernist, linear, (perhaps tacitly) Euro-centric narrative”—albeit camouflaged as integral. Second, the macrohistorical nature of my narrative necessitates a careful consideration of time from multiple perspectives. By the default view of time I mean the three-phase linear-time-model of past, present and future that underlies modernist models of *development*, *evolution* and *progress*. These models are invariably value-loaded such that the past is problematized as primitive, while progress, development, evolution are lauded as unilinear paths to civilization. Although these modernist grand narratives have been under siege for decades, theoretical understanding of this taken-for-granted notion of time is relatively undeveloped.

Over the last two millennia the linear conception of time—which began as the more formal *measurement* of already-recognized cosmic and natural temporal cycles—became rationally conceptualized as the chronological measurement of change. The early development of clocks included astronomical/astrological features, indicating notions of time that were still connected with cosmic cycles—beautifully exemplified by the astrological clock in the tower of the town hall in Prague, built in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Since the Industrial Revolution linear, chronological time has further contracted by association with *mechanical* time and *factory* time. Further scientific and technological developments in the last century have seen temporal partitioning become hyper-exaggerated by increasingly sophisticated scientific and digital means, from one extreme in radioactive half-life, to the other extreme in nanoseconds.

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of *retro-meta* was coined by Morin to express the complex recursion that “sustains living processes at all levels” and is inherent in a full understanding of the prefix RE. “The process of RE complexly unifies and intermixes the past and future in order to generate the creative pulse of evolution” (Morin, 2005a, p. 254).

<sup>2</sup> My usage of *template* refers at least to its etymological roots from the Latin: *templum* “piece of ground consecrated for the taking of auspices, building for worship,” and from the French *templet* “weaver’s stretcher,” the latter, in relation to my planetary tapestry.

<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=template&searchmode=none>

Linear time has also become dominated by politico-economic features, exemplified by such phrases as “time is money,” “buying time.” This mechanistic and economic colonization of time has increased exponentially in recent decades, contributing to the *speed addiction* of our present age—demonstrated in fast foods, internet, instant global text messaging, accelerated learning, and the three-quick-steps-to-spiritual-enlightenment culture. Just to cope there are drugs to keep up, such as speed and cocaine; and drugs to slow down, such as alcohol and tranquilizers. However, in parallel with the accelerating freneticism and time panic<sup>3</sup> of the 20<sup>th</sup> century alternative notions have been emerging.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century significant theoretical developments concerning the notion of time occurred in both the natural sciences and the social sciences. In physics, Einstein’s theory of relativity displaced the Newtonian conception of *objective* time as an unchangeable, permanent ‘place’ upon which the movement or change of things can be measured in discrete, identical fragments (Einstein, 1920/2000; Weik, 2004). Synchronously, the new philosophical phenomenology of Husserl was positing a *subjective* time—the time of the soul—in contrast to external or objective time (Husserl, 1905/1964). Numerous theoretical attempts have been made to come to terms with these new perspectives on time. Philosophical developments include Heidegger’s phenomenological notion of *existential* time (Heidegger, 1927/1962); Whitehead’s process view of time (Griffin, 1986a, 1986b; Weik, 2004; Whitehead, 1929/1985); and Bergson’s paradoxical notion of *durée*—the conscious flow of life—which includes a radical multiplicity of Time (Bergson, 1922/1965; Deleuze, 1966/2006). Significant—albeit lesser known—contributions were also made by Steiner and Gebser and will be explicated in this appendix. More recent attempts have been made to reconcile some of these views, e.g., by Schatzki’s notion of history and Ricoeur’s *poetics of narrative* (Ricoeur, 1985/1988; Schatzki, 2005).

In addition, there has been a recent trend towards diversity in conceptualizations of time (Geissler, 2002). Notions of cyclical time are being reclaimed from non-western (Eliade, 1954/1989; Inayatullah, 1999) and feminist perspectives (Forman & Sowton, 1989; Kristeva, 1986; Leccardi, 1996; Milojevic, 2005b). Initially these two major time perspectives—linear and cyclical—were set up in opposition to each other. However, increasingly, new discourses are emerging that provide a more complex, nuanced perspective. These include:

- Postmodern philosophical concepts such as repetition and difference (Deleuze & Conley, 1992), complex recursion (Morin, 2005a);
- Complex concepts of time in archaeology<sup>4</sup> (Klejn, 2005);

<sup>3</sup> Gebser (1949/1985) referred to “time anxiety” and “addiction to time” as symptoms of the deficient-rational mode of consciousness (p. 22).

<sup>4</sup> Russian archaeologist L. S. Klejn (2005) has recently identified “twelve concepts of time . . . These are the primordial presentism, the cyclic notion of time, the genealogical, labeled perception of time (marked time), the linear concept (measured time), the dynamic time (the notion of the flow of time), the concept of general time, the vector time, the time acceleration, the relativist concept, the static time, and the annihilation of time” (Abstract). His article discusses how they manifest various archaeological epochs and how they are displayed in archaeology. The full article is only available in Russian, but I was able to access an English abstract. Clearly this work could contribute significantly to this discussion.

- The emergence of futures studies as an academic field, introducing new concepts of past, present and future, e.g. the 200-year present and the long-now (Boulding, 1990; Slaughter, 1996; Slaughter & Inayatullah, 2000); macrohistory (Galtung & Inayatullah, 1998); long-term and non-Western future-time concepts (Inayatullah, 2000; Inayatullah & Boxwell, 2003);
- Spiral notions of development in worldviews and values reflecting both cyclical and progressive notions (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Cowan & Todorovic, 2005; Inayatullah, 1999; Inayatullah, 2004; Wilber, 1996c);
- Contemporary developments in the “time arts—music and film” (Benedikter, 2005);
- Multiple dimensions of time (Starr & Torbert, 2005);
- Spiritual notions of Eternal Time and the Now (Tolle, 2004);
- The emergent *slow* time movement, e.g. slow food movement (Parkins, 2004); the slow school movement (McGill, 2005).

While there is unquestionably now a substantial and growing body of literature on the various notions of time, there is a lack of theoretical coherence. This appendix is primarily an explication of the time perspectives (temporics) of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber, who frame many of the above-mentioned notions in a macrohistorical, evolutionary context. It is a work-in-progress, providing additional depth to the main paper and pointing to theoretical possibilities for further research.

## Gebser’s Temporics in Relation to Evolution of Consciousness

Temporics is an expression of . . . endeavors to bring to consciousness the abundance and freedom concealed “behind” the concept of time as they relate to all structures and all areas of our entire reality. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 359)

Diverse notions of time, and their relationship to structures of consciousness form a major theme in Gebser’s seminal work—*The Ever-Present Origin*.<sup>5</sup> Because of his in-depth focus on the significance of this relationship, I am using his *temporics* to provide the overarching conceptual structure for my analysis of Steiner’s and Wilber’s notions of time. This analysis should assist in uncovering any tacit assumptions about time in the interwoven narratives comprising the main body of this paper, thus increasing their transparency. In the next section, I will primarily illustrate with brief quotes from Gebser’s own text to retain the nuanced flavor of his conceptualizations.

### Archaic Pre-Temporality

Gebser says very little about this earliest structure of consciousness. He refers to it as “a ‘non-dimensional’ structure ‘behind’ the physical and biological data and phenomena of the different structures, a structure which is pre-magic, pre-temporal, and pre-conscious” (p. 388). This *original pre-temporality* (p. 356) of the archaic deep-sleep consciousness, is the structure from

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<sup>5</sup> In this appendix, all textual quotes from Gebser will be drawn from this source, unless otherwise specified.

which a gradual awareness of time exfoliates through the three subsequent structures of consciousness—magic, mythic and mental.

### **Magic Timelessness**

Gebser primarily uses the phrase *magic timelessness* (pp. 289, 358) when referring to the notions of time in this second consciousness structure. He illustrates this sense with the following quote. “[The] . . . timeless phenomena . . . arise from the vegetative intertwining of all living things and are realities in the egoless magic sphere of every human being” (p. 49). He relates the magic structure with the auditory experiencing of *tone*, noting that timelessness can be integrally re-awakened through music.

### **Mythical Temporality**

In relation to mythical consciousness, Gebser primarily speaks of “mythical temporality” (p. 358), and “rhythmic time” (p. 176). He describes a gradual transition from the remote magic timelessness, to a more tangible sense of periodicity, particularly in relation to the seasonal rhythms of nature. He again points to some of the important cultural sites that have been discussed in the main paper, in relation to the transition between magic and mythical consciousness.

Whenever we encounter seasonal rituals in the later periods of the magic structure, and particularly in astronomical deliberations and various forms of the calendar, as for example among the Babylonians and later Egyptians and Mexican civilization, we find anticipations of the mythical structure. (p. 61)

Gebser also notes that in mythic consciousness there is a reciprocal interplay between the internalization of memory, as recollection, and the externalization of utterance, particularly through poetry (p. 192). This is consistent with Steiner’s characterization of the shift from *localized memory* to *rhythmic memory* (see below).

### **Mental-Conceptual Temporality**

According to Gebser, the birth of linear time occurred with Parmenides’ (b. 540 BCE) tripartition of time into past, present and future (p. 178). He claimed that mental-conceptual time first arose in Greece with notions of measurement, quantity and partitioning of space. He regards the purpose of linear time as facilitating the shift from mythical to mental consciousness. “Time, that is, our mentally oriented conception of time, the divider of mythical movement and the partitioner of the circle, severs its two-dimensionality and thereby creates the possibility of three-dimensional space” (p. 177). Gebser expressed concern about the problems arising from the deficient<sup>6</sup> mental notions of time as illustrated in contemporary *time anxiety* and *addiction to time*. He believed this arose from the overextension of the dividing function, which has reduced *time* to a *spatial* function.

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<sup>6</sup> Note further discussion on Gebser’s use of the terms efficient and deficient in the main paper.

Dividing time, which is itself a divider leads to atomization . . . Here we would only note once again that the phenomenon of “lack of time” is characteristic of our material, spatially accentuated world: How is anyone to have time if he tears it apart? (p. 180)

However, he also indicates that this predictable, mechanical, conception of time began to change especially with the elaboration of Einstein’s theory of special relativity in 1905 (p. 341). Referring to his notion of *concretion of time*, Gebser notes.

Wherever time is able to become “the present,” it is able to render transparent “simultaneously” the timelessness of magic, the temporicity of myth, and the temporality of mind. There are already signs of this ineptual mutation that can be demonstrated. (p. 181)

### **Integral-Atemporal Time-Freedom**

Time-freedom as the quintessence of time. (p. 356)

This brief quote from Gebser encapsulates the inherently paradoxical nature of his *integral-atemporal* notion. He uses several different expressions to attempt to communicate what he sees as a central aspect of the emergent integral-aperspectival consciousness. It is as if he is trying to “describe the elephant” from all sides to enter into the complexity of concepts that represent his notion. The terms he primarily uses are: “arational,” “time-freedom,” “open time,” “achronon” (pp. 289, 358); “concretion of time,” “temporic concretion” (p. 26); “fourth dimension” (p. 340).

Expanding on his frequent use of *concretion of time* he linked it with two other terms, *presentation*, and *latency*, distilling how the new consciousness experiences a simultaneous sense of past, present and future.

Presentation is “more” than a tie to the past; it is also an incorporation of the future. (p. 271)

Latency—what is concealed—is the demonstrable presence of the future. (p. 299)

Gebser’s nuanced *concretion of time* does not represent a linear developmental endpoint like that of the modernity project, nor is it endlessly recursive in non-directional cyclical space as in Eliade’s “myth of the eternal return” (Eliade, 1954/1989). Integral consciousness as understood by Gebser does not place mythic and modern constructions of time in opposition to each other, as both modern and traditional approaches tend to do. Alternatively, Gebser’s *temporic concretion* is an intensification of consciousness that enables re-integration of previous structures of consciousness—with their different time senses—honoring them all. It opens to new understanding through atemporal translucence whereby *all* times are present to the intensified consciousness *in the same fully conscious moment*.

### **In Summary**

Gebser proposed that the intellectual realization that time was more than mere clock time began with Einstein’s theory of relativity. “Time first irrupted into our consciousness as a reality

or world constituent with Einstein's formulation of the four-dimensional space time continuum" (p. 286). Gebser also noted the implications of this for philosophical notions of time. He discussed the gradual displacement of fixed concepts of linear time, particularly through the philosophies of Bergson, Heidegger, Husserl and Whitehead (p. 402-410).

### **Wilber's Temporics in Relation to Evolution of Consciousness**

Each successively higher mode of self represents an expansion and extension of consciousness, and thus each higher mode of self can grasp increasingly extended temporal modes . . . until time vanishes back into its Source and disappears as a necessary but intermediate ladder of transcendence. (Wilber, 1996c, p. 65)

What indications are there that Wilber is aware of, or enacting, the nuanced complexities of Gebser's *concretion of time*? Wilber's integral framework clearly contains a temporal dimension, in that he conceptualizes comprehensive transpersonal models for both cultural evolution (phylogenesis) and individual development (ontogenesis). However, in the overall scheme of his writing, discussions of time are not emphasized—several of his key books do not index the term *time* at all (Wilber, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a). I suggest that, for Wilber, time could be regarded as one of many features within an overall spatially oriented model. Frequently referred to as a map or a framework, not the least by Wilber himself, his framework is divided and partitioned in multi-faceted ways. This may indicate that he is primarily operating in a conceptually *spatial*, rather than a conceptually *temporal* mode. The significance of this in relation to Gebser's approach may become clearer as our analysis proceeds. It is worth noting that Gebser equates the dividing and partitioning of knowledge—the *ratio* part of rational—as marking the beginning of the deficient phase of the mental, rational mode (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 93). Could this imply that Wilber's framework is a type of meta- or hyper-rational model?

When Wilber does refer to time he appears to emphasize one or other of two extremes.

- A strong linear perspective—where he frequently uses the phrase “time's arrow” (Wilber, 2000d, p. 19);
- A timeless spiritual present—where he frequently uses the phrase “always already” (Wilber, 2001a, p. 50).

These two notions will now be discussed briefly in an attempt to uncover how Wilber reconciles this contradiction.

#### ***Time's Arrow*—A Strong Linear Perspective**

In what I understand to be Wilber's (1996c) most developed documentation of his linear-time perspective,<sup>7</sup> his terminology lies close to Gebser's, yet it appears that his meanings may differ. Although he borrows Gebser's term *exfoliation*, his emphasis indicates a more linear template.

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<sup>7</sup> This is the second edition (1996) of *Up from Eden*. Although he has published several books since then, I have not been able to identify any further developments on this model.

For example, it is arguable whether Gebser's "pre-conscious" equates with an attribution of "ignorance" (See point (1) below.) Wilber (1996) summarizes his temporics as follows.

There are different structures, or different types, of time that exfoliate from the Timeless. In ascending, expanding, and evolving order, corresponding with the levels of the Great Chain, we have:

- (1) The pretemporal ignorance of the pleroma-uroboros;
- (2) The simple passing present of the typhon;
- (3) The cyclic, seasonal time of mythic-membership;
- (4) The linear and historical time of the mental-age;
- (5-6) The archetypal, aeonic, or transcendental time of the soul;
- (7-8) The perfectly Timeless eternity of Spirit-Atman. (p. 65)

The numbers in parentheses relate to Wilber's individual developmental stages—also linked to similar temporal stages—as set out in *The Atman Project* (Wilber, 1996b, p. 44-46).

Wilber (2000d) characterizes his notion of *time's arrow* as the "irreversible direction through time" postulated by evolutionary theorists from Heraclitus and Aristotle, through Leibniz, Schelling and Hegel to Darwin. In these theories, "evolution proceeds irreversibly in the direction of increasing differentiation/integration, increasing structural organization, and increasing complexity" (p. 19).<sup>8</sup>

Wilber (2000d) links this to his notion of *spiritual ascent* with its linear trajectory from lower to higher.

Darwinists could always be seen . . . as simply supplying empirical evidence for a scheme already known and accepted, namely, evolution as God-in-the-making, Eros not simply seeking Spirit but expressing Spirit all along via a series of ever-higher ascents" (pp. 537-538).

While this proposition may well have been accepted by several of the German idealists, Teilhard de Chardin, Sri Aurobindo and others, it is implied by Wilber that the relationship between biological evolution and spiritual ascent<sup>9</sup> is universally accepted. From my research, this is far from the case in conventional evolutionary theory today.

### ***Always Already—A Timeless Spiritual Present***

At first glance the above quotes seem to suggest an overarching, linear, developmental emphasis in his approach to understanding time sense, however, he then follows it, in the next paragraph with the statement: "until time itself vanishes back into its Source, and disappears as a

<sup>8</sup> Wilber (2000d) also notes that from the perspective of the second law of thermodynamics in regard to some aspects of the physiosphere *time's arrow* could be seen to be winding down (pp. 18-19).

<sup>9</sup> This particular statement also omits to refer to the dialectical notion of spiritual descent although Wilber does acknowledge it elsewhere (Wilber, 2000d). He does not appear to give it the type of equivalence to ascent that is expressed, for example, by Sri Aurobindo (2000) in his notion of the divinization of the earth.

necessary but intermediate ladder of transcendence” (p. 65). This appears to link to an earlier section in this book where he includes a diagram showing these eight developmental stages—as he conceptualized them at this time—held within a circular model, beginning and ending with the “ground unconscious” (Wilber, 1996c, p. 12).

### **The Origin vs. Archaic Controversy**

There is an apparent contradiction between some of Wilber’s statements that reflect the Timeless Spiritual Presence, “we were once consciously one with the very Divine itself” (Wilber, 2001a, p. 50) and some of his more linear statements, referring to the “pretemporal ignorance of the pleroma-uroboros” (Wilber, 1996c, p. 65). It is unclear whether Wilber also sees an even earlier, *conscious* stage prior to the uroboros. This is a complex issue that is beyond the scope of this appendix to engage with fully. For further reading there has been extensive discussion between Feuerstein (1997) and Wilber in regard to convergences and divergences between Wilber’s and Gebser’s views of the nature of the archaic structure of consciousness in relation to origin.

### **Gebser’s Integral vs. Wilber’s Transpersonal Levels**

While Gebser sees integral time concretion as the point where consciousness folds back on itself and integrates the whole, Wilber (1996c) sees this as inadequate as a theory of spiritual development, going as far as making the following major critique of Gebser.

What Gebser and Habermas both lacked was a genuinely spiritual dimension. Gebser vigorously attempted to include the spiritual domain in his work, but it soon became obvious that he simply wasn’t aware of—or did not deeply understand—the contemplative traditions that alone penetrate to the core of the Divine. As I said, beyond Gebser’s integral-aperspectival there are actually several stages of transpersonal or spiritual development, which Gebser clumsily collapses into his integral stage. (p. ix)

My research on Gebser demonstrates that this is far from the truth. I am wondering if Wilber had in fact read Gebser’s seminal work when he made this comment in 1996, or was deducing this opinion from a secondary source. His reasoning is that Gebser’s highest stage is integral-aperspectival—equivalent to his centauric-existential, whereas his own model (at that time) claimed several other higher stages—“psychic, subtle, causal and nondual occasions” (p. ix). My own interpretation of the matter is, firstly, that the situation is a lot more complex than the *either/or* that Wilber is suggesting between his and Gebser’s models but a full analysis would require far more space. I would like, however, to provide some of Gebser’s actual words that appear to me to indicate that Gebser’s work does indeed have “a genuinely spiritual dimension,” in contrast with Wilber’s claim. Gebser states,

A new possibility for perceptual consciousness of the spiritual for the whole of mankind one day had to shine forth. Previously the spiritual was realizable only approximately in the emotional darkness of the magical, in the twilight of imagination of the mythical, and in the brightness of abstraction in the mental. The mode of realization now manifesting itself assures that in accordance with its particular nature, the spiritual is not only given

emotionally, imaginatively, abstractly, or conceptually. It also ensures that in accordance with our new capacity it is also perceptible concretely as it begins to coalesce with our consciousness. . . . The shining through (diaphaneity or transparency) is the form of appearance (epiphany) of the spiritual. (p. 542)

Wilber's vertical transcendent model where full unity with the Divine awaits the ascent through all the stages seems to weigh his whole approach towards vertical linearity. Gebser's approach clearly tilts more towards an expression of spiritual immanence than Wilber's, yet Gebser is clearly describing an authentic spiritual dimension. Wilber's later work in Integral Spirituality does attempt to address issues of spirituality at all stages of development through his Wilber-Combs matrix, but to address this in detail would move beyond our focus here on temporics (Wilber, 2006).

### In Summary

Wilber tends to swing between a primarily linear developmental model—albeit one that includes higher stages beyond the formal, mental mode—and the spiritual Timelessness of the non-dual. Sometimes, he brings both voices through in the same piece of writing, as indicated above. However, it is unclear whether Wilber sees Timelessness as being synchronous with Gebser's origin. It appears likely that for Wilber this is an endpoint to be strived for rather than something that can be experienced as a concretion of all the temporics.

### Steiner's Temporics in Relation to Evolution of Consciousness

Out of the womb of time there is born for us human beings that which is beyond time. . . .  
For as far as human work is concerned, Eternity is the birth of that which has matured in Time. (Steiner, 1922/1940)

What indications are there that Steiner is aware of the nuanced complexities of Gebser's *concretion of time*? There are several aspects of Steiner's work where one might look to respond to this question. Firstly, it could be noted that many of Steiner's books and lecture series are related to notions of time, history, mythology or relationships between time and consciousness (Steiner, 1926/1966b, 1950, 1904/1959, 1971a, 1971b, 1971c, 1971d, 1982c). This is by no means a complete list but rather a representative selection. This is also not intended to suggest that he overly emphasized time or did not problematize the terms *time* or *history*—time is just one of the themes he researched in depth. A unique feature of Steiner's approach is that he does not isolate time from other factors. His writing on time is very complex,<sup>10</sup> and in itself integral-aperspectival, in my view, in that he consciously presents views from a number of perspectives. The themes he discussed in relation to *time* include human memory, history, astro-geological cycles and progressive recapitulation. These are all complexly interwoven within his writings.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> I am aware that my section on Steiner's temporics is considerably longer than the other two, however, his work on time is arguably much more extensive, including additional areas such as *precession of equinoxes* that have not been touched by the other narratives.

<sup>11</sup> Several methodological challenges arise with researching Steiner's views on any theme. The most obvious are: German-to-English translation issues; and the fact that many of his works were transcribed lectures, unrevised by him before his death. An additional, more subtle challenge is that the complex

## Time and Memory

Like Gebser, Steiner pointed to the relationship between human memory and the gradually evolving sense of time. Steiner (1950) described a three-stage development of memory that he called *localized*, *rhythmic* and *temporal memory*. Steiner (1904/1959) also referred elsewhere to *cosmic memory*.

### *Localized Memory*

Steiner (1950) claimed that in very early times—which from the context of his text appear to be Upper Paleolithic—memory was not yet internalized within the human psyche, but was connected with place, with the Earth, requiring signs and prompts such as “memorial tablets and memorial stones” (p. 16). This appears to link to Gebser’s magic consciousness.

### *Rhythmic Memory*

Following this, during the transition from the magic to the mythical—related to his *Indian cultural period*—Steiner (1950) claimed that memory began to become internalized and we learned to remember by rhythm and repetition, through which “the whole ancient art of verse developed” (P. 17). He referred to ancient Asia as a central location . . . citing the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Vedas* as later codified examples of this rhythmic memory (p. 18).<sup>12</sup> *Learning by heart* is a vestige of this type of memory and Steiner mentions the importance of this in children’s education.

### *Temporal Memory*

Steiner (1950) characterized the temporal memory that “we take for granted today” (p. 17) as beginning in the Greco-Roman cultural period emerging around 800 BCE with the classical Greece of formal history. This of course coincides with the emergence of intellectual-mental-rational consciousness as we have seen in the main paper. Wilber (1996c), drawing on Whyte and Bergson, also refers to the emergence of memory—apparently referring to what Steiner calls “temporal memory”—in association with the mental-egoic consciousness (p. 206).

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interwovenness of his work means that important views are very often scattered throughout his writing—even in seemingly—non-relevant titles. This is exacerbated by the fact that, although some of his published works include a detailed *table of contents*, most volumes are not indexed. Consequently, it can be quite laborious finding relevant textual material. By contrast, Wilber’s published writing includes adequate *tables of contents* and *indexes* and is generally more thematically organized—according to the standard academic form of our times, and therefore quite easy to source. Gebser’s English-published writing, although complexly interwoven like Steiner’s, includes a very detailed *table of contents* and is meticulously indexed.

<sup>12</sup> The development of rhythm was also enhanced by the emergence and cultivation of music (See Appendix C for more information on this development).

### *Cosmic Memory*

Steiner (1904/1959) also proposed that through *conscious* spiritual development we may go beyond the ordinary, everyday temporal sense and attain access to our *cosmic memory*—the deep collective past—and, in some instances, the future. He referred to the field where this information is stored as the *Akasha Chronicle* or *Akashic Record* (p. 39). Laszlo—from a scientific perspective—has also recently proposed the term *Akashic field*, or *In-formation* field for the field that stores cosmic memory (László, 2007). Gebser’s (1949/1985) notion of “atemporality” or remembering the future is similar—he cites Rilke’s poetic line: “wishes are recollections coming from the future” (p. 504). This future-time-sense is at the core of the contemporary futures studies literature (Slaughter, 1999).

### **Time and History**

Steiner (1924/1973a) also held a very large, meta-historical perspective that he characterized as having three stages: *cosmic or heavenly history*, *mythical or mythological history* and *earthly history*.<sup>13</sup> He also refers elsewhere to *non-transitory history* (Steiner, 1904/1959, p. 39), which being beyond linear time, may resemble Gebser’s “time freedom.” I will primarily illustrate with brief quotes from Steiner’s own text, to retain the nuanced flavor of his conceptualizations.

#### *Cosmic/Heavenly History*

“Earlier peoples still had this ‘heavenly History’ in their consciousness, and were indeed far more aware of it than of the Earthly . . . The man of that age, when he came to speak of ‘origins,’ did not relate earthly events but cosmic” (Steiner, 1924/1973a, p. 143). This appears to relate to Gebser’s magical timelessness.

#### *Mythical History*

“This . . . was followed by the mythical History . . . [which] combines heavenly events with earthly. ‘Heroes,’ for instance . . . appear on the scene” (p. 144). This is clearly linked with Gebser’s mythical structure. Steiner (1924/1973a) considered these *heroes* to be more highly evolved beings who worked through the initiates and leaders of the time in various places. Wilber’s (1996c) two parallel strands of evolution—the evolution of the *average mode* of consciousness and the evolution of the *most advanced* mode of consciousness—concur with this (p. 339).

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<sup>13</sup> It would be interesting to explore how Steiner’s three stages of history might relate to Nietzsche’s three modes of history: *antiquarian*, *critical* and *monumental* history, where, in the latter, “exemplary insights from the past flash forward, bespeaking their validity and guiding us today” (Schwartz, 2005, p. 137-138). Or indeed, how Steiner’s and Nietzsche’s notions might relate to Kristeva’s concepts of cyclical, rhythmical time and “monumental temporality . . . all-encompassing and infinite like imaginary space” (Kristeva, 1986, p. 191); or Starr and Torbert’s (2005) one-, two- and three-dimensional time notions. See also Sean Kelly (1993). These are interesting pointers for further research.

### *Earthly History*

The origins of formal *history*<sup>14</sup> as-we-know-it, has been present “since the unfolding of the Intellectual or Mind-soul [in ancient Greece]. Nevertheless for a long time [people] continued to ‘think’ in the sense of what had been before [that is, mythically]” (Steiner, 1924/1973a, p. 145-146). This reflects Gebser’s mental time conception. Wilber (1996c) claimed that history began a few hundred years earlier, c. 1,300 BCE, with the Assyrian rulers (p. 213).

### *Non-Transitory History*

Steiner (1909/1959) proposed that freedom from the limitations of linear time could be developed through the new consciousness from the beginnings of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and increasingly in our times. He also pointed to a new *self-reflective* period where we would be aware of our actions in linear history and also be able to *pay attention to* our own historicity. This insight seems to foreshadow contemporary attention to historicity, arising from postmodern philosophy and hermeneutics. Gebser also spoke of divesting history of “its mere temporality and sequential nature” (p. 192).

### **Steiner’s *Progressive Recapitulation as Complex Recursion***

The many aspects of RE involve simultaneously: a reactivation of the ancestral past, a production and reproduction of present existence, and arrangements for the future. RE always includes a return to the past that resuscitates it in the present. By this movement, RE catapults the past towards the future. (Morin, 2005a, p. 261)

Morin’s notion of *RE*—representing complex recursion—appears to align with Gebser’s concretion of time and Steiner’s progressive recapitulation<sup>15</sup> theory. Steiner (1910/1939) claims that in each new stage of evolution, there is a “recapitulation” of the previous stage in a way that “is something like a repetition of . . . evolution [that] takes place on a higher level” (p. 155). He considers this process to be operating at every level of existence, including the previous stages of cosmic existence of the earth (cosmogony), socio-cultural evolution (phylogeny), and individual development (ontogeny). Morin (2005a) furthers this perspective. “*Innovation is Inscribed in the Return that it Transforms . . . Evolution is at once a break from repetition, through the upwelling of the new, and the reconstitution of repetition through the integration of the new*” (p. 264). Laszlo (2006) observes a similar process in the evolution of societies. “The nonlinear but on the whole progressive evolution of societies is driven by innovations that perturb and eventually destabilize previously stable systems” (p. 105). (See also Deleuze’s (1994) notion of repetition and difference).

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<sup>14</sup> The first official *chronological* historians were Herodotus (484BCE-c.425BCE) and Thucydides (460-c.400BCE), the latter taking a systematic historical method that emphasized chronology and human actions. Systematic historical method also began in China with Sima Qian (145-90BCE) of the Han Dynasty, indicative of mental mode time conceptualizations there as well.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History>

<sup>15</sup> I am coining the term *progressive recapitulation* as a descriptor of Steiner’s evolutionary perspective. It is not his actual term.

One way to investigate evolution's complex recursivity is to explore relationships between astronomical cycles and anthropo-socio-cultural cycles.<sup>16</sup> While both ancient hermetic science and modern astronomy have investigated such relationships, the potential influence of cosmic/astronomical cycles on the *anthropo-social sphere*<sup>17</sup> has been largely ignored by modern and postmodern social scientists—in spite of having been already postulated as early as ancient Greece. We will now briefly explore the state of research in this area.

### **Solar Precessions and the *Deep-Time-Cycles* of the World**

The orientation of the Earth's rotational axis in relation to the stars and clusters of stars is not fixed, but varies slowly, over time, because of the gravitational influence of the Sun and the Moon on the swelling of the Earth's equator. If we extend the earth's axis to the imaginary sphere of the fixed stars, the point of intersection describes a circle of approximately 26,000 years. (Bocchi & Ceruti, 2002, p. 4)

Steiner was the first post-Enlightenment scholar, as far as I have been able to ascertain, to substantially research and document the relationship between astronomical cycles such as the precession of the equinoxes and anthropo-socio-cultural evolution. The notion of the *precession of the equinoxes*, is thought to have been known to the civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Nile valley as early as 3,000 BCE, but only fairly recently formalized by modern astronomy. The complete precession cycle is a period of approximately 25,700 years—the so called great Platonic year—during which time the equinox regresses over a full circle of 360°. While paleoclimatologists have begun to recognize the contribution of this process to cycles of climate change such as ice ages,<sup>18</sup> there is little mention of it in the evolution of consciousness discourse. Although Steiner pointed to these links a century ago, neither Gebser, nor Wilber, have indicated any possible macrocosmic influence on the cycles of change in human culture and consciousness. More recently, a humble resurgence of interest is dawning in this under-researched area of human concern from philosophers (Bocchi & Ceruti, 2002; McDermott, 1984; Tarnas, 2006; Ulansey, 1994), and evolutionary psychologists (Sedikedes, Skowronski, & Dunbar, 2006). Philosopher of science Gianluca Bocchi and genetic epistemologist Mauro Ceruti, using a transdisciplinary narrative approach, draw on the notion of the precession of the

<sup>16</sup> Drawing on a combination of his recapitulation and precession of equinoxes theories, Steiner proposed a U-shaped theory of cultural development, with the Greco-Roman period being the pivotal turning point (Steiner, 1910/1939). He suggested the current emergent culture and consciousness will recapitulate some qualities of the cultures of the fourth period, for example, Ancient Egypt, not as a regression but recursing at a higher more conscious resonance. This could well be interpreted as an example of Gebser's *concretion of time*.

<sup>17</sup> This is one of Morin's composite terms, for which he is famous. "It is interesting to emphasize in Morin's *ecological* perspective the importance of the 'dash,' which establishes the linkages, the connections, that binds the words anew" (De Siena, 2005, p. 423).

<sup>18</sup> The precession of the equinoxes is one of several astronomical cycles that are believed to influence the 100,000-year cycle of ice ages (this being approximately four complete Platonic years of 25-26,000 years). "There are three astronomical variables used in paleoclimatology: the obliquity, the eccentricity multiplied by the sine of the longitude of perihelion, measured from the vernal equinox, [i.e. the precession of the equinoxes] and eccentricity itself." (Varadi, Runnegar, & Ghil, 2003) These three cycles are referred to as the Milankovitch cycles.

equinoxes to illuminate the myths of many cultures that refer to a previous Golden Age<sup>19</sup> (Bocchi & Ceruti, 2002).

Steiner made a unique potential contribution to the evolution of consciousness discourse in this area. He explored in some detail, across numerous books and lectures, the 2,160-year periods of the sun's precession and the relationship of this to the evolution of culture and consciousness. According to Steiner (1971a), in his first post-glacial cultural period—the ancient Indian—the sun at the vernal equinox was moving into the constellation associated with Cancer (p. 52). He claimed that it then continued to move every 2,160 years, transitioning through Gemini in the Persian period, Taurus in the Egypto-Babylonian period, Aries in the Greco-Roman period (Steiner, 1971b), and so on. Historian of religion, David Ulansey, has undertaken and published substantial research into the notion of the precession of the equinoxes in relation to the ancient Roman Mithraic religion and their astrological mythologemes related to Taurean metaphors (Ulansey, 1991, 1994). Such research if extended to other cultural periods could be very fruitful. Philosopher, Richard Tarnas, has recently published the results of decades of research on the influence of astronomical events on human culture and consciousness (Tarnas, 2006). His work, however, primarily concerns shorter planetary cycles and not the large macro-cycles being referred to here.

### **In Summary**

Steiner's writing demonstrates a complex dialectic between progressive development and cyclical recursion. Like Gebser's writing, it points to a new stage of consciousness that is capable of beginning the integration of all aspects of human nature. And like Wilber's writing it also foreshadows the potential of further future stages.

### **Pre-temporal, Temporal and Trans-temporal Notions of *Time***

As demonstrated, Steiner, Gebser and Wilber all identify more than three stages in the development of human conception of time, and all agree that the notion of linear, historical time co-arose with the emergence of mental-egoic consciousness in approximately the first millennium BCE. They each make important distinctions between linear time and our notions of time prior to this. They each identify emergent postformal, integral notions of time. However, they differ in their conceptualizations and languaging of these issues.

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<sup>19</sup> Bocchi and Ceruti (2002) explain how the particular nature of this astronomical event between 4,000 and 3,000 BCE was so dramatic as to mark the end of the *Golden Age* in human myths.

For people who lived in 4,000 [BCE] the Milky Way traced the path of the Sun, a visible indication of the annual transit of the Sun above the Heavenly equator. This configuration was very symmetrical. The way to the heavens was opened to human beings if they crossed the two mighty gates of Gemini and Sagittarius. . .

The precession of the equinoxes broke this symmetry. The Heavenly gates collapsed. The Sun was exiled in strange . . . regions, a part of the Milky Way sank in the abyss below the heavenly equator. . . . This was the end of the Golden Age. (pp. 5-6)

They explain how this astronomical event was at the basis of the belief that was held as recently as the 17<sup>th</sup> century by philosophers, theologians and even scientists that the world was created in approximately 4,000 BCE. Some creationists still believe that to this day (p. 3).

### Wilber's *Pre-Trans Fallacy* as an Expression of Linear Ascent

Making use of one of his iconic phrases, the *pre-trans fallacy*, Wilber distinguishes between what he calls the *pre-temporal* or *atemporal*<sup>20</sup> *lack of* time sense of the archaic-uroboric consciousness—which he identifies with Freud's *Id* in developmental terms—and the *transtemporal* or *eternal* present. Wilber (1996b) associates the former with temporal ignorance, where “there is no time in it because it is too primitive—too *dumb*—to grasp such notions (p. 90) (emphasis added). He associates the *transtemporal*—using the metaphor of the fifth floor of a building—with the higher levels of development, in the transpersonal realms that he claims are accessing “mystic union” or the “primal Ground of Being” (Wilber, 1996b, p. 90). In this example, the ascended linearity of Wilber's model is foregrounded, with its negative value judgments in relation to earlier/lower levels. However, although he *categorically* states there is a difference between pre- and trans-temporality—just as he does with pre- and trans-rationality—Wilber's writing does not actually bring through the difference phenomenologically. My sense is that he is using his intuition here. He *knows* there is a difference but it is not discernible through his words. Both Gebser's *intensification of consciousness* and Steiner's *heightening of consciousness* appear to be aligned to Wilber's notion on *trans-temporal* as distinct from *pre-temporal*.

### Gebser's *Time-Freedom through Intensification of Consciousness*

When Gebser (1949/1985) characterized his integral notion of *atemporality*—as distinct from *pre-temporality*—he noted several significant features. He foregrounded the notion of *time-freedom*, and identified the following three characteristics as being expressions of it.

- *Intensification* of consciousness. “Time-freedom is the *conscious* form of archaic, original pre-temporality” (p. 356);
- *Concretion* of the three previous time-mutations. “By granting to magic timelessness, mythical temporicity, and mental-conceptual temporality their integral efficiency, and by living them in accord with the strength of their degree of consciousness, we are able to bring about this realization. . . . The conscious quintessence of all previous temporal forms” (p. 356);
- The *fourth* dimension. “Time-freedom is the fourth dimension because it constitutes and unlocks the four-dimensionality . . . Its conscious form . . . is an *integrative dimension*, or, more exactly, it is the *amension* and not just an expanding or destructive spatial dimension. . . . a-categorical . . . a-waring” and transparent” (p. 356).

When Gebser speaks of what needs to be concretized in his concretion of time, he is referring to the concretion—or simultaneous consciousness of—the magical, mythical and mental structures of consciousness. In their most condensed forms Gebser (1949/1985) refers to them as “our vitality, psychicity, and mentality” (p. 300).

<sup>20</sup> Incidentally Gebser makes a clear distinction *between* these two terms using *pre-temporal* for archaic and *atemporal* for integral *time concretion*.

### **Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom through Heightening of Consciousness***

Steiner identified several factors related to the emergent consciousness, linking it to the development of human freedom and integration of several faculties. Although Steiner (1914/1973c) does not use the term *time-free*, he appears to use the terms *sense-free* or *body-free* consciousness in a similar sense, linking it to notions of heightened consciousness. The following three points bear resemblance to Gebser's notions.

- *Sense-free* consciousness. "Must not be confused with those enhanced mental conditions that are not acquired by means of characterized exercises but result from states of lower consciousness, such as unclear clairvoyance, hypnotism, etc. . . . This inner work consists in a heightening, not a lowering of the ordinary consciousness" (p. 466-467).
- *Heightening of consciousness*. He links this heightened consciousness with being *beyond* notions of temporality or even eternity.
- *Condensation of feelings*. Thirdly, he referred to a process of *condensation of feelings*, similar to Gebser's *concretion of time*.

Expanding on the latter point Steiner (1914/1973c) commented,

Through continued practice of the soul, that is, by holding the attention on the inner activity of thinking, feeling and willing, it is possible for these "experiences" to become "condensed." In this state of "condensation" they reveal their inner nature, which cannot be perceived in the ordinary consciousness. (p. 453)

From my hermeneutic study of their works, I interpret that Gebser's (1949/1985) text referring to concretion of "our vitality, psychicity, and mentality" (p. 300), echoes Steiner's notion of "condensation of thinking, feeling and willing." I propose that Gebser's *mentality* (mental mode) relates to Steiner's *thinking* (intellectual soul), Gebser's *psychicity* (mythical) relates to Steiner's *feeling* (sentient soul), and Gebser's *vitality* (magic) relates to Steiner's *willing* (also related to magic, nature forces). Thus there is a close alignment between some of their key concepts.

## **Gebser's Concretion, Wilber's Paradox, and Steiner's Progressive Recapitulation**

### **Gebser's Concretion of Time**

Gebser focused powerfully in so many ways on his notion of concretion of time. Although it is arrived at through a linear process, in itself, it has a cyclical character. I have tried to clarify it through presenting his work from a variety of angles as it behoves us to come to terms with a notion he has tried so hard to communicate.

### **Wilber's Paradox**

The underlying paradox of Wilber's temporics is related to the unclear relationship between 1) his vertical multi-stepped transcendent model, where full unity with the Divine awaits the

ascent through all the stages; and 2) the actual polar swing between his vertical model and his Timeless-Spirit model, where he (2000a) refers to “that which is actually your own Original face” (p. 141). Perhaps more research could ascertain whether there is a rationale for the different contexts in which one or other model is used. Overall, his work seems to weigh more heavily towards vertical, linearity.

### **Steiner’s Progressive Recapitulation**

In addition to his apparently linear perspectives of time in relation to memory and history, Steiner (1914/1973c) also spoke in other contexts about the dialectical relationship between *temporality*, and notions of *infinity*, *eternity* or *duration*. He also emphasizes the meta-cyclical and recapitulative aspect.

In summary, all three approaches involve varying degrees of complexity in relation to time, including aspects of both linear progress and cyclical return. However, Gebser consciously problematizes issues of progress, slightly favoring the cyclical return model with its emphasis on origin and spiritual immanence; Wilber aspires to a non-dual approach but appears to tacitly favor the linear model with its emphasis on spiritual ascent and transcendence; Steiner’s approach appears to comprehensively integrate both metacyclical recapitulation and progression suggesting its complex, progressive, recursive nature.

### **Conclusion**

This extended temporal analysis has demonstrated that the default, modernist, linear time perspective can be historically contextualized as emerging in ancient Greece in the first millennium BCE, in parallel with the awakening of the intellectual-mental-rational consciousness structure, most notably identified with the origins of western philosophy. Gebser proposed that this default notion of linear time—as well as all previous time senses—could be integrated in the integral-aperspectival consciousness. This integral-atemporal view transcends and includes the three earlier time perspectives: magical timelessness, mythical cyclicity, and mental linearity.<sup>21</sup> His view is supported by Steiner’s and Wilber’s evolutionary views on time, though in their own distinct ways. It is in this complex, integral view of time that my evolution of consciousness narrative is situated.

There are many theoretical implications arising from these perspectives that could make a substantial contribution to the current state of theorizing about time. However, such extensive research is beyond the scope of this appendix.

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<sup>21</sup> Since there is no time sense in the Archaic it cannot be included.

## Appendix B: Cosmic Kinship: A Micro-Macro View of Space

### Introduction—Interrogating the Space of *Space*

Our planet requires polycentric thought that can aim at a universalism that is not abstract but conscious of the unity/diversity of the human condition; a polycentric thought nourished by the cultures of the world. (Morin, 2001a, p. 52)

As far as we know, or can determine at this point in our global knowledge capabilities, the earth is the *only-born child* of her kind in the cosmos. In spite of our common biological ancestry with other mammals,<sup>1</sup> we humans appear to be the most biologically suitable species to play an active role in earth's nurturing care. Yet the imbalance that has arisen from the over-extension of the egoistic aspects of mental-rational consciousness has led to the polar opposite of care for our only planetary home. The imminent possibility of a major planetary catastrophe, and a climate increasingly inhospitable for human habitation—already correlated with mass extinction of species—demands an urgent reframing of human relationships with nature and the cosmos. The insights that have arisen from the narratives of Steiner, Gebser and Wilber may throw new light on concepts of cosmos and space—aligned as they are to Morin's notion of *polycentric* thought. Gebser (1949/1985) claimed that as the mental-rational mode of thinking took hold, particularly in Europe, it facilitated a new spatial awareness that gradually turned into an overemphasis on space and spatiality that increased with every century since 1500 (p. 22). This led to the victories and horrors of the *Age of Discovery*—which as Edgar Morin indicates was the beginning of the *Planetary Age*. In the last few decades—once the geographic exploration of the earth was exhausted—this developed into a new obsession with scientific explorations in *outer* space.

My interest in this brief appendix is to interrogate some of the taken-for-granted assumptions of modernist notions of *space*. Such an interrogation is already underway in several contemporary discourses, such as postmodern philosophy (Benko & Strohmayer, 1997; Foucault, 1986); feminist geography (Aiken, Brigham, Marston, & Waterhouse, 1988; Ainley & Ainley, 1998); queer theory (Brown, 2000; Cruz-Malave & Manalansan, 2002); postcolonial perspectives of cultural theory (Cruz-Malave & Manalansan, 2002; Mathani, 2001); and emergent integral explorations of *liminal conceptual space* (Hampson, 2007). These reformulations of *space* focus primarily on the opening up of cultural and social space, and thus also conceptual/noospheric space. I am particularly interested in pointing to how the modernist worldview based on scientific materialism has colonized the noosphere<sup>2</sup> with respect to our concepts of *planetary* space and *outer* space—by way of its *physicalist* metaphors drawn from classical physics.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that our brains are second only in complexity to dolphins (Russell, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> The *noosphere* is “the envelope of thinking substance” and is more fully discussed in the main paper (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959/2004, p. 151).

<sup>3</sup> This is not to underestimate the value of classical physics nor to suggest that developments in the science of cosmology throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century—such as *the anthropic principle* (Barrow & Tipler, 1986) and the *metaverse theory* (Davies, 2007; László, 2007)—do not contribute to postformal conceptual

I propose that a new look at relevant concepts from a postformal, integral-planetary lens could re-introduce other notions such as *inner* space to complement *outer* space, *cosmosophy* to complement *cosmology*, *soul/spiritual* space to complement *physical* space, and *planetization* to complement *globalization*. These *other* components of space have become marginalized by the one-sided emphasis of scientism. I have drawn quite strongly here on the pioneering spiritual evolutionary theories of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959/2002, 1959/2004) and the ecological philosophy of Edgar Morin (Morin, 2001a, 2005a; Morin & Kern, 1999). They have both contributed enormously to a spiritual reconfiguration of humanity's place—and responsibility—in nature and cosmos. Additional literature is incorporated where relevant. This appendix is a work in progress. It is not conclusive, but rather points to some new areas for integral research and to some additional resources that also point to a renewal of spatial metaphors.

### **The Hermetic Science of Unitive Space—*As Above so Below***

That which is Below corresponds to that which is Above, and that which is Above, corresponds to that which is Below, to accomplish the miracles of the One Thing.<sup>4</sup>

Up to and including the mythic structure of consciousness, according to Gebser (1949/1985), humans lived within an undifferentiated sense of space, “as a simple inherence within the security of the maternal womb” (p. 10). Oases appeared and disappeared; river valleys flooded and baked; and rambling farming settlements began to evolve into cities, along the Nile, Tigris-Euphrates, Indus and Huang He valleys. In the civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, with their clear desert skies, and their pictorial imaginations, the people felt a special relationship with the sparkling stars in the celestial dome overhead. The Egyptian astronomer-priests directed the placement of buildings according to astronomical orientations, while the pyramidal buildings of these times reached up to the sky. The Hermetic<sup>5</sup> sciences were profoundly unitive sciences based on a perceived intimate relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm. Yet this ancient wisdom was held within a mythic consciousness.

The Hermetic notion of the sacredness of the relationship between human, earth and cosmos—including the mathematico-geometric proportions therein—continued to inspire human aspirations for thousands of years. It is most notably articulated in sacred geometry (Lawlor, 1982) as expressed in temple, mosque and cathedral architecture, which seeks to mediate the rift between the human on earth and the divinity of the cosmos. This Hermetic integration of science,

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emergence. Rather, I am suggesting that the potentially highly significant implications of the latter have not been fully explored philosophically.

<sup>4</sup> These words were translated by Sir Isaac Newton from the *Emerald Tablet*—a Hermetic text attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, the legendary founder of the Hermetic tradition (Dobbs, 1988). See also the Sussex University *Newton Project* <http://www.newtonproject.sussex.ac.uk/prism.php?id=1>.

<sup>5</sup> According to legendary oral records, Hermes Trismegistus, an ancient Egyptian spiritual leader, originated the Hermetic sciences. Johannes Kepler linked his Hermetic writings with the ancient Egyptians in recently translated writings on the *musica mundana*—or *harmony of the spheres*—available for the first time in English via the Schiller Institute in Washington, DC (Kepler, 1619/1997). More information about the *Kepler Project* of the Schiller Institute is available. <http://www.wlym.com/~animations/harmonies/index.php>

art and spirit continued to inspire leading-edge scientific thinkers such as Kepler<sup>6</sup> and Sir Isaac Newton<sup>7</sup> during the transition to modern science—and this realization is leading to some dramatically new ideas on their *other* marginalized writings (Watson, 2005). Gradually the mental-rational consciousness became more established in Europe through the Copernican revolution in cosmology; Cartesian dualism in thinking; the Kantian barrier between our interpretive thoughts and the *thing in itself* (Tarnas, 1991); and a materialistic form of scientific empiricism.<sup>8</sup> Synchronously, the Hermetic-scientific sense of an ensouled cosmos—or *anima mundi*—slipped slowly out of sight.

## The Materialistic Rationalization and Colonization of Space

### Emergence of *Planetary Space*—in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century

In 1492, these small, young nations [Spain, Portugal, Britain] set out to conquer the globe, and their adventures of war and death brought the five continents into communication and opened the planetary era, for better or for worse. (Morin, 2001a, p. 53)

The mythic sense of interwovenness between earth and cosmos—and between *inner* soul space and *external* physical space—continued in Europe until the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This is difficult for us to imagine today with our taken-for-granted understanding of the physical territory of the earth—gained through the discipline of geography; and our exponentially expanding notions of the extent of the cosmological universe—as taught to us by the sciences of astronomy and physical cosmology. Gebser points to the exact moment in global history—in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century—when someone saw, for the first time, the physical landscape of the earth, from an objective mental perspective, rather than a dream-like inner-soul response. In the same way that medieval humans were afraid to sail too far out from shore so as not to fall off the *flat earth*, humans were also, collectively—according to Gebser—afraid to climb mountains, which we believed were the homes of the Gods. In 1336, Petrarch climbed Mount Ventoux, near Avignon in the French Alps, breaking a cultural taboo, and reaching into the wonder of the new world of the explorers. For Gebser (1949/1985) this represented a fundamental shift into spatial awareness, not just for Petrarch but also for humanity.

For his time, his description is an epochal event and signifies no less than the discovery of landscape: the first dawning of an awareness of space that resulted in a fundamental alteration of European . . . attitude in and toward the world. (p. 12)

Gebser emphasized his point by quoting the final words of Petrarch's *letter of confession* about his discoveries. Petrarch stated: "So much perspiration and effort just to bring the body a

<sup>6</sup> Arguably the origins of western science were based on Hermetic science until the 17<sup>th</sup> century CE (Kepler, 1619/1997).

<sup>7</sup> The *Newton Project* is uncovering, translating and publishing online Newton's previously unknown theological and alchemical writings. <http://www.newtonproject.sussex.ac.uk/prism.php?id=1>

<sup>8</sup> Alternatives to *materialistic* forms of scientific empiricism have been offered along the way through Goethe's *delicate empiricism* (Holdrege, 2005; Robbins, 2006); James' *cosmological realism* (Gitre, 2006); and Whitehead's process metaphysics (Gare, 1999), yet they have not gained substantial noospheric traction.

little closer to heaven; the soul, when approaching God, must be similarly terrified” (p. 14). This reflects the spiritual reverence that was embedded in this discovery that marked a turning point in European consciousness about the land. Less than a century later, throughout the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Portuguese and Spanish explorers set sail to find new lands, marking the beginnings of the physical expression of what Morin refers to as the planetary era. Morin’s view is coherent with Steiner’s and Gebser’s claims that the new consciousness began to emerge in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This new *Age of Discovery* laid the first physical foundations for what we now see arising in the noosphere as postformal-integral-planetary consciousness.

### **Socio-cultural Space—Colonization > Globalization > Planetization**

Human history began with a planetary diaspora across all the continents and in modern times entered the planetary era of communication between fragments of the human diaspora. (Morin, 2001a, p. 53)

*Colonization*<sup>9</sup> first arose on a grand, planetary, and destructive, scale from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of the European expansion into the *new world*. Indigenous cultures around the planet have been—and are still being—devastated, particularly in the three Americas (north, central and south), Australia, China and many parts of South-east Asia. Colonization—and its associated ideology—colonialism, resulted in “irremediable catastrophic cultural destruction and terrible enslavement” (Morin, 2001a, p. 53). A UNESCO research project on this issue currently describes the situation as follows.

The cultures of indigenous peoples are in danger of dying out . . . These populations number some 350 million individuals in more than 70 countries in the world and represent more than 5000 languages and cultures. Today many of them live on the fringes of society and are deprived of basic human rights, particularly cultural rights.<sup>10</sup>

*Globalization* is arguably a complex politico-economic and socio-cultural phenomenon, yet its primary expression is through a politico-economic movement of large multinational corporations purportedly contributing to a *trickle-down effect* in global wealth distribution while competing for market share (Deardorff, 2002). There is a secondary transmission of cultural values, which is highly contested. From the perspective of many postcolonial scholars it is a *weapon of mass destruction* of cultural identity and diversity—and has been referred to as the *McDonaldization of the world* (Alfino, Caputo, & Wynyard, 1998; Gidley, 2001d; M. Jain & S. Jain, 2003). Furthermore, the enthusiasm and idealism that pervaded the early geographical

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<sup>9</sup> The original Proto-Indo-European (PIE) base root was *\*kwel-* "move around" and this has occurred since the beginning of human habitation of the earth. Even the Latin root *colere* "to inhabit, cultivate, frequent, practice, tend, guard, respect," has a relatively harmless ring to it. Yet, the form of colonization that occurred from the beginning of the mental-egoic period and intensified in the 15<sup>th</sup> century had the new character of ego-dominance with its attendant *lack* of respect.

<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=colony&searchmode=none>

Its destructive impact has been deepened through its association with the ideology of colonialism, which claims “some nations, languages and cultures are superior to others, thereby giving them the right to colonize the territory of ‘inferior’ nations.” <http://www.penllyn.com/cymuned/papurau/colonization.html>

<sup>10</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/admin/ev.php?URL\\_ID=2946&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/admin/ev.php?URL_ID=2946&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201)

exploration of the earth's surface, seems to have deteriorated over centuries to a stale, disenchanted attitude to the as-yet-untamed parts of the earth. Not only are the remaining forests and oceans considered to be simply material resources for the wealthy and powerful to use and abuse, but the endangered and disappearing cultures are, at worst, a cheap resource to exploit in the name of *economic progress* or, at best, a *cultural artifact* to exploit for tourism purposes (Hunter, 2006).

By contrast, *planetization*, as conceived by Teilhard de Chardin—and others inspired by his work—may provide a counterbalance to the hegemonic excesses of globalization. The notion of planetization<sup>11</sup> involves not domination but awareness and respect for the richness of cultural diversity. Teilhard de Chardin (1959/2002) refers to planetization as a *mega-synthesis* through which “the outcome of the world, the gates of the future . . . will only open to an advance of *all together*, in a direction in which *all together* can join and find completion in a spiritual renovation of the earth” (pp. 243-245). He emphasized that this cannot be achieved merely by the pressure of *external* forces—such as totalizing governments—but needs to unfold from within human hearts “directly, centre to centre, through *internal* attraction . . . through *unanimity* in a common spirit” (p. 112). He identified several postformal features in the planetization process—increasing *complexity*; the *reflexion* of the Noosphere upon itself; the closing of the *spherical, thinking circuit*; and the *rebounding* of evolution upon itself—a type of complex recursion.

### **Cosmic Space—*Tellurianization*<sup>12</sup> of the *Kosmos* in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

The overemphasis on space and spatiality that increases with every century since 1500 is at once the greatness as well as the weakness of perspectival man. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 22)

After five centuries of exploration and colonization of the planet, the ego-drive to conquer space eventually led to such advanced technology that we began to extend our reach, beyond our home planet into *outer space*. Interestingly, the early space explorations were attended by a similar sense of reverence for the divine, to that felt by Petrarch, over 600 years earlier. Edgar Mitchell one of the astronauts on Apollo 14—the third mission to land on the moon—had the following experience on his voyage home. The following text is an extract from *The Noetic Sciences Institute* website.

Sitting in the cramped cabin of the space capsule, he saw planet Earth floating freely in the vastness of space. He was engulfed by a profound sense of universal connectedness—an epiphany. In Mitchell's own words: "The presence of divinity became almost palpable, and

<sup>11</sup> The distinction I am making between *globalization* and *planetization* is further discussed in the main narrative.

<sup>12</sup> From Latin: *tellus* meaning *earth*. The adjective *tellurian*, means, “Of or relating to or inhabiting the land as opposed to the sea or air.” I have created a composite noun from tellurian. <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definition/tellurian>

I knew that life in the universe was not just an accident based on random processes. . . .  
The knowledge came to me directly."<sup>13</sup>

It seems that each new development has begun with reverence and humility, but later is taken over by greed for ego-accomplishment. As part of this colonization of outer space, we have imposed materialistic-earthly-metaphors from classical physics on the cosmos—which previously was regarded as the source of the Divine. While quantum physics has shaken the foundations of scientific theories at the micro level, the full implications of it for theories at the macro level are yet to be adequately explored. Perhaps we could ask ourselves: Is it really appropriate to be spending such massive resources on trying to ascertain whether there is life on Mars, at the very time in planetary history when the human species is at the tipping point of destroying life on Earth? A critical approach to economic theory including global wealth distribution is also required (Eisler, 2007). It is imperative in our current planetary crisis, that we de-familiarize this privileging of *outer* space, particularly when it is so out of balance with our sense of *inner* space (Kelly, 2007). This obsession with conquering and colonizing outer space is an eloquent expression of an overextension of the ego-mental faculties. For the duration of two millennia these thinking powers have tamed and transformed the earth through architecture, road, sea and air infrastructure, and technology. Arguably, these processes of development can be justified as long as they are sustainable, but this is no longer the case. The work of conquering and colonizing the planet is over. The work of caring and nurturing must begin in earnest.

### Cosmic Kinship—An Ecology<sup>14</sup> of Evolving Concepts

One way to increase our awareness of our fragile planetary situation might be to foreground the prefix *cosmo*. The following is a deconstruction and reconstruction of some common—and not so common—terms that infer our planetary status as one of kinship with the cosmos. There is an interesting family of terms—including *cosmology*, *cosmogony*, *cosmosophy* and *cosmography*—that deal with knowledge about the cosmos, its origins and the place of humans in it. The term *cosmos* itself originated from the Greek *κόσμος* meaning "cosmos, the world," or in some translations, "a sense of *order*, in contrast to *chaos*." By a focus on the prefix *cosmo-*, I intend to build stronger conceptual links between our largely anthropocentric, *tellurian* notions of space on the one hand and authentically *cosmic* notions of space on the other. I am endeavoring to pick up leading-edge developments in the evolution of language as it is happening in the world at the present time through a kind of noospheric environmental scanning—or remote sensing.

#### Cosmos

The term *cosmos* itself has begun to appear in various discourses, with broader meanings than that used in cosmology discourses from the physical sciences. Three new journals have appeared

<sup>13</sup> Edgar Mitchell, based on the inspiration described here, founded the Noetic Sciences Institute, in California, one of the first educational institutions in the USA for nurturing integral-planetary consciousness. <http://www.noetic.org/about/history.cfm>

<sup>14</sup> Notwithstanding the illustrious uses of the term *ecology*, not the least by Gregory Bateson (2000) in his *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, I first came across the phrase "ecology of concepts" in conversations with Gary Hampson, who illuminated and inspired my thinking on this idea.

that link the term cosmos or Kosmos with broader issues: *Cosmos and History: the Journal of Natural and Social History*; *Culture and Cosmos: A Journal for the History of Astrology and Cultural Astronomy*; *Kosmos: An Integral Approach to Global Awakening*. It is worth noting that Wilber uses the term *Kosmos* to distinguish his more integral, spiritual notion from purely physical cosmological notions. He has written a trilogy called *The Kosmos Trilogy*—the first of which is published in book form (Wilber, 2000d); Tarnas (2006) has recently published *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View*.

## Cosmology

Probably the best-known term in this cosmo-family is *cosmology*: the study of the structure and changes in the *present* universe.<sup>15</sup> Although this may take the form of mythical, religious or philosophical cosmologies, the *default* usage today would most likely refer to cosmology as a branch of astrophysics. The shift from the unitive hermetic sciences—with their ensouled notions of the cosmos as *anima mundi*—to the starkly materialistic cosmology of 20<sup>th</sup> century science, was marked by centuries of overlap. As hinted earlier, the founders of modern physical cosmology, Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), Galileo Galilei (1564-1624), Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), Isaac Newton (1643-1727), were all hermetic scientists, who studied the psycho-spiritual-sciences of alchemy and astrology<sup>16</sup> as well as physics. A question that could be posed here is how and why did the more spiritually-oriented hermetic side of cosmology and astronomy become buried under the weight of materialism for two to three centuries?

## Cosmogony ⇔ Cosmogenesis: From Big Bang to *In*-formed Meta-verse

Perhaps a lesser-known term than cosmology is *cosmogony*. According to NASA the scientific field of cosmogony is distinct from cosmology in that cosmogony is more concerned with the *origin* of the universe.<sup>17</sup> In a similar way to cosmology, there are other theories of cosmogony that are not based on scientific materialism. Questions of the origin of the universe, the earth, life and humanity have, as far as we know, been asked by humans for millennia. Some of these theories of origin are based on spiritual philosophies, as will be discussed below. Perhaps a conceptual bridge could be made here via the transformation of scientific thinking that has occurred as an outcome of the new biological theories arising from chaos and complexity science, and notions of self-organization and emergence. Building on these perspectives, integral cosmologist Brian Swimme (1992, 1999) refers to the emerging shift to complex, morphogenetic and cosmogenetic notions arising from postformal biological models of complex adaptive systems. Swimme builds on Teilhard de Chardin's use of the term cosmogenesis to describe the cosmological process of the creation of the Universe. Teilhard de Chardin (1959/2004) viewed

<sup>15</sup> For consistency, I am using the definitions for both cosmology and cosmogony from the NASA website. In some notes for teachers the following comment is made. "Observations about the present universe may not only allow predictions to be made about the future, but they also provide clues to events that happened long ago when the chemical evolution of the cosmos began. So—the work of cosmologists and cosmogonists overlaps.

<http://genesismission.jpl.nasa.gov/educate/scimodule/Cosmogony/CosmogonyPDF/CosCosmolTT.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Even in Kepler's time, there was no clear distinction between astronomy and astrology (Banville, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> See also earlier note on *cosmology*.

his notion of cosmogenesis as a foundation for the later processes that he called *biogenesis*, and *noogenesis*.

A cosmogenesis embracing and expanding the laws of our individual ontogenesis on a universal scale, in the form of Noogenesis: a world that is *being born* instead of a world that *is*. (pp. 80-81)

As indicated in the main narrative, diverse theories of evolution hotly contest the degree to which humans with their mental faculties have evolved through random selection, complex adaptation, or *autopoiesis*.<sup>18</sup> Although the new science of emergentism is beginning to discuss the emergence of complex, moral and spiritual dimensions in human nature, this theory is still based on the metaphysical assumption of the primacy of matter, whereby any emergent dimensions are completely *new* appearances.

Steiner, Gebser and Wilber all make significant contributions to this conversation. Although their views diverge somewhat all three share the heterodox idea that prior to matter and the subsequent evolution of matter, there was a spiritual *origin*. In all their views, it could be stated that ontogeny recapitulates not only phylogeny but also cosmogony (Grossinger, 2000, p. 705)

The notion that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny<sup>19</sup> was developed by biologist Ernst Haeckel in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Anthropologist, Grossinger (2000) takes the view that Haeckel was actually dealing in “information theory<sup>20</sup> and deep structure,” (p. 330) but because he preceded structuralism, he clothed his theories in natural science. Such a cybernetic version of recapitulation could be seen to foreshadow the recent scientific notion that a complex invisible dimension is infolded within the material world. Bohm’s *implicate order*, Rupert Sheldrake’s *morphic field* and, more recently, Laszlo’s *Akashic Field*, require further investigation in this regard (Bohm, 1980; László, 2006; Sheldrake, 2006). These theories of an *in-formed* universe, also underpin current meta-verse theories. Laszlo (2007, p. 38-42), citing several metaverse theorists, and Davies, propose that our universe was birthed from a Metaverse—the mother of all universes. Davies (2007) refers to “a family of universes multiplying ad infinitum, each giving birth to new generations of universes . . . With such cosmic fecundity, the assemblages of universes—or metaverse . . . might have no beginning or end” (p. 138).

This endless cyclical aspect of the cosmos is also proposed by cosmologists Paul Steinhardt and Neil Turok (2002) who claim “. . . the universe undergoes an endless sequence of cosmic epochs” (László, 2007, p. 42). It seems that these postformal science theories are bringing us back, full circle, to the cyclical notions of mythological cosmologies. I suggest that there are also parallels between Laszlo’s and Davies’ theories of a Meta-or Mother-universe—incorporating Laszlo’s in-formation rich Akashic field—and Steiner’s, Gebser’s and Wilber’s notions of

<sup>18</sup> *Autopoiesis* refers to self-organization in a complex adaptive system (Maturana & Varela, 1991).

<sup>19</sup> For an analysis of the state of play in late 20<sup>th</sup> century biology theory, see Stephen Jay Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny* (Gould, 1985).

<sup>20</sup> For Grossinger (2000), Haeckel’s ontology was cybernetic and syntactic rather than mechanical. He claims that it was this tacit *symbolological* thread of Haeckel’s biogenetic ideas that echo in the ideas of Steiner, Freud and Piaget who drew on the developmental metaphor of recapitulation for their cultural, pedagogical and psychological theories (p. 330).

spiritual *involution*<sup>21</sup> prior to the biological *evolution* of matter (Davies, 2007; Gebser, 1970/2005; László, 2007; Steiner, 1971c; Wilber, 2001b). Such a proposition may point to some fruitful potential for future research.<sup>22</sup>

## Cosmosophy

Perhaps even less familiar is the word *cosmosophy*, which derives from the Greek combination-*cosmos* and *sofia*, meaning the *wisdom of the cosmos*, with the understanding that the Greek sense of Wisdom was intimately connected to Love. Cosmosophy may also refer to the place of the human being in the cosmos. The notion of cosmosophy, possibly a Hegelian concept, having in modern times passed through Steiner (1921/1985), appears to be undergoing a revival of interest—most notably through Morin—as integral thinkers struggle to find new ways of expressing postformal ideas. For Steiner, cosmosophy was an evolution of cosmology through an inner development that infuses Wisdom with Love.<sup>23</sup> This echoes Morin’s *Cosmosophic* perspective, as summarized by Santa de Siena (2005) as “love for the cosmos” (p. 435). “In interrogating the notion of eco, Morin opens the *Oikos*, the *common home* of the *living*, a *cosmophilosophy*, a *planetary* perspective implying the idea of *munus*, of *reciprocity* toward all those who give *us* life” (p. 437). While *physical* cosmology is knowledge of the external physical cosmos discovered through the observing intellect, in Steiner’s poetic interpretation, cosmosophy would be knowledge of the cosmos, “which blossoms like a flower in the depths of the individual soul.”

The science which arises from this cannot be measured by its power of abstract reasoning but by its power to bring souls to flower and fruition. That is the difference between ‘Logia’ and ‘Sophia,’ between science and divine Wisdom. (Steiner, 1978a)

Contemporary researchers who have begun to recognize the appropriateness and depth of this notion include Come Carpentier de Gourdon (2002), who sees cosmosophy as a way of reconciling scientific knowledge and spiritual culture, and John Toomey (2007), who defines cosmosophy as the confluence between cosmology—as the study of the universe; and philosophy—as the love of wisdom.

## Cosmography

Like many of the other terms discussed above *cosmography* also has a *default* scientific meaning. The term is used for “the science that maps the general features of the universe;

<sup>21</sup> Sri Aurobindo has also written extensively on the notion of spiritual involution as being intimately interconnected with evolution (Aurobindo, 1909, 2000). Further research in preparation (Gidley, 2007c).

<sup>22</sup> On a somewhat lighter note, it appears that the notion of *cosmogenesis* is beginning to move into wider spheres of culture. A leading postmodern landscape architect is proposing a move towards architecture informed by complexity science and reflecting cosmogenetic principles (Jencks, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> Steiner referred to a three-stage development in this regard. “The progress of humanity is from unconscious [mythic] spirituality, through intellectualism (the present age), to *conscious* spirituality, where the [emotional] and intellectual faculties unite once more and become dynamic through the power of the Spirit of Love, divine and human” (Steiner, 1978a, Lecture I).

describes both heaven and earth (but without encroaching on geography or astronomy).<sup>24</sup> Clearly, when one begins to speak about *heaven* as well as *earth*, the notion of cosmography can appropriately be broadened beyond science. It is intriguing that we have a well-known term, *geography*—usage of 1,481 per 100 million words<sup>25</sup>—for the mapping or description of the earth<sup>26</sup> yet the counterpart term, *cosmography*, for mapping or writing about the cosmos, is far less used—usage of 3 per 100 million words. Using the etymological root *graphia* "description," from *graphein* "write," the term *cosmography* could be used to refer to how we describe, or write about, the cosmos. This *narrative* sense of *cosmography* is beginning to reflect postformal thinking.

Buckminster Fuller made some inroads into a postformal approach to cosmography with his notion of *cosmic conceptioning* (Fuller, 1992). Recently, social scientists Lesley Kuhn and Robert Woog, have developed the notion of *complexity cosmography*. They draw on concepts from complexity theory—such as self-organization, dynamism, and emergence—to develop narratives appropriate for social inquiry (Kuhn & Woog, 2007). Their complexity cosmographies utilize narratives that are generated through what they call *coherent conversations*—that is conversations that include postformal characteristics such as self-reflexivity, intuition and construct awareness. Kuhn and Woog (2007) are undertaking pioneering postformal research, by taking several key concepts from complexity science—originally formulated as mathematical concepts—and reshaping them in prose, as a basis for social inquiry, e.g., fractal dimensions become *fractal narratives* (p. 177); mathematical *phase space* becomes *phrase space* as a literary device related to construct awareness in narrative and discourse (p. 181). Although they are not using their complexity cosmography to write about the cosmos as such, they are opening up new possibilities for human narratives—fractal, non-linear, recursive—that could provide a template for cohering our complex relationships as humans with the cosmos. Another relevant contribution to a re-enlivening of cosmic conceptioning—to use Fuller's term—is the notion of the *narrative universe*. Although Swimme (1999) and Bocchi and Ceruti (2002) do not use the term *cosmography*, they are indeed writing new postformal cosmographies.

### Cosmopolitanism

A postformal-integral-planetary consciousness, as developed in this research, emerges through a re-awakening of the roots of its own being in the archaic, magic, mythic and mental structures of consciousness. Instead of being stuck in the ego-mental space of individualism, territorialism and nationalism, we may begin to appreciate a broader planetary space. If we wish to understand more about our marginalized spirituality, vitality and imagination, we need to step beyond our ego-bound intellectual-mentality and glance at the spirituality, vitality and imagination among the disappearing cultures whom our hegemonic mentality has marginalized. There are indigenous and traditional people on every continent who may know more than

<sup>24</sup> Cosmography definition can be found at, <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definition/COSMOGRAPHY>

<sup>25</sup> Word usages are found in the Webster's online dictionary. <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definition/COSMOGRAPHY>

<sup>26</sup> Geography from Gk. *geographia* "description of the earth's surface," from *ge* "earth" + *-graphia* "description," from *graphein* "write." <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=geography&searchmode=none>

modernist western science can imagine, about these other structures of consciousness. This is not a regressive romantic plea or some re-vamped version of the 19<sup>th</sup> century *noble savage*. It is a conscious integral philosophic stance towards a new cosmopolitanism—an honoring of all cultural treasures. All people need to go through all structures, including ego-mental, to be able to reach a fully integral-aperspectival awaring. However, the emphasis has been too strongly on culturally *progressing* and *transcending*—particularly through techno-economic rather than humanitarian values—with insufficient consideration of cultural *pluralism*, *preservation* and *inclusion*.

Such a postformal, integral-planetary consciousness is evident in philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah's recent book *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (Appiah, 2006). Appiah appears to successfully steer a course that critiques both the imperializing influence of extreme *liberal universalism* and also the vagaries of *cultural relativism*. His notion of *universality plus difference* echos the ideals of this narrative, and others (Morin & Kern, 1999; Poletti, 2005).

### **A Neo-Hermetic Renaissance—Reintegrating Micro-Macrocosms**

This evolutionary journey of interrogating spatial concepts has pointed to the loss of the perceived unitive connection between the microcosm and the macrocosm, through centuries of scientific materialism. Yet this was a necessary part of the clear formulation of rational notions of the physical components of the universe. However, as a marker of the emergence of postformal, integral movement/s of consciousness, there is a renaissance of interest in the hermetic sciences within the academy. As discussed earlier, both the Newton Project and the Kepler Project are uncovering and researching the extensive theological and alchemical writings of these scientists.<sup>27</sup> In addition, researchers are uncovering and revisiting some of Darwin's original—yet marginalized writings on love and morality (Loye, 1998, 2004; Richards, 1992, 2002). These developments suggest a reintegration of modern and Hermetic sciences—of microcosm and macrocosm—from a postformal noospheric space of fully awake consciousness. These moves are all indicative of Gebser's *concretion of time*, Steiner's *progressive recapitulation*, and Wilber's *vision-logic*, which are to be expected today and have been detailed more fully in Appendix 1. It is illustrative of integral-planetary consciousness breaking through.

### **Indicators of Postformal-Integral-Planetary Re-Conceptualizations of Space**

Post-modernity can be understood as the loss of terrestrial centrality, of the *dominating uniqueness* of one species, the peripherization and opening to the *living*, the knowing consciousness of *biodiversity*—the beginning of a humanity that gives the Cosmos back to the Cosmos. (De Siena, 2005, p. 426)

A scan of developments in emergent language usage points to significant breakthroughs in the re-conceptualization of space. I have chosen a small number of spatially-oriented terms from the literature that are suggestive of a postformal-integral-planetary consciousness.

<sup>27</sup> An additional project is being undertaken on Newton's alchemical writings at the Indiana University in collaboration with the US National Science Foundation <http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/newton/index.jsp>.

### *Trans*

The prefix *trans-* is a postformal spatial metaphor at least in relation to noospheric space. It is being increasingly used in such contexts as trans-personal (Braud & Anderson, 1998; Ferrer, 2002; Walsh & Vaughan, 1993; Wilber, 1996b, 1996c), transform/transformativ/transformation (Earley, 1997; Ferrer, Romero, & Albareda, 2005; Gangadean, 2006b; Grof & Grof, 1989; Hart, 2001; Inayatullah & Gidley, 2000; Montuori, 1997; Schwartz, 1999; Sinnott, 2005; Starr & Torbert, 2005; Thompson, 2001), trans-disciplinary (Gidley, 2002a; Nicolescu, 2002; Volckmann, 2007), and trans-national (Boulding, 1990; Mato, 2000). While not in itself denoting a link to cosmic dimensions, it certainly denotes a mood of expansion. It suggests a movement away from metaphors of *the known* to metaphors of *the something more*—perhaps even transcendence (Bergo, 2005; Braxton, 2006; Cook-Greuter, 2000; Goodenough, 2001; Perl, 1999; Sonya, 1993) or renewed notions of the transcendental (Brun, 2005; Bryant, 2000; Robinson, 2007).

### *Ecology*

Ecology is also a term that is appearing in numerous contexts—ecology of mind, education, commerce, imagination and concepts. Ironically, the Greek term *oikos*<sup>28</sup> is the root of the two concepts: *economics* and *ecology*. While *economics* in its deficient form—i.e. an economic rationalism that is beholden to corporate greed—is contributing to the destruction of our planetary home, *ecology* is the science that is purportedly trying to save the planet. It carries an integral or holistic sensibility as it concerns the relationships between components within space—sometimes referred to as *connectionism* (Bache, 2000; Berman, 1981; Berry, 1988; Hicks, 1995; Jardine, 1998; Lovelock, 1979; Ornstein & Ehrlich, 1991; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1993).

### *Planetary*

As discussed in the main paper, the term planetary is also increasing in use in a range of discourses (Earley, 1997; Gangadean, 2006a; Montuori, 1999; Swimme & Tucker, 2006). It is almost becoming a household word. This appendix has endeavored to stretch the concept of planetary to include such meanings as planetary crisis, planetary cultures and planetary consciousness.

## **Noospheric Space—Cultivating Integral Noodiversity: A Personal Perspective**

The new planetary culture can be a shining example of unity-in-diversity, or *unitas multiplex*. It will be robustly diverse, intermixed to the core, and filled with awe at the rich lineages of our common past. (Ceruti & Pievani, 2005, Abstract)

<sup>28</sup> *Oikos* is from ancient Greek: οἶκος, plural: οἶκοι) meaning household, house or family. <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=ecology&searchmode=none>

[Morin's cosmosophy] is a *principle of inclusion* . . . to open to the *Oikos*, the life of life, the life of ideas, the existence of all species, in the multiplicity of social, cultural, and logical diversity and specificity, of the different emerging levels and orders of reality. (De Siena, 2005, p. 424)

Although there is an emergence of new integrative material from within both science and the humanities, there is still a predominance of researchers who do not refer to scholarly research from neighboring disciplines. This isolationism makes it difficult for integrative approaches—approaches that do not fit neatly into one discipline. There also appears to be a lack of attention overall in the Anglophone academic world—particularly in the USA—to substantial works that originated in another language, such as German (Steiner, Gebser, Benedikter), French (Derrida, Deleuze, Morin) and Italian (Bocchi, Ceruti, de Siena, Pievani). While some of this relates to translation issues, I propose that some of it is related to a lack of prioritization. In regard to the nurturing of integral noospheric diversity, I wish to draw attention to the notion of multilingualism as an emerging issue that needs to be included on any integral map.

Based on some preliminary field research<sup>29</sup> into the development of integral thought, globally, I have noted that there is an emergent proliferation of integral writings arising from the USA, and also a number of higher education centers developing integral studies. However, much of the literature is strongly American centric, drawing on a fairly local body of research with some of it bordering on ideological territorialism. An exception is the contribution of the California Institute of Integral Studies—particularly Alfonso Montuori and Sean Kelly for the translation and dissemination of Edgar Morin’s French writings (Montuori, 1999; Morin & Kern, 1999). By contrast, integral thought is less explicit and tangible in Europe—with the term *transdisciplinary* (Nicolescu, 2002; J. Visser, Barach, John, & Visser, 2007) apparently favored over *integral*. While clearly the roots of American integral theory have originated from European—and/or Indo-European—genealogies, European integral thinkers appear more concerned with negotiating relationships between *national identities* and an emergent sense of *European community*. This manifests as an emphasis on transnational and transdisciplinary research, with terms such as *integral* and *spiritual* being treated with some suspicion.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, although US integral theorists espouse global and planetary thinking, much of the content focus is quite American-centric. As an Australian, somewhat removed from both these large, powerful geographies, I endeavor to reach as broadly as possible across linguistic, national and ideological boundaries. I challenge all of us developing integral theory to push beyond our tacit barriers, to create an authentically integral, authentically planetary cosmography.

## Conclusion—How *Planetary* is Integral Consciousness?

We are children of the cosmos, but, because of our same humanity, our culture, our mind, our conscience, our soul, we have become strangers to this cosmos from which we were born and with which we must remain secretly intimate. (Morin, 2001b, p. 29, cited in De Siena, 2005, p. 424)

My interest has been to interrogate the concept of space as used in a variety of discourses. This has created a conceptual template from which to ascertain how *planetary* was each of the narratives—both espoused and actual. Steiner (1984c) identified on the one hand the totalizing

<sup>29</sup> I spent three months in the USA in 2005 scanning the various integral approaches operating there. I recently spent several weeks in Europe (2007) with a similar intent.

<sup>30</sup> The complex reasons for European academic reserve in relation to *spiritual* discourse are explored by philosopher Roland Benedikter (2005).

tendency of ideological intellectualism (p. 40), and on the other hand “the fragmentation of the human family caused by the ideology of nationalism” (p. 44). From these perspectives—as something of a proto-postmodernist—he spoke of the need to strive for “an understanding of multiplicity, of harmoniously working diversity” (p. 37). He seemed to be foreshadowing postmodern perspectives on planetary culture and consciousness and the importance of noospheric diversity. Although Wilber stresses the importance of global and planetary awareness—particularly as part of his concept of vision-logic—it is rather difficult to reconcile this with his lack of substantial engagement with non-Eastern spiritual traditions and 20<sup>th</sup> century continental philosophy, other than Foucault and Habermas. Gebser’s (1949/1985) phenomenological cultural surveys were broadly cosmopolitan. He also, like Steiner, foreshadowed the postmodern turn by poetically reconceptualizing the concept of *nations* as “dynamic efflorescences of a larger cultural context” (p. 291).

# Appendix C: Literacy Unveiled: Art as Language from a Palaeoaesthetic Perspective

## Introduction

More than a heroic history of conquest, according to Telmo Pievani, we may discover that our history is a “cloth made of very fine and multicoloured threads, like a weft of unexpected interdependencies, unknown relations, intertwined roots” (Pievani, 2002, p. 25, cited in De Siena, 2005, p. 410).

This appendix—like the others—is a work in progress. It provides pointers for further research arising from the main paper. It challenges the dominant evolution narrative, which claims that the evolution of consciousness is primarily a matter for classical evolutionary biology. It intimates that the domain of *art*—or *aesthetic sensibility*—may be a more fruitful starting point for the creation of a new *panhuman*<sup>1</sup> narrative for an authentically integral-planetary consciousness. The significance of *art*—rather than *tools*—as a basis for a new semiotically based taxonomy of cultural evolution, has recently been proposed by Robert Bednarik,<sup>2</sup> director of the *International Federation of Rock Art Organizations* (IFRAO) (Bednarik, 2003c). In such a taxonomy, the term *Palaeolithic* could be replaced by the term *Palaeoaesthetic*.<sup>3</sup>

The hermetic sciences—as discussed in Appendix 2—valued art and spirituality as the two pillars that supported its empirical investigations. However, from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century, when science began to be reduced to a materialistic venture, it lost its connection with art and spirit. Although there is a resurgence of interest in re-uniting science and spirituality, the significance of *art* in this enterprise is still undervalued. A reconstructed spiritual science—as indicated by Steiner—would place art back at the centre of a new epistemology (Steiner, 1964a, 1970, 1928/1972a, 1990b). From such a perspective the evolution of consciousness would foreground the *macrohistory of art*. Gebser (1949/1985) also places art—and particularly poetry—at the foreground of integral consciousness (pp. 316-333, 487-505). Wilber, although he does not

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<sup>1</sup> The term *panhuman* comes from the Greek *pananthropinon*. It has been used in recent academic literature, particularly in reference to world art (Kimball, 2004) and Greek poetry (Stathatou, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Rock art scientist, Robert Bednarik, draws attention to the Eurocentrism of much palaeoarcheological research, and nomenclature. He makes the critical point that instead of terms such as *Paleolithic* and *Neolithic*—referring to the development of use of stone tools—“a cultural taxonomy derived from art is vastly superior to one derived from tools. After all, tools do not designate cultures; art does” (Bednarik, 2006a, p. 2).

<sup>3</sup> Although *palaeoaesthetics*—or *paleoaesthetics*—is not an area of research in the Anglophone academic world, French art historian, Emmanuel Guy, uses the French term *paleoesthetique* to describe his study of the aesthetic nuances between different palaeoart archaeological sites.

<http://www.paleoesthetique.com/index.php>

foreground art in his practice, does place it conceptually as one of what he calls the *Big Three*<sup>4</sup>—Art, Morals and Science.

The significance of art in developmental and evolutionary theory was already proposed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century by educational philosopher/poet, Sir Herbert Read (1893-1968). Read (1954) proposed that “art—or, to use a more exact phrase, aesthetic experience—is an essential factor on which Homo Sapiens has depended for the development of his highest cognitive faculties” (p. 143). On the basis of this proposition and following in the illustrious footsteps of 18<sup>th</sup> century Romantic philosopher Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), Read also claimed that art/aesthetics should be the very *basis* of education (Read, 1943; Schiller, 1795/1977). Read’s evolutionary proposition begs the question: Why has art/aesthetics<sup>5</sup> remained—at best—a tangential thread in educational philosophy in the light of its apparent significance as an evolutionary catalyst? I consider this to be a core question in the evolution of consciousness research yet it has received little attention in the dominant discourse until recently.

The study and application of *aesthetics* has been a relatively minor—but continuous—philosophical thread that stretches from at least the Platonic beginnings of Western philosophy up to the present time (Bosanquet, 1892/2005). Interest in the developmental, and/or evolutionary significance of aesthetics—particularly in education—has also followed a similar trajectory. Over the last few decades several postmodern philosophers and postformal education and psychology researchers have begun to point to the significance of art/aesthetics in education and psychological development (Abbs, 2003; Arnheim, 1989; Broudy, 1987; Burnham, 2006; J. Campbell, 1968; Deleuze & Conley, 1992; Derrida, 2001; Gadamer, 1960/2005; Gidley, 1998c; Hutchings, 1999; Jain, 2001; Kaufman, 2005; Kearney, 1998; Kelen, 2002; Kimball, 2004; Koestler, 1989; Kristeva, 1982; Lock & Peters, 1999; Montuori, 2003; Montuori, Combs, & Richards, 2004; Neville, 1989; Nielson, 2006; Palmer, 2007; Pridmore, 2004; Roy, 2006b; Schindler, 1964; Sinnott, 2005; Sloan, 1992; The Mother, 1955; Thompson, 1998; Warren, 1996). There is a point of contention, however, in relation to how art is characterized. Postmodern and critical perspectives claiming that the *high art* industry is elitist (Rose & Kincheloe, 2003; Shiner, 2001) can be contrasted with the more normative—even essentialist—conceptions of art in modernist narratives (Danto, 1986). Inviting a reconciliation, Mitch Avila (Avila, 2003) points to Shiner’s seminal book, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*, proposing “a healthy pluralism in which multiple forms of arts and crafts—in their manifold richness—can be integrated into a full human life with a diverse range of aesthetic pleasures from the mundane to the sublime” (p. 403). A full scholarly study of these issues cannot be undertaken here.

<sup>4</sup> Wilber (1997) expands on his Big Three in relation to his four quadrants. "Sir Karl Popper's 'three worlds' (subjective, cultural, and objective); Plato's the Good (as the ground of morals. . .), the True (objective truth. . .), and the Beautiful (the aesthetic beauty. . .); Habermas' three validity claims (subjective truthfulness of I, cultural justness of we, and objective truth of its). Historically of great importance, these are also the three major domains of Kant's three critiques: science or its (*Critique of Pure Reason*), morals or we (*Critique of Practical Reason*), and art and self-expression of the I (*Critique of Judgment*)" (pp. 71-92).

<sup>5</sup> While I recognize that art and aesthetics could be characterized as distinct domains, this appendix is not the place for such a nuanced conceptual distinction.

The purpose of this appendix is to trace fragments of the evolutionary narrative that have been critically underappreciated—the apparent aesthetic sensibilities of some early hominins and humans. I have bounded this appendix in two ways: by time periods and content. Regarding my temporal delimitation, the focus is on the three earliest of Gebser’s structures of consciousness, archaic, magic and mythical—prior to the emergence of the more abstract thinking of the mental structure (c 800 BCE) and the complex thinking of the integral structure (emerging in current times). The mental structure co-arose with more abstract writing in the form of the alphabet (Poletti, 2002), which is regarded as the primary marker of literacy.<sup>6</sup> In terms of content, my primary focus is on the available evidence for aesthetic sensibilities with a further delimitation within this on the semiotic nature of the visual-artistic-language dimension. I will also briefly refer to the parallel—and arguably even earlier—origins of the aural-musical-oral dimension in the evolution of language. However, the latter is a study in itself and largely beyond the scope of this appendix.

### An Archaic Unity of Primal Sounds and Images

We are in a forest near a mighty tree. The sun has just risen in the east. The palmlike tree, from around which the other trees have been removed, casts mighty shadows. The priestess, her face turned to the east, ecstatic, sits on a seat made of rare natural objects and plants. Slowly in rhythmical sequence, a few strange, constantly repeated sounds stream from her lips. . . . Those around her move in rhythmic dances. (Steiner, 1904/1959, p. 82)

Steiner wrote this quote as an imaginative representation of the socio-cultural-aesthetic sensibility that he claimed was already operating among pre-anatomically modern humans. There is still considerable academic contention about the details of human origins. There are two major theoretical positions.

- The *short-range*<sup>7</sup> theory<sup>8</sup> posits that there was a sudden cultural jump, or flourishing, primarily in South-Western Europe, during what is conventionally referred to as the *Aurignacian* cultural period of the Upper Palaeolithic (40,000-28,000 BP) (Bednarik, 2007). This theory was the main theory-in-use in archaeology for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and proposes that very little was going on in human evolution prior to that time, or outside Europe even during that time. It appears to be losing credibility over the last couple of decades since more systematic rock art research outside Europe has been undertaken. It does not seem well supported now in the literature except by some

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<sup>6</sup> From a 20<sup>th</sup> century, modernist Eurocentric perspective, the beginning of literacy in a culture, marks the beginning of its history. For a postcolonial critique of the Eurocentrism in the taken-for-granted modernist notions of *literacy*, see the following critiques of the World Bank’s *Education for All* agenda (Gidley, 2001b; S. Jain & M. Jain, 2003b).

<sup>7</sup> The short-range theorists tend to use the following terms: *creative explosion*—popularized by science writer John E. Pfeiffer (1983); *“big bang” of consciousness*—introduced by anthropologist Richard Klein (R. Klein, G. & Edgar, 2002); or recently, *symbolic revolution* (Brumm & Moore, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> Although most authors refer to these divergent approaches as theories, Bednarik prefers to call them hypotheses (R.G. Bednarik, personal communication, November 23, 2007).

archaeologists<sup>9</sup> and art historians (Klein, & Edgar, 2002; Mithen, 2004; Noble & Davidson, 1996; White, 2003). Some proponents of *Aurignacian* cultural explosion acknowledge that Palaeoart was not just occurring in Western Europe during this period, and also that—in spite of the apparent lack of evidence—it appears likely that human beings have symbolically marked their landscapes over much longer time periods (Chippindale & Tacon, 1998; Watson, 2005).

- The *long-range*<sup>10</sup> theory proposes that the ground was laid for the apparent sudden cultural/artistic emergence over at least several hundred thousand years through protolanguage and the creation of symbolic processes and artifacts. Although the evidence for this has so far only been discovered in fragments, long-term advocates claim that this lack of evidence is a result of taphonomy<sup>11</sup> and geo-cultural factors—such as Eurocentrism and Anglophone bias in the discourse (Bednarik, 1992, 1994). Epistemological support for this theory comes from evolutionary anthropology and psychology (Dunbar, 2003; Dunbar, Knight, & Power, 2003; Foster, 1999; Hodgson, 2000, 2003; Sedikedes, Skowronski, & Dunbar, 2006); art history (Watson, 2005); palaeontology (Conway Morris, 2004, 2007; Teilhard de Chardin, 1959/2002); paleopsychology (Bloom, 2001); and rock art science (Bahn, 1994, 2005; Bednarik, 2003b, 2006b, 2007).

It seems to me that the evidence is shifting in favor of the long-range theories as more evidence comes to light in previously unexamined corners of the globe. As discussed elsewhere, my research points to the need for further research on the proposition that at least some flourishing of consciousness and culture have been associated with major geo-climatic events—such as glaciation cycles—which in turn have been linked by climatologists to astronomical cycles, such as the Milankovitch cycles. (See Appendix 1).

There is also contention in regard to the related question of the beginnings and early development of language. However, most contemporary theorists suggest that some *pre-adaptation* occurred during the pre-human and early *Homo* periods—at least from around 500,000 BCE (Foster, 1999; Kay, 1977; Lock & Peters, 1999). This would seem to support Habermas' (1979) claim that even hominins possessed “a language of gestures and signal calls” (p. 134). Others propose early chorus singing, bipedalism, and the use of *symbolic symbols* such as cave painting as important foundations for the flourishing of language that had developed by the late glacial age (Christiansen & Kirby, 2003). A recent collection of international research on language evolution to some extent meets its claim of being interdisciplinary (Christiansen & Kirby, 2003). However, this collection is primarily conceptualized from within an unproblematized science discourse with its physicalist and classical Darwinian evolutionary

<sup>9</sup> Actually, archaeologist Steven Mithen's subsequent book appears to take a more long-range view (Mithen, 2005/2007).

<sup>10</sup> The *long-range* theory is often referred to in the literature as the *gradualist* theory, however this should not be confused with the gradualism of classical Darwinism. The long-range advocates allow for a variety of punctuated cultural phases throughout the much longer-term process than 30-40,000 years (R. G. Bednarik, personal communication, November 23, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> *Taphonomy* refers to the “study of the processes affecting rock art after it has been executed, determining its present appearance and statistical properties” IFRAO Glossary (Bednarik, 2007, p. 199).

underpinnings. New light may be shone on this issue by Steiner's and Gebser's research.<sup>12</sup> As indicated in the opening to this section, Steiner (1904/1959) made the apparently radical claim that these early matriarchs—whom he called priestesses—assisted the development of early language, and even memory, through initiating rhythmical chanting, and interpreting the hidden language of nature—which they expressed in “sound, tone and rhythm” (p. 82). Recent interdisciplinary research on the origins of language via music supports Steiner's claim that, prior to *Homo Sapiens*, proto-language took the form of singing and rhythmical chanting (Merker, 2001; Skoyles, 2000), particularly initiated by the females, as an extension of the mothering impulse (Dissanayake, 2005; Mithen, 2007). In this regard, reference is made to the role of *synchronous choring* in the evolution of human language development (Merker, 2001; Wallin, Merker, & Brown, 2001).

Gebser (1949/1985) claimed that there was no separation such as we have today between sound and image—that the two streams were interpenetrating. The notion that *nature speaks* has been dismissed under centuries of instrumental rationalism and empiricism, but is beginning to be reconsidered along with the recovery of indigenous epistemologies and shamanic wisdom (Nandy, 2000; Sinnott, 2005). This section focuses on the Lower Palaeolithic period. (See Table C1 below.) The end of this period roughly overlaps with the transition from early *Homo* species to *Homo Sapiens*.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, because of disciplinary isolationism, this type of connection is rarely made in the literature. As discussed earlier, only the long-range theorists consider the Lower Palaeolithic period to have any significance for the evolution of culture and consciousness. A long-range advocate, arguably Bednarik has done more than most to research Palaeoart from this perspective as a short selection of his several hundred academic publications demonstrates (Bednarik, 1992, 1994, 1995, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d 2007).

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<sup>12</sup> Although the stated intention of this overall paper is to hermeneutically converse between Steiner's, Gebser's and Wilber's theoretic narratives, Wilber has not to my knowledge developed much material on this aspect of human evolution so my focus is more on Steiner and Gebser.

<sup>13</sup> The origins of the *Homo Sapiens* species—or anatomically modern humans—is also variously dated within different disciplines at anywhere from 200,000 to 100,000 BCE.

**Table C1: Archaeological Cultural Periods from Lower Palaeolithic to Bronze and Iron Ages**

<b>“Old World” Archaeological Taxonomy</b>	<b>Approximate Chronology</b>	<b>Descriptions and Geographical Locations</b>	<b>Archaeological Cultural Periods</b>
Lower Palaeolithic	2.5 mya to 180,000 ya <sup>14</sup>	Oldest division of the Older Stone Age of the Old World	<i>Acheulean</i> —Old World: Southern Africa to India
Middle Palaeolithic	180,000- 30,000 ya	Middle division of the Older Stone Age of Eurasia, Northern Africa	<i>Mousterian</i> —Europe, Western Asia and Northern Africa
Upper Palaeolithic <sup>15</sup>	40,000- 10,000 ya	Final division of the Older Stone Age of Eurasia, Northern Africa	<i>Aurignacian</i> <sup>16</sup> <i>Gravettian</i> <i>Solutrean</i> <i>Magdalenian, Azilian</i>
Mesolithic	12,000- 10,000 ya	Middle Stone Age of Eurasia, prior to Neolithic: regional variability	<i>Mesolithic</i> is a contested term now because of its Eurocentrism
Neolithic	10,000- 5,000 ya	Vague division of New Stone Age: regional variability	<i>Neolithic</i> is contested in terms of its meaning as a cultural period
Bronze & Iron Ages	5,000- 3,000 ya	Signifying the cultural use of metals such as copper, bronze and iron	<i>Bronze</i> and <i>Iron Ages</i> are also contestable as cultural periods

*Note.* Compiled from information in Bednarik (2007), Schriek, Passmore, Stevenson, & Rolao (2007), Seger (2006), and Zong, Chen, Innes, & Chen (2007). See Table C2 for more detail of Upper Palaeolithic.

<sup>14</sup> “ya” stands for *years ago*.

<sup>15</sup> For more detail on the European cultural periods within the Upper Palaeolithic see Table C2.

<sup>16</sup> In some classifications what is here called Aurignacian is further divided into Lower Aurignacian—Ch<sup>^</sup>atelperronian, Middle Aurignacian—Aurignacian, and Upper Aurignacian—Gravettian (White, 2006, p. 270).

## Palaeoart<sup>17</sup> from a Planetary Perspective

It must be borne in mind that the entire region between southern/eastern Africa and Levant in the west and Java and China in the east remains profoundly neglected, in terms of its [hominin] history. Yet we have no realistic choice but to assume that India was occupied for at least 1.9 million years.<sup>18</sup>

As discussed in the main narrative, conventional archaeological models in use for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century theorized that human art and culture arose in a sudden cultural explosion, in the Upper Palaeolithic<sup>19</sup> period primarily in South-Western Europe. This claim supported the *replacement theory* that the apparently very primitive *Homo Neanderthalensis* species was replaced by the apparently much more sophisticated *anatomically modern humans*. Contemporary research from the emerging field of *rock art science*<sup>20</sup> has been interrogating the evidence for this model for more than a decade (Bednarik, 1992, 1994, 2003b, 2006a, 2006b, 2007). Bednarik argues that palaeoarcheology has retained a strongly Eurocentric history until relatively recently. The cave art of regions such as *Lascaux* in southern France were for some time considered the earliest evidence of human art—and thus culture. However, as the discourse has become more planetary in orientation, archaeological discoveries are increasingly being made in other locations. Some of the recent discoveries, particularly in India, Australia and Central-Eastern Europe, and of course Africa, pre-date the European sites. Portuguese archaeologist, João Zilhão, has claimed that the diversity of recent discoveries around the globe suggest that, “the corresponding genetic and cognitive basis must have been present in the genus *Homo* before the evolutionary split between the Neanderthal and modern human lineages” (Zilhão, 2007, Abstract). Several forms of rock art—manuports, use of colored pigment, beads and petroglyphs—have been found to significantly pre-date the earliest European cave art of the Upper Palaeolithic (c. 32,000 BCE) (Bahn, 2005; Bednarik, 2003b; 2006b, 2006c; 2006d, 2007; Reddy, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> Palaeoart is the “collective term describing all art-like manifestations of the distant past”. The more specific term Palaeolithic art refers to “the surviving palaeoart of the Pleistocene, from the Lower Palaeolithic to the end of the Upper Palaeolithic” as classified by the *International Rock Art Glossary* (IRAG) adopted by the International Federation of Rock Art Organizations (IFRAO) in 2000 (Bednarik, 2007, pp. 5, 206). The IRAG is published in English, French, German, Spanish and Russian and will shortly also be published in Arabic, Chinese, Greek and Portuguese (R. G. Bednarik, personal communication, November 23, 2007).

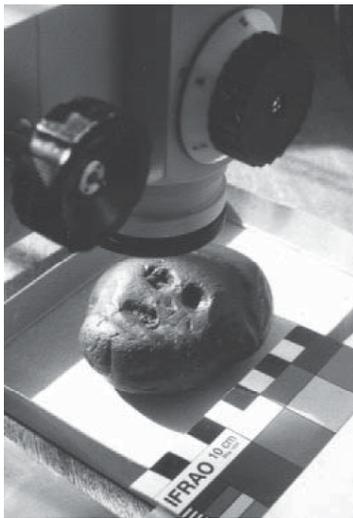
<sup>18</sup> The Early Indian Petroglyphs (EIP) Project is a joint venture by the Rock Art Society of India (RASI) and the Australian Rock Art Research Association (AURA)  
<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/eip1/web/eip3.html>

<sup>19</sup> See Table C1.

<sup>20</sup> The new discipline of Rock Art Science appears to have been established in the 1980s with the foundation of the Australian Rock Art Association (AURA) in 1983 by Robert Bednarik, who was instrumental in launching the academic journal *Rock Art Research* in May 1984. In 1988, the first World Congress of Rock Art Research was held in Darwin, Australia, at which the International Federation of Rock Art Organizations was formed, which has grown from an initial nine members, and now has 43 member organizations representing many thousands of researchers world-wide (R. G. Bednarik, 2007, personal communication, November 23, 2007).

## Pre-Human,<sup>21</sup> Lower Palaeolithic<sup>22</sup>—Collecting Interesting Manuports

As palaeoart research becomes more accomplished, the discovery and identification of artistic and cultural artifacts takes us into earlier and earlier temporal landscapes. Bednarik has documented archaeological discoveries indicating that the earliest Palaeoart actually pre-dates *Homo Sapiens* and can be attributed to the late Pliocene geological period.<sup>23</sup> The earliest known manuport is the Makapansgat cobble<sup>24</sup> from South Africa dated between 2.5 and 3 million years old (Bednarik, 2003b). (See Figure C1.) Although it is not an example of hand-modification of an object the inherent values implied in the collection of such an iconic-shaped object suggest an incipient form of reflective consciousness. It could be regarded as the first evidence of proto-aesthetic and symbolic thinking in pre-humans (Bednarik, 2007, p. 178).



**Figure C1: Makapansgat cobble**<sup>25</sup>  
South Africa > 2.5 million BP



**Figure C2: Earliest-known Proto-figure**<sup>26</sup>  
Tan Tan, Morocco > 300,000 BP

<sup>21</sup> It is notable that this discovery is within the contested borderline time period between *pre-Homo* species and *early Homo* species, such as *Homo Habilis* and *Homo Rudolfensis*, who according to fossil records, first inhabited Africa in the Pliocene epoch, a little over 2 million years ago (Lock & Peters, 1999). However, the *Homo* status of these early hominins, is also currently under revision (Key, 2000; Wood & Collard, 1999).

<sup>22</sup> See Table C1.

<sup>23</sup> The Pliocene is the geological period prior to the Pleistocene—also known as the Ice Age—which began c. 1.8 million years ago (Bednarik, 2007, p. 208).

<sup>24</sup> The Makapansgat cobble bearing two or three faces, was reportedly collected many kilometers from the cave it was found in, and carried back to the home base of either *Australopithecus africanus* or a very early hominin, presumably because of its startling natural markings and its red color. First discovered in 1925, identified as palaeoart in 1974 and then in 1998, microscopically examined by Bednarik (2003b, p. 97).

<sup>25</sup> Note. From “The Earliest Evidence of Palaeoart,” by R. G. Bednarik, 2003b, *Rock Art Research*, 20(2), p. 97. Copyright 2003 by Robert G. Bednarik. Reprinted with permission.

<sup>26</sup> Note. From “The Earliest Evidence of Palaeoart,” by R. G. Bednarik, 2003b, *Rock Art Research*, 20(2), p. 96. Copyright 2003 by Robert G. Bednarik. Reprinted with permission.

## **Homo Ergaster/Erectus,<sup>27</sup> Lower Palaeolithic—Coloring, Shaping, Engraving**

As an extension of the pastime of collecting interesting objects—and still within the pre-Sapiens temporal range—it appears that *Homo Ergaster/erectus* began to modify iconic natural objects. This may seem remarkable based on conventional archaeological views of the primitivism of *Homo Ergaster/Erectus*. However, evolutionary psychologists claim that the species displayed unprecedented dispersion patterns. Specifically, *Homo Ergaster/erectus* immigrated to many regions of the habitable world (e.g., Middle East, China, Indonesia, and Southern Europe) (Sedikedes, Skowronski, & Dunbar, 2006). While their presence in these places is widely accepted now in archaeological discourse, how they got there is still disputed.

New evidence has come to light—still requiring further substantiation—suggesting that extensive sea-faring may have been undertaken by hominins from as early as 800,000 BP to enable the occupation of Flores in Indonesia and Timor (Bednarik, 2003a). Synchronously, the first use of colored pigment has been traced to around 800,000-900,000 BP in South Africa and possibly India (Bednarik, 2003b, 2006b, 2007); the use of lumps of ochre has been dated to at least 380,000 BP in Southern France with speculation as to its possible use as a *crayon*, or for medicinal purposes (Watson, 2005, p. 28); and also a collection of small crystal prisms has been uncovered in India from a similar time period (Bednarik, 2003b, 2007). Bednarik's claims regarding the symbolic nature of these activities is consistent with recent evolutionary psychology claims that the foundations of language were relatively evolved by approximately 500,000 years ago (Dunbar, 2003; Foster, 1999). This has also been linked with the evolution of self-concept “the human self was already substantively in place by the appearance of archaic humans round 500 kya<sup>28</sup> and hence that its first glimmerings may already have begun to emerge by the late stages of the *Homo Ergaster/erectus* period” (Sedikedes, Skowronski, & Dunbar, 2006, p. 66).

The modifying of iconic objects—a type of proto-sculptural activity—appears to have begun approximately half a million years ago. Some of the most notable are the modified female-shaped pebble from *Berekhat Ram*, Golan Heights, Israel, dated 233,000-470,000 BP, and the human-shaped natural quartzite object, which has been modified by engraved markings and the addition of red pigment from *Tan-Tan*, Southern Morocco, dated 300,000-500,000 BP (See Figure C2) (Bednarik, 2003b, 2006b, 2007). From around the same time c. 350,000 BP a site in *Bilzingsleben*, Germany, consisting of three round dwelling places (Watson, 2005) revealed a variety of engraved objects such as bone, ivory and stone fragments (Bednarik, 2003b). This German site is believed to have been a significant one for *Homo Heidelbergensis*—successful descendent from *Homo Ergaster*, and progenitor of both *Homo Neanderthalensis* in Europe and *Homo Sapiens* in Africa (Mithen, 2007). Synchronously, engraved ironstone slabs have been identified in South Africa (c. 260,000-420,000 BP) (Bednarik, 2003b). These artifacts are particularly interesting in terms of origins in that they appear to have been produced within the extant period of *Homo Erectus*, yet after the emergence of *Homo Heidelbergensis* identified in Africa and Eurasia (500,000-100,000 BP) (Key, 2000; Lock & Peters, 1999; Wood & Collard,

<sup>27</sup> What is generally referred to in Palaeoanthropology as the middle *Homo* period was dominated by *Homo Ergaster/Erectus*—who emerged in both Africa and Eurasia, during the Plio-Pleistocene transition (2 million to 200,000 BP) (Key, 2000; Lock & Peters, 1999; Wood & Collard, 1999).

<sup>28</sup> “kya” refers to thousand years ago.

1999). Archaeologist, Mithen, has noted that it was during this period—from approximately 600,000 BCE—that brain size began to increase rather rapidly<sup>29</sup>, for the first time since the appearance of *Homo Ergaster* about a million years earlier (Mithen, 2007, p. 158).

### *Lower Palaeolithic Petroglyphs*

The oldest known rock art, anywhere in the world, has been found only in the last few years in Auditorium Cave in Bhimbetka in India. Very simple in form, with a *cupule* (or small cup) and a long, meandering groove (See Figure C3), it is consistent with the Indian Acheulian<sup>30</sup> age, 290,000 to 350,000 years ago (Bednarik, 2003b). This ancient petroglyph is apparently the first representation of the two archetypal forms—a circle and a line—that the entire world of form consists of. The religious significance of these archetypes continues to be emphasized in more recent times in Japanese Zen calligraphy<sup>31</sup> rituals.

### *Lower Palaeolithic Pendants and Beads*

The earliest manuports were mostly collections of *unmodified* natural objects, or iconically shaped natural objects that have been slightly modified apparently to enhance their iconic form—rather than hand crafted objects. The earliest hand crafted objects that have been found suggest the beginnings of body decoration. They include pendants made from a *perforated wolf's canine* and a *bone point* as early as 300,000 years ago in Austria (R. G. Bednarik, personal communication, November 23, 2007), and ostrich eggshell beads, crafted 200,000 years ago in Libya, northern Africa (See Figure C4). In extensive replication experiments Bednarik has demonstrated the high level of manual skill and patience required to create the ostrich eggshell beads, and has also remarked on the geometrically perfect sense of form that the originators must have had (Bednarik, 2006d).

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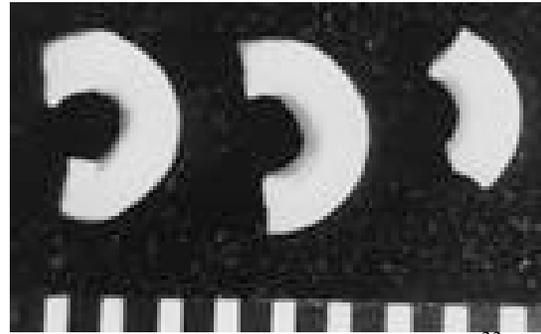
<sup>29</sup> While the cranial size of early *Homo Ergaster* appears to have been in the vicinity of 500-800 cubic centimeters, by the time of *Homo Heidelbergensis*, cranial size appears to have increased to 1,000-1,200 cubic centimeters. A further growth leap had taken place by the time of *Homo Sapiens*—1,500-1,600 cubic centimeters—with *Homo Neanderthalensis* cranial size being even larger (1,600-1,800 cubic centimeters) (Mithen, 2007, p. 159). Arguably, cranial size expansion had ended by approximately 200,000 BP (Hodgson, 2000).

<sup>30</sup> The Acheulian Age is the earliest classified cultural period (See Table C1).

<sup>31</sup> The ritual practice of drawing *ichi* (one) and *enso* (a circle) is part of Zen philosophy as expressed in calligraphy. [http://www.mediamatic.nl/magazine/8\\_4/joshi-letterforms/joshi-3e.html](http://www.mediamatic.nl/magazine/8_4/joshi-letterforms/joshi-3e.html)



**Figure C3: Earliest-known Petroglyph**<sup>32</sup>  
Bhimbetka, India, > 200, 000 BP



**Figure C4: Ostrich Eggshell Beads**<sup>33</sup>  
Libya c. 200,000 BP

### A Magical Transition—From Primal Sound to Archetypal Image

Indeed the very obscurity, dormancy, fusion and undifferentiated texture of the primal sounds and roots give us at the very most an intimation of what takes place beyond that temporal limit which exists between the archaic and the magic structures and had to be surmounted during the formation of the primal words. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 124)

Gebser's view of the origins of language, suggested a proto-language as many contemporary researchers do. As expressed here, Gebser contradicts the more conventional *compositional theory* of language origins, yet is aligned to more recent theories proposed by Steven Mithen—pointing to the research of linguist, Alison Wray—referred to as the *holistic theory* (Mithen, 2007, p. 3).

From an archaeological perspective the present section focuses on the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic periods, which are the earliest periods during which *anatomically modern humans* began to make their marks on their environment.

### Foundations of Speech through Song and Music

Perhaps the auditory sense is not the first from a physiological standpoint, but it is definitely more prominent in the magic realm than the visual sense. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 126)

The aural strand of language appears to have been primary to the visual strand—language was first expressed in song and natural music. As discussed above, human singing, chanting and

<sup>32</sup> Note. From “The Earliest Evidence of Palaeoart,” by R. G. Bednarik, 2003b, *Rock Art Research*, 20(2), p. 92. Copyright 2003 by Robert G. Bednarik. Reprinted with permission. Earliest known petroglyph in the world, Auditorium Cave, Bhimbetka, dated very conservatively to earlier than 200,000 BP.

<sup>33</sup> Note. From *Rock Art Science: The Scientific Study of Palaeoart* (p. 182), by R. G. Bednarik, 2007, New Delhi: Aryan Books International. Copyright 2007 by Robert G. Bednarik. Reprinted with permission.

dancing appears to have predated speech (Merker, 2001; Skoyles, 2000; Steiner, 1904/1959). It is possible that Australian aboriginal *Songlines*, or *Dreaming tracks*, are the closest phenomena we have today to the origins of language through chanting and song.

Around campfires, they repeat legends of the Dreaming, stories that tell of how their Ancestors created themselves and how they walked throughout the land speaking and singing each object in the natural world into existence, leaving an unbroken trail of spoken words and musical notes along the line of their footprints. (Grigar & Barber, 2004, Abstract)

Songlines were introduced to a broader audience around twenty years ago with the publishing of a popular book (Chatwin, 1987). The songlines not only connect the aboriginals with the land of their ancestors, but deeply with the land itself. The songlines have been described as a type of geographical mapping and communications system between tribes (Grigar & Barber, 2004).

The history of music also predates the written word and presumably first occurred, like synchronous chorusing against the backdrop of birdsong and other animal sounds. It has been argued that Neanderthals began to use rocks, stalactites and other natural objects as proto-instruments to create music (Mithen, 2007). New research on the origin of music appears to be adding some weight to the *long-range* theories of cultural and consciousness evolution (Dissanayake, 2005; Mithen, 2007; Wallin, Merker, & Brown, 2001). The earliest known musical instruments are carved bird-bone flutes from a site in *Geissenklösterle*, Southern Germany, authentically<sup>34</sup> dated by archaeologists, Francesco D'Errico and Graham Lawson to 36,000 BCE (Mithen, 2007).

Archaeologists in China researching the early Neolithic site of *Jiahu* in Henan Province, claim to have found the earliest complete, playable, multi-note musical instruments—resembling flutes (Zhang, Harbottle, Wang, & Kong, 1999, pp. 367-368). However, researchers<sup>35</sup> on this early Neolithic site (c. 7,000 BCE) seem unaware that much earlier flutes have already been identified in Germany. Also these Chinese artifacts need further investigation to authenticate. The earliest Indian flutes—the seven-holed flutes—appear to date from the Indus Valley civilization, along with various early stringed instruments (Massey & Massey, 1996).

### **Foundations of Writing through Painting and Carving**

Simple non-iconic markings appear in the late part of the Lower Palaeolithic, and they continue to be made during the Middle Palaeolithic. Over an enormous time span they seem to experience some change towards increasing complexity, but their range

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<sup>34</sup> The authenticity of these artifacts are in contrast to the false claims in 1995 that the world's oldest flute had been found in Western Slovenia and dated at 54,000 years ago. This claim was contradicted by microscopic analysis by archaeologist Francesco d'Errico demonstrating that the perforations were natural and not human-made (Mithen, 2007; Watson, 2005, p. 31).

<sup>35</sup> This project was supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China [and] the Department of Science & Technology of China, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Structure Research Laboratory at USTC. Research at Brookhaven National Laboratory is supported by the US Department of Energy. The full article is available online. <http://www.shakuhachi.com/K-9KChineseFlutes-Nature.html>

nevertheless remains remarkably consistent: parallel lines, convergent lines, radial motifs, zigzags or meanders, dot patterns, lattices, circles. (Bednarik, 2003b, p. 102)

The *visual strand* was first expressed in the visual arts by hominins modifying natural objects through coloring with pigment, engraving petroglyphs, and shaping beads apparently for decorative purposes—the earliest of those that have been found were demonstrated above. Petroglyphs continued throughout the Middle Palaeolithic period, and were supplemented at least from the Upper Palaeolithic by cave paintings.<sup>36</sup> (See Table C1 for chronology.) These earlier forms of picture consciousness were followed by pictograms when mythic consciousness began to emerge in the late Neolithic period and into the Bronze and Iron Ages. Eventually, full-writing systems, such as logograms, syllabaries and alphabets emerged with the gradual awakening of ego-mental consciousness, in the first millennium BCE.

### *Middle<sup>37</sup> Palaeolithic Petroglyphs and Engravings*

Prior to the discovery of the Acheulian petroglyphs found in India, as discussed above, it was believed that most petroglyphs were created during the Upper Palaeolithic period. However, Bednarik claims that, for more than hundreds of thousands of years prior to the iconic Upper Palaeolithic cave paintings found in Europe, non-iconic cupules or other patterned engravings were being made on rocks and other available materials. The engraved bone fragment pictured in Figure C5 is from the *Oldisleben 1* Site, Germany, possibly 120,000 years old. It shows two sets of sub-parallel lines engraved with stone tools. A significant type of petroglyph that has survived from the Middle Palaeolithic involves multiple uses of cupules arranged in what is likely to have been a meaningful shape. Figure C6 is an illustration of a large limestone slab from a Neanderthal<sup>38</sup> infant's grave, La Ferrassie, France, bearing eighteen cupules on its underside, most of them in pairs. It is the earliest known rock art in Europe, being from the *Mousterian*<sup>39</sup> period, and most likely 40,000-70,000 years old (Bednarik, 2003b, p. 98).



**Figure C5: Engraved bone fragment,<sup>40</sup> Germany, c. 120,000 BP**

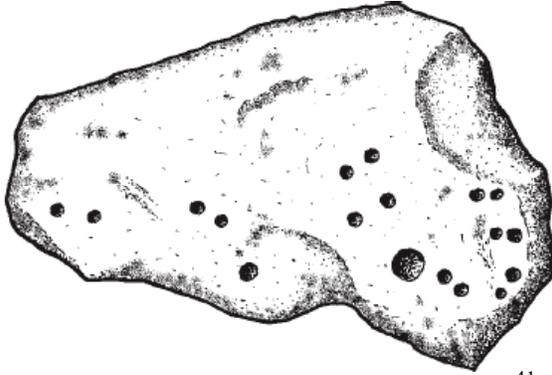
<sup>36</sup> It should be noted that although it is believed in conventional archaeological theory that petroglyphs were an earlier form of rock art than cave painting, this conclusion may be a result of taphonomic factors, in that petroglyphs—being engraved in the rock are more likely to have survived the ravages of time (Bednarik, 1994).

<sup>37</sup> See Table C1.

<sup>38</sup> *Homo Neanderthalensis* appear to have been the first species to ceremonially bury their dead.

<sup>39</sup> See Table C1.

<sup>40</sup> *Note.* From “The Lower and Middle Palaeolithic Origins of Semiotics,” by R. G. Bednarik, 2006b, p. 7. Copyright 2006 by Robert G. Bednarik. Reprinted with permission.



**Figure C6: Neanderthal child's grave,<sup>41</sup> La Ferrassie, France > 40,000 BP**

*Middle/Upper Palaeolithic Rock Art*

During the Upper Palaeolithic period in Europe, numerous types of art developed and consolidated that could be regarded as proto-writing—particularly abstract and figurative rock engraving and paintings—as magical consciousness was beginning to give way to more symbolic, image-based forms of expression. Gebser pointed to the features of magical consciousness that can be discerned in the cave paintings, particularly those of the animal hunt, which he claims are predominantly spell-casting and magic in character (Gebser, 1949/1985). The notion of themes related to magic in Upper Palaeolithic rock art is one of a number of interpretations being considered in contemporary archaeology discourse (Conkey, 1999). Because the major focus of archaeological and Palaeoanthropological research until a decade or two ago was privileging Upper Palaeolithic European sites—especially Western European—the taxonomy of cultures that has been developed has nomenclature based on the names of the French sites where particular art was found. (See Table C2 below for summary of the main classifications.) Since the Upper Palaeolithic European cave art, such as *Chauvet* (c. 32,000 BP) and *Lascaux*<sup>42</sup> caves in Southern France are quite well known, this section will focus on presenting some less documented rock art from Australia—some of which occurred within a similar time frame<sup>43</sup> as the oldest of the Western European cave art.

Some of the earliest known rock art outside of Western Europe is sub-continental Indian and Australian. The earliest rock art of indigenous Australians has been found in the limestone caves of Mt Gambier in South Australia, the Kimberleys and Pilbara regions in Western Australia, and Kakadu National Park in Arnhem Land, near Darwin in the Northern Territory. Archaeological

<sup>41</sup> Note. From “The Earliest Evidence of Palaeoart,” by R. G. Bednarik, 2003b, *Rock Art Research* 20(2), p. 98. Copyright 2003 by Robert G. Bednarik. Reprinted with permission.

<sup>42</sup> The cave art of *Lascaux* caves in France was made famous by French anthropologist and philosopher, Georges Bataille, in his book, *Lascaux or The Birth of Art* (Bataille, 1955).

<sup>43</sup> It should be noted that according to Bednarik in a personal email to me, the European nomenclature is not used in Australia. In addition, he pointed out that if researchers wish to use it then they need to take into account the fact that ALL Australian tool technology up to about mid-Holocene is of *mode 3 technologies*—that is, Middle Palaeolithic. Consequently, most Australian rock art—in excess of 100,000 petroglyphs—is technically Middle Palaeolithic, from the European terminology perspective. From this perspective there is thus *more* Middle Palaeolithic rock art in the world than Upper Palaeolithic (R. G. Bednarik, personal communication, November 23, 2007).

evidence demonstrates that Kakadu has been continuously occupied by indigenous Australians for at least 40,000 years and some parts of Arnhem Land as long as 60,000 years.<sup>44</sup> Petroglyphs from Malangine Cave, near Mt Gambier, are believed to be some of the oldest in Australia and are dated at in excess of 28,000 years old (Bednarik, 2003b, p. 94) (See Figure C7). The *Gwion Gwion* rock paintings of the West Kimberleys, in Western Australia, are some of the most outstanding in terms of color and richness and exceptional in terms of their unique style (See Figure C8). Although the dating is most likely within the early Holocene period, because of the technology used, this would need to be classified as Middle Palaeolithic art from the perspective of the European nomenclature.

**Table C2: Taxonomy of Cultural Periods used for classification of Eurasian Archaeological artifacts during the Upper Palaeolithic**

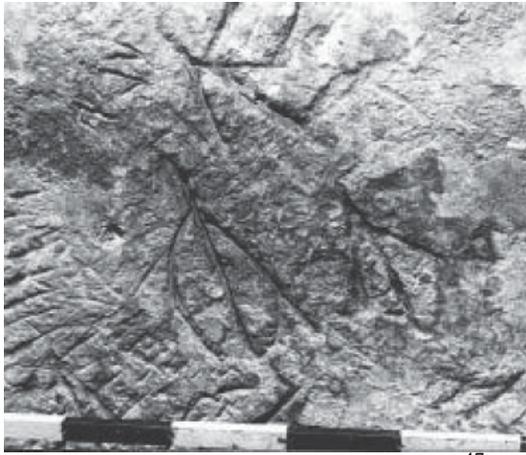
<b>Sub-Divisions within Upper Palaeolithic</b>	<b>Approximate Chronology</b>	<b>Geographical Locations</b>	<b>European Archaeological Cultural Taxonomy</b>
Early Upper Palaeolithic	40-28 kya <sup>45</sup>	Southern Europe and Near East	<i>Aurignacian</i> <sup>46</sup> (Named after <i>Aurignac</i> rock shelter, Pyrenees, France)
Upper Palaeolithic	28-20 kya	South-western, central and Eastern Europe	<i>Gravettian</i> (Named after <i>La Gravette</i> Dordogne, France)
Upper Palaeolithic	19-16 kya	South-western Europe	<i>Solutrean</i> (Named after the open-air site <i>Solutré</i> , France)
Late Upper Palaeolithic	16-10 kya	Western and Central Europe	<i>Magdalenian</i> (Named after <i>la Magdeleine abri</i> , Dordogne, France)
Final Palaeolithic	11-10 kya	South-western Europe	<i>Azilian</i> (Named after <i>Mas d'Azil</i> , Pyrenees, France)

*Note.* Compiled from information in Bednarik (2007, pp. 201-212) and White (2006, p. 270).

<sup>44</sup> “Archaeologist Rhys Jones obtained dates for the earliest occupational layers of about 53,000 to 60,000 BP, more probably the latter . . . The oldest painted and engraved surfaces dated back perhaps as far as 40 000 BP, and signs of artists working with ochre paint possibly as far back as 60,000 years ago [at Nauwalabila].” <http://www.aboriginalartonline.com/art/rockage.php>

<sup>45</sup> “kya” stands for thousand years ago.

<sup>46</sup> In some classifications what is here called Aurignacian is further divided into Lower Aurignacian—Châtelperronian, Middle Aurignacian—Aurignacian, and Upper Aurignacian—Gravettian (White, 2006, p. 270).



**Figure C7: Australian Petroglyph**<sup>47</sup>  
Malangine Mt Gambier > 28,000 BP



**Figure C8: Gwion Gwion**<sup>48</sup>  
Kimberleys W. Australia 4,000-10,000 BP

### *Upper Palaeolithic Sculpture and Pottery*

The Upper Palaeolithic seemed to also mark the beginnings of what we could call sculpture. This is notwithstanding the earlier examples of enhanced natural objects from the Lower Palaeolithic, which could perhaps be called proto-sculptures. Fully formed iconic sculptures are not found in the archaeological record until at least 30,000 ka—with the exception of the presumed bear head from *Tolbaga*, Siberia, possibly a few thousand years earlier (Bednarik, 2007). The so-called *Venus figurines* of the Eurasian Upper Palaeolithic are the earliest known sculptures but there is much controversy about their dates as well as their meaning. It should be noted that the term *Venus figurines* is used for a vast collection of artifacts from the *Gravettian*<sup>49</sup> tradition—many of which show no female attributes (Bednarik, 2007). Two notable figurines whose gender has not been questioned are illustrated below. They are of ceramic and ivory, respectively. The *Venus of Dolní Věstonice*—about 11 centimeters tall—is reputedly the oldest known ceramic artifact in the world, dated to the *Aurignacian*<sup>50</sup> period. It was found in 1925 between *Pavlov* and *Dolní Věstonice* in Moravia, Czech Republic, and has been exhibited over the last 12 months at the National Museum in Prague (See Figure C9). The more famous *La*

<sup>47</sup> Note. From “The Earliest Evidence of Palaeoart,” by R. G. Bednarik, 2003b, *Rock Art Research* 20(2), p. 94. Copyright 2003 by Robert G. Bednarik. Reprinted with permission. “Karake-style petroglyphs carved into the ceiling of Malangine Cave. . . . They were covered by a speleothem layer of 15 to 20 mm thickness yielding a U/Thage estimate of about 28 000 years BP” (Bednarik, 2003b, p. 94).

<sup>48</sup> The *Gwion Gwion* of the Ngarinyin people the traditional owners of the land on which they have been found. They were formerly called the Bradshaws—after Joseph Bradshaw who noticed them in 1891 when lost on expedition in the Kimberleys. <http://www.aboriginalartonline.com/regions/gwion-gwion.php> This image is copyright Robert G. Bednarik, International Federation of Rock Art Organizations and is used with permission. “Typical [Gwion Gwion] rock paintings from Kimberley region, Australia. This art was produced by hunting peoples but is free of hunting motifs and weapons, its primary concern being the elaborate headdresses and other apparently ceremonial paraphernalia on anthropomorphs (after Welch 1993). These paintings are thought to be 4000 to 10 000 years old, but remain inadequately dated” (Bednarik, 2003c).

<sup>49</sup> For information on *Gravettian* culture, see Table C1.

<sup>50</sup> For information on *Aurignacian* culture, see Table C1

*Dame à la Capuche*—also sometimes called the *Venus of Brassempouy*—has been thoroughly microscopically studied and dated to the *Gravettian* (White, 2006, p. 252). This small, 3.5 centimeter ivory sculpture found in Western France in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century—although technically a bust—is generally also referred to as a Venus figurine (See Figure C10).



**Figure C9: Venus of Dolní Věstonice**<sup>51</sup>  
Moravia, Czech Republic c. 27-31 ka



**Figure C10: La Dame à la Capuche**<sup>52</sup>  
Brassempouy, France c. 22-28 ka

## Mythic Imagination Threads into Story—Origins of Writing

It was first hieroglyph, that is, mythically stressed writing and only later a script of sign or letter, that is, mental and abstracting. The meaning, in other words, had to be expressed, most likely by sound and intonation—acoustic characteristics of the magical structure—and only later in pictograph or sign. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 156, Note 6)

Gebser claimed—as indicated in this quote—that language development went through a three-stage sequence of *tone-image-sign* that he claimed was echoed in the development of writing. Steiner presented a similar three-stage process in that he referred to the first stage of language development as being related to our early attempts to imitate the sound component of what we experienced in the outside world—expressed as song and music; secondly, that we began to transform the sound experience inwardly into symbolic images—externalized as pictographs and hieroglyphs; only then, from a more abstract conceptual consciousness were we able to conceptually create abstract signs such as alphabets. He also indicated that in the present cultural period we need to move consciously beyond mental abstraction towards a further development of

<sup>51</sup> This image is in the public domain under the GNU Free Documentation License  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Venus\\_of\\_Dolni\\_Vestonice.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Venus_of_Dolni_Vestonice.png)

<sup>52</sup> This image is in the public domain. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Venus\\_of\\_Brasempouy.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Venus_of_Brasempouy.jpg)

symbolic imaginative conceptions—but it is beyond the scope of this appendix to pursue this claim (Steiner, 1930/1983a, p. 9).

While there are many possible definitions for the concept of writing—the broad definition being advanced here was put forward by Gelb (2004) “a system of intercommunication by means of conventional visible marks” cited in Postgate’s review (2005, p. 276). Linguists tend to identify four main methods of making records or communicating information: pictograms/ideograms, logograms/word-signs, syllabic signs and alphabets (Hooker, 1990, p. 6). Pictograms and logograms began to emerge at the end of the fourth millennium BCE, and developed in several regions during the second and third millennia BCE. They are associated with mythic consciousness by Steiner, Gebser and Wilber as were the early writing systems that combined logograms with syllabic signs—signs corresponding to sounds in the language—in Sumer, Egypt, China and Meso-American Mayan script (Houston, 2004). Alphabets, however, did not emerge until the first millennium BCE, in Greece, building on the Phoenecian proto-alphabet that emerged in Crete a few hundred years earlier (Hooker, 1990; Poletti, 2002). The literature on the origins of writing—like the discourse on human origins—is vast, growing exponentially, and somewhat contentious. Since a full analysis is well beyond the scope of this appendix, I will point to significant recent publications, which can direct the reader to some of the main issues involved.

There are several contested issues in relation to the origins of language:

- The traditional philological notion that proto-writing is merely “a deficient representation of language” *versus* the epistemological perspective that proto-writing is rather a “successful means of representing knowledge and transmitting it” between individuals and generations (Damerow, 2006, p. 2);
- *Monogenesis*—the notion that language was invented only once—*versus polygenesis*—the notion that proto-writing has emerged in different places without direct contact with each other. “The emergence of the Indus script, of Chinese itself, or of Maya writing . . . cannot easily be related to models of monogenesis and diffusion” (Damerow, 2006, p. 2, 9);
- The role of linguistic structures *versus* the role of non-linguistic structures and mechanisms—the latter exemplified in administrative cuneiform, arguably the earliest form of proto-writing (Damerow, 2006, p. 9);
- The role of symbolic, pictorial, representational aspects, as exemplified in the Egyptian and Mayan glyphs, *versus* the more graphic aspects of the Mesopotamian and Chinese systems (Baynes, 2004, p. 172);
- *Taphonomic* factors are significant in all Palaeoart as discussed earlier (Bednarik, 1994) and also to the history of proto-writing, where it is believed that outside of Mesopotamia where clay tablets were used for script, “much of the early script development has been lost because most documents were written on perishable materials (Postgate, 2005, p. 278).

Damerow has created an aesthetically pleasing diagram depicting the major proto-writing phases from a planetary perspective (See Figure C11).

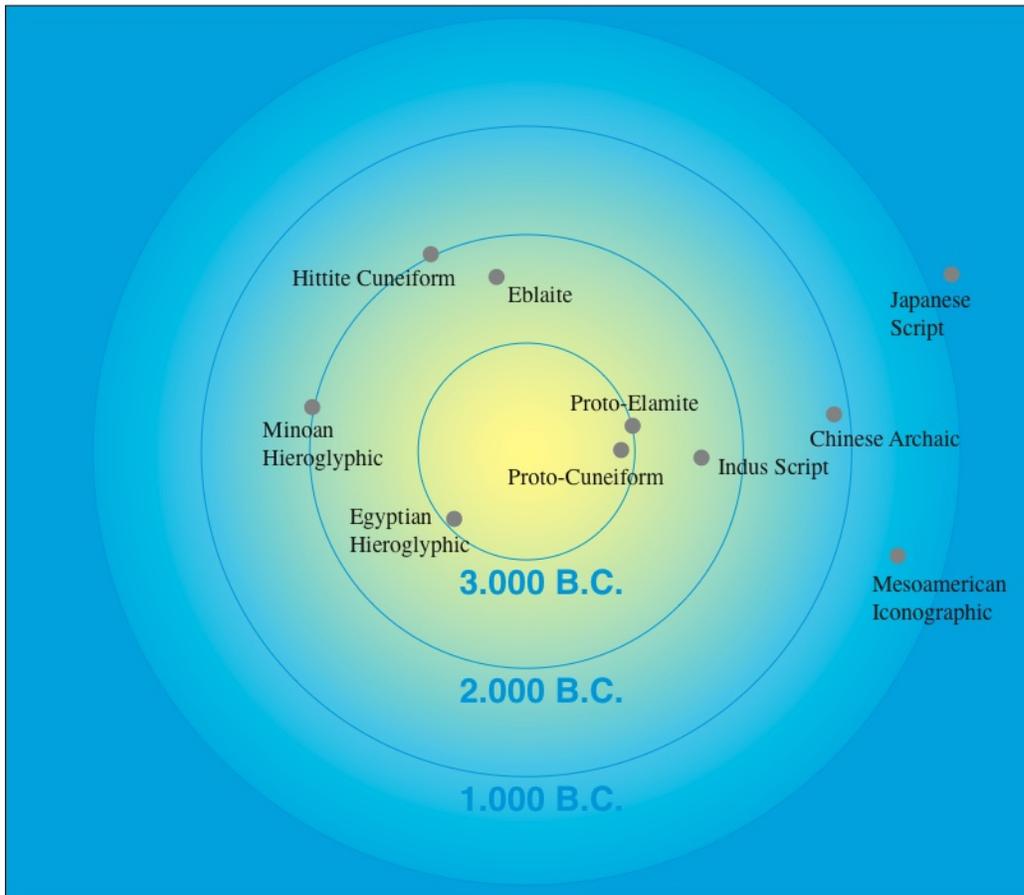


Figure C11: Historico-Geographic Map of Earliest Attestations of Writing<sup>53</sup>

### Pictographic/Ideographic Proto-Writing

Pictographic scripts (in which the graphemes are iconic pictures) are generally not classified as complete writing systems. Most linguists claim that a writing system cannot be completely pictographic or ideographic but must be able to refer directly to a language in order to have the full expressive capacity of a language. Although the details of exact chronologies are hotly—and perhaps territorially debated—earlier pictographic writing has been found in Sumer, Egypt, China, Mesoamerica and the Indus Valley regions.

The Indus script (See Figure C12) is a pictographic system that developed between 2700–2500 BCE as the Early Harappan culture transitioned into the Mature Indus Civilization. Around 2000–1900 BCE the Indus Civilization came to an end in the Indus Valley, which led also to the disappearance of the Indus script (Parpola, 2005, p. 31). There were also earlier pictographic forms of writing on clay in Uruk perhaps as early as 3,300BCE, which may have laid foundations for the later wedge-shaped cuneiform (Hooker, 1990, p.19) (See Figure C13).

<sup>53</sup> Note. From “The Origins of Writing as a Problem of Historical Epistemology,” by P. Damerow, 2006, *Cuneiform Digital Library Journal*, 1, p. 3. Copyright 2006 by Peter Damerow. Reprinted with permission.



**Figure C12: Indus Script Pashupati**<sup>54</sup>  
Indus Valley 2,700-2,500 BCE



**Figure C13: Pictographic Cuneiform**<sup>55</sup>  
Sumer c. 2,600 BCE

Still extant pictographic scripts are found among the North American first nation *Micmaq* people, the Aztec *Nahuatl*, and the Sino-Tibetan *Naxi* people.

### Logographic and Syllabic Writing Systems

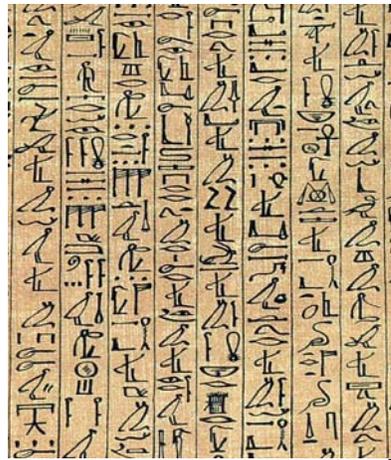
Although preceded by earlier pictographic systems, the following are considered to be the first complete language-based writing systems: Sumerian Cuneiform (See Figure C14), Egyptian Hieroglyphs (See Figure C15), Chinese *Hanji* (See Figure C16) and Mayan glyphs (See Figure C17). The Chinese Hanji—was used for short texts on bronze vessels and in the oracle bone system from the Shang Dynasty (c. 1,200 BCE) (Trigger, 2004, p. 50). In a recent edited book on *The First Writing*, anthropologist Stephen Houston (2004) presents these as the first systematic scripts representing units of sound and meaning. Something of an expert on Mayan script, he claims that the earliest Maya texts are not mere logograms but as something of a shock to traditional notions of Pre-Columbian Mesoamerican development. He claims that Mayan scripts are as “linguistically equipped, with ergative pronouns, possessive suffixes, and instrumentals, as anything seen in [Chinese] Oracle Bone inscriptions” (p. 351). These four systems all appear to combine logographic, syllabic and determinative features.

<sup>54</sup> The Pashupati, Indus Valley seal with the seated figure termed Pashupati. The writing above it is inscribed in the mature Indus script. This image is in the public domain. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indus\\_script](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indus_script)

<sup>55</sup> Sumerian inscription in monumental archaic style, ca. 26th century BCE. This image is in the public domain. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuneiform\\_script](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuneiform_script)



**Figure C14: Cuneiform Clay Letter**<sup>56</sup>  
Telloh (Girsu), Iraq c. 2400 BCE



**Figure C15: Papyrus of Ani**<sup>57</sup>  
Egypt, 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty c. 1,300 BCE



**Figure C16: Oracle Bone Script**<sup>58</sup>  
China, Shang Dynasty c. 1,200 BCE



**Figure C17: Mayan Glyphs**<sup>59</sup>  
Palenche, Mexico c. 400-700 BCE

<sup>56</sup> Cuneiform letter sent by the high-priest Lu'enna to the king of Lagash (maybe Urukagina), informing him of his son's death in combat. This image is in the public domain.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Letter\\_Luenna\\_Louvre\\_AO4238.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Letter_Luenna_Louvre_AO4238.jpg)

<sup>57</sup> The *Papyrus of Ani* is the original Egyptian text of the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*. It is written in cursive hieroglyphs, usually reserved for religious texts. This image is in the public domain.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian\\_hieroglyphs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_hieroglyphs)

<sup>58</sup> Oracle Bone about *the Sun*, from an exhibit at Chabot Space and Science Center in Oakland, California. This image is in the public domain under the GNU Free Documentation License.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:OracleSun.JPG>

<sup>59</sup> Maya glyphs in stucco at the *Museo de sitio* in Palenque, Mexico. This image is in the public domain.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayan\\_glyphs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayan_glyphs)

A significant point of distinction is beginning to be made—in relation to the origins of writing—between the more symbological systems such as Egyptian and Mayan glyphs which show one approach to developing scripts and integrating them with high culture and the more graphical systems such as Mesopotamian and Chinese (Baynes, 2004, p. 172). The recognition of these different types of early writing opens new potential avenues for considering other complex recording systems as writing systems as well—most notably the Inkan *Khipu*.

### Cord<sup>60</sup> Recording Systems

The *khipu*<sup>61</sup> (or *quipu*) is a textile artifact demonstrating a complex system of different colored cords and knots (See Figure C18). An Italian archaeologist, Laura Minelli, has posited that two Italian Jesuits who had begun the deciphering process, between 1610 and 1638 identified the khipu as a writing system. According to Minelli, the Jesuits claimed, “There were quipus that differed from the ones used for accounting. These so-called royal quipus<sup>62</sup> had elaborate woven symbols, which hung down from a main string” (Domenici & Domenici, 1996) (See Figure C19). The authenticity of this claim is still in dispute. Anthropologist, Gary Urton, refers to Inka *khipu* as “an integrated system of knowledge, skills, and communicative practices that I believe would qualify, in the eyes of most theorists on writing and literacy, as a writing system” (Urton, 2003). He has also deciphered it sufficiently to claim that it was primarily structured as a binary code, like the coding systems used in present-day computer language.<sup>63</sup> This factor seems to suggest that it may have been both a simple writing system in combination with a counting system. This writing system of the Inkas was once thought to have only been in use at the height of the Inka civilization (14th to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries CE), but recent discoveries in coastal Peru, suggest much earlier. Ruth Shady, an archeologist leading investigations into the Peruvian coastal city of Caral claims that *Khipus* were among a treasure trove of articles discovered at the site, which are about 5,000 years old.<sup>64</sup> This claim will need considerable research to establish its veracity. However, if the claim were found to be valid then it would suggest that the Inkan counting system pre-dated the Babylonian and Greco-Roman counting boards<sup>65</sup> that had already pre-dated the Chinese *abacus* by approximately 1,500 years.

<sup>60</sup> It is interesting to note the etymology of the word “cord” as the suffix in the verb “record,” from the Latin: *recordari* “remember, call to mind,” from *re-* “restore” + *cor* (gen. *cordis*) “heart” (as the metaphoric seat of memory, cf. *learn by heart*). [www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com)

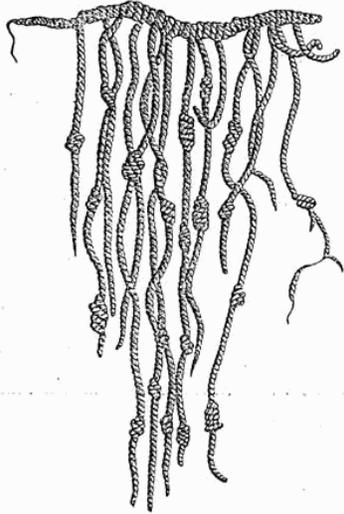
<sup>61</sup> *Khipu* is the Quechuan spelling. *Quipu* is the Spanish spelling. For more information on the current state of academic research, see the *Khipu Database Project*, funded 2002-2004 by the National Science Foundation and Harvard University, and in 2004-2005 is funded by the National Science Foundation. <http://khipukamayuy.fas.harvard.edu/DatabaseProj.html>

<sup>62</sup> Reputedly, most of the *royal khipus* were burned by the invading Spaniards.

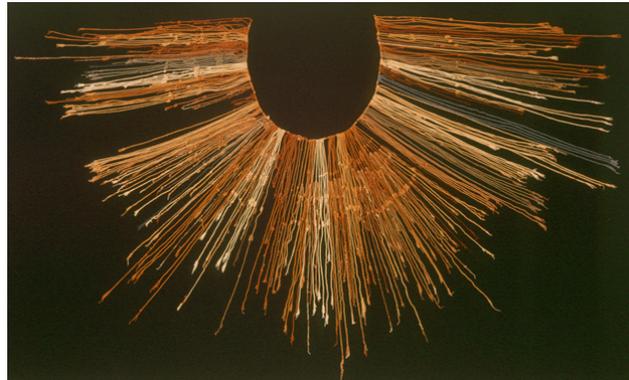
<sup>63</sup> For more information about Khipu, Gary Urton’s book is extracted online at <http://www.utexas.edu/utpress/excerpts/exurtsig.html>

<sup>64</sup> More information about the Peruvian khipu can be found as a news report from the South African Broadcasting Commission. Caral: Ancient Peru city reveals 5,000-year-old ‘writing’ *July 19, 2005, 22:45*, SABC News

<sup>65</sup> The *Salamis* tablets (300 BCE) were the first known counting boards, and were apparently invented by the Babylonians. They were followed by Greek and Roman counting boards and the medieval European abacus, while the Chinese abacus originated in 1,200 CE followed by the Japanese and Russian. There are



**Figure C18: Simple Khipu**<sup>66</sup>  
Peru c. 1,400-1,532 CE



**Figure C19: Possibly a Royal Khipu**<sup>67</sup>  
Larco Museum, Lima Peru

### Towards Alphabets

The evolution of the first full alphabet<sup>68</sup> in Greece c. 800 BCE was followed by the Roman version, which is the alphabet used for English and most Western European writing today. Linguists claim that the Greek alphabet developed from Egyptian hieroglyphs through a number of other proto alphabets such as the Proto-Canaanite (c. 1,400 BCE) and the Phoenician (c. 1,100 BCE) (Hooker, 1990). The situation is much more complex though in relation to other writing systems and beyond the scope of this appendix which was intended to focus on *pre-literate* language development through art.

### Literacy and Beyond—Future Directions for Language as Art

The above illustrated discussion was intended to introduce a cross-section of Palaeoart and pre-historical artifacts that demonstrate a remarkable degree of aesthetic sensibility—not to mention other qualities and faculties—in early humans and even our predecessors, well before the invention of the alphabet and what is generally referred to as literacy.<sup>69</sup> Up to that point in

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also suggestions that the Aztecs had a portable abacus as early as 1,000 CE. There are references (in Spanish) listed on the following website. [http://www.geocities.com/alma\\_mia/abacus/](http://www.geocities.com/alma_mia/abacus/)

<sup>66</sup> A simple khipu most likely used for accounting. This image is in the public domain.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Quipu.png>

<sup>67</sup> An elaborate khipu showing different colored threads and variously positioned knots that may possibly have been a Royal khipu. This image is in the public domain.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Inca\\_Quipu.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Inca_Quipu.jpg)

<sup>68</sup> Full alphabets consist of both consonants and vowels. Earlier proto-alphabets—called abjads—only consisted of consonants. A similar development apparently occurred in language evolution though much earlier (Foster, 1999; Kay, 1977).

<sup>69</sup> For a postcolonial critique of the Eurocentrism in the taken-for-granted modernist notions of *literacy*, see the following critiques of the World Bank's *Education for All* agenda (Gidley, 2001b; S. Jain & M. Jain, 2003b).

time—around 1,000 BCE—according to the narrative unfolded in the main paper, human consciousness was of a different nature from what it is today. The archaic, magic and mythic, modes of consciousness demonstrated in the previous sections became superceded in many parts of the world—but significantly for European history, in Ancient Greece and Rome where writing based on alphabets began in earnest (Poletti, 2002). Perhaps the most notable feature of the development of consciousness that arose with the intellectual-mental-rational mode of thinking is that it led to the breaking up of earlier more unitive magic and mythical consciousness into what we take for granted now as more or less separate faculties—speech, writing, visual arts and music. Prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE these faculties and the processes and products associated with them were much more closely interwoven than they are in most 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century *modernized* humans—as indicated in the preceding illustrations. The *most* unity was in the Palaeoaesthetics of the very early human and the *least* integration between these faculties has been evident in the last two hundred years—with key individuals along the way being multidimensional exceptions. The latter are often referred to as Renaissance men/women indicating the integration of their intellects with art, music and spirituality. The narrative that I have been presenting throughout this appendix and throughout the whole paper points towards an emergent reintegration of these key human faculties—through postformal-integral-planetary consciousness. The future indicated would be one where language again becomes artistic, yet also rich with the conceptual content, organization and clarity that may arise from the integration of aesthetic creativity *and* mental conceptualization.

## Conclusion

From the perspective taken in this appendix I invite a deeper appreciation of aesthetic sensibility as one of the core characteristics that distinguishes us as human beings. Anthropologist of art and culture, Ellen Dissanayake has referred to humans as *Homo Aestheticus* (Dissanayake, 2003). Gebser and Steiner both point to the significance of artistic aesthetic enactment through renewed forms of scholarly-poetic writing as part of the new emerging consciousness. Edgar Morin appears to have a similar idea with the use of his term *Homo Poeticus*, (cited in De Siena, 2005). This appendix points to the need for further research in this area. There are multiple theoretical implications that could be drawn from the above data. It is not the place in an appendix such as this to attempt to cohere this evidence theoretically. My primary interest was to present some of the critically underappreciated evidence of the emerging aesthetic sensibility of hominins, and the several phases of aesthetic flourishing that pre-literate humans have demonstrated, as potential contra-indications to the premature theoretical closure of either the *up from apes* biological narratives, or the Upper Palaeolithic *cultural explosion* narratives. Clearly more research and delicate theorizing is needed to enter phenomenologically and hermeneutically into the deeper meaning of this evidence.

# Towards an Integral Critical Theory of the Present Age

Martin Beck Matušík

**Abstract:** A new model of a critical theory that is integral is introduced. It adds a seventh stage to a six-stage model of critical theory. Building on the model's predecessors, from Kant, Hegel, and Marx to Habermas and Wilber, this proposal is a three-pronged model of material, socio-political, and spiritual critique of the present age. Each dimension is non-reducible to the other. The current model echoes the attempts to bridge social and existential perspectives by early Marcuse and Sartre, and the author's prior work that did this for Habermas and Kierkegaard. This model of an integral critical theory introduces a self-transformational axis, the integer or witness-self, complementing transversally the vertical stages and horizontal states of consciousness.

**Keywords:** Critical theory, Habermas, integral, model, Wilber

## Introduction

A new—integral—critical theory (ICT) of the present age calls for at least three non-reducible dimensions of inquiry and practice, each dimension addressing a distinct field of human needs. My thinking about the possibility of ICT is programmatic in ways it poses its questions: How do we come to terms with economic, political, and religious conflicts in the context of their globalization? And, in response to their global character, how do we integrate the fields of the economy, politics, and spirituality? Answering these questions is a matter of planetary survival, and some preparatory work is in order. In taking such a propaedeutic step in the direction integral questioning opens for us, I describe three distinct and yet interrelated fields of needs and their historical modes of economic, political, and spiritual scarcity. ICT requires us to rethink the fault lines of conflict not as so many clashes of civilizations but rather as collisions of frameworks among material, political, and spiritual levels of development within each civilization and increasingly globally. By "integral" in the context of "critical theory" I mean a theory that includes the three essential and non-mutually-reducible (or orthogonal) dimensions of human existence: material, sociopolitical, and spiritual needs. ICT endeavors to bring together the personal or existential freedom with sociopolitical liberation and spiritual self-transformation.

While there have been schools of thought in other disciplines that chart various integral perspectives on human development, there have not been new or fully successful attempts in philosophy that would bring together the personal or existential freedom with sociopolitical liberation and spiritual self-transformation. Integral perspectives on human and social development were not generally available as a possibility before the notions of biological evolution (Darwin), psychological development (Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky, Kafka, Piaget, Freud, Kohlberg), and social evolution (Hegel, Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Habermas) were introduced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Accordingly, I will begin with a brief review of major efforts that pave the way for the very possibility of ICT and next describe the seven stages of critical theory. I will introduce then three fields of human needs and corresponding ideal dimensions of their satisfaction. With the ready-made outline of dimensions, fields, and ideals of ICT, I will chart the basic modes of critical deficit that describe various types of failure of meeting the ideality. Finally, I will show that *integral* critical theory must embody *redemptive critique*, insofar as its motive not only develops a theory with practical intent but also with transformative hope.

## Sources of Integral Critical Theory

My thinking about an ICT of the present age does not originate in a vacuum. It has numerous theoretical and practical forerunners, and thus raises both old and new questions. While the notion that the political is personal and the personal is political echoes some of the more recent ferment of the 1960s, in the West we find much earlier ideas for integrating personal and social perspectives both in the Judeo-Christian and philosophical writings. The Jewish Law, Torah, and the early Christian faith embody the communal forms of life that are at once socially and personally transformative. Plato's *Republic* offers a thorough examination of the intrinsic relationship between the twofold founding of justice, that of a just individual (psyche) and society (polis). The Middle Ages achieve an increasing synthesis of these classical perspectives: St. Augustine's *City of God* responds not just to Cicero but mainly to the collapse of the ancient Roman civilization, and the "city" becomes the dominant metaphor of personal-political *Ordo* in its human and divine ordinances. St. Thomas Aquinas erects in his *Summa* an architectonic of a spiritually informed real-politics. And the Jewish, Christian and Arabic scholars in the Golden Age in Spain, e.g., Maimonides, engage in a civilizing, philosophical dialogue among the three religions of the Book.

The precursors to what I call integral critical theory are found much closer to our times. In his early essays from the 1930s, Herbert Marcuse attempted to integrate the existential ontology of Martin Heidegger with the newly discovered humanistic perspective of the young Karl Marx. That attempt, initiated while Marcuse was writing his second doctorate under Heidegger, was cut short by the rise of Nazism. Marcuse joined the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research on its flight into exile and never resumed the project of phenomenological Marxism. It was not until the mid-twentieth century that Jean-Paul Sartre embarked upon a major effort to link in a single philosophical space of theory the existential (personal) together with the sociopolitical (public) perspectives on human development. The accent of the early Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* falls on the personal development, the accent of the late Sartre in *Critique of Dialectical Reason* falls on the social, political, and institutional analysis. These two perspectives, existential Marxism, Marxist existentialism, are like the popular optical illusion showing, depending on one's figure/ground perspective, a duck or a rabbit, and so one can never quite see both at the same time. There were other parallel projects of phenomenological or dialectical Marxism proposed by the Yugoslav *praxis* philosophers, such as by Mihailo Markovic and Svetozar Stojanovic, and by the Czech philosopher Karel Kosík. The Yugoslav experiment in thought had its unreliable companion in Tito's authoritarian socialist regime that morphed after his death into ethnic warfare. Some of the former philosophers of existential praxis became the proponents of the new Serbian nationalism. The Czech idea of existential humanism was promulgated in practice by Alexander Dubček's socialism with the human face, only to be crushed by the

invading Soviet army in 1968. What was left of this existential perspective immigrated into the theater of the absurd of Václav Havel who performed it faithfully from his dissident years all the way into his Czechoslovak Presidency after 1989.

In my earlier work (Matušík, 1993, 2001), I took one small step in the direction abandoned by early Marcuse and unsuccessfully pursued by Sartre. I did so by articulating Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative or discourse ethics in conjunction with Søren Kierkegaard's indirect communication underwriting his existential ethics. To be sure, Kierkegaard is able to provide critical theory with an existential dimension of communication that critical theorists of the Frankfurt School tradition for the most part rejected on account of Heidegger's momentary lapse into Nazi activism and more recently also because of the lapse of the Yugoslav *praxis philosophers* into Serbian nationalism. Throwing out the baby of existential perspective with the dirty bath water of nationalism left critical theory too weak to be able to confront the arising religious fundamentalism in the present age. Whether or not one can begin to sketch a critical theory that would give justice to self-transformative and socially transformative perspectives without violence and reductionism, this is no longer an academic question. What is at stake is our ability to come to terms with globalization of socioeconomic, political, and religious conflicts. While social experiments in real existing socialism yielded at least as much suffering as they hoped to alleviate, the reigning neoliberal market ideologies deepen the wasteland left by the previous century. We must learn from their failures as much as achievements, but have we found yet an economic way of life that would not be self- and other-destructive, that would resemble in the material domain what many invoke in their Friday or Sunday prayers? Have we found a political and cultural way of life that would prevent even our best institutions from taking self- and other-destructive paths? Can we say with clear conscience that more democracy has meant less war and exploitation? I pose these as questions, lest someone thinks I easily dismiss the levels of complexity seen in our age and the good-efforts of humanity to meet them. These questions are not rhetorical points for a homily, asking them should not be judged as preaching either. The search for integral thinking and living in the fields of the economy, politics, and spirituality is a matter of global survival.

## Seven Stages Toward Integral Critical Theory

While one could name numerous other contemporary sources of or precursors to integral thinking, my most immediate motivating impulse for developing the notion of ICT came from engagement with Ken Wilber's thought in 2006. Because I discovered Wilber rather late, I had both certain distance of a centurion who had never been a disciple as well as independence of years of thinking on the topic with which I came into our dialogue. I want to conclude this review of precursors with two relevant impacts of Wilber's thought on my thinking about integral critical theory.

The first is Wilber's (1997) early engagement with Habermas's critical theory. In my 2001 (xxv-xxvi) biography of Habermas I describe six stages of theory on the way to becoming 'critical.' In my recent engagement with Wilber and other integral thinkers I began to work toward the seventh, integral stage of critical theory, which I introduce in this programmatic essay. To briefly outline the seven stages: First, the Kantian critique of the conditions of possible experience gives us apriori structures that, while as formal perspectives are never experienced

themselves, set limits to rational thinking and protect understanding from illusions and contradictions. Second, Hegel, impacted by Darwin and historical consciousness of nineteenth century, taught us that all formal structures or perspectives are themselves developmental, and so while also never experienced as such, they can be grasped retrospectively in their forms of life. Third, Marx discovered that because structures of understanding are not only apriori and developmental conditions of possible experience, but also categories rooted in material career of institutions and modes of economic life, critical theory must not only think possibilities, it must become emancipatory of concrete people and their lived possibilities. Fourth, Western and Freudian Marxists asked the Soviet or orthodox Marxists why greatest critical deficits occurred in the context of revolutionary upheavals of the twentieth century? With Nietzsche and Freud and later with postmodern and literary critical theorists found in cultural studies, they theorized the failure to attend to the depth (hidden, irrational, or deceptively willed) dimensions of human unfreedom. Fifth, early Frankfurt School thinkers, Benjamin, Marcuse, Adorno and Horkheimer among them, learned as much from Western Marxists as from Max Weber and rejected the vanguard hubris of the Soviet and Chinese Marxism, but they retained the emancipatory aims of critical theory. Here belongs also Horkheimer's (1937/1972) classical differentiation of critical, emancipatory theory from traditional, disinterested theorizing. Sixth, Habermas introduces from the late 1970s a communicative model of critical rationality that integrates the elements of Kant, Hegel and Marx and yet reinscribes their achievement within the study of linguistic competences and social evolution. Seventh, ICT adopts Habermas's (1984, 1987, 1992) linguistic-communicative turn and his postmetaphysical standpoint as both a step forward and partial to its own achievement of formal rationality. It is a step forward insofar as Habermas's critical theory explains the apriori structures of understanding or perspectives as grammatical (performative) moves within communicative interaction in which a speaker (I) addresses a hearer (you, we) about something (it) in the world. Habermas is, however, partial to his version of postmetaphysical thinking insofar as he accepts Weber's reduction of all religious development into one of the secularized validity spheres of culture (science, morality and law, and art). In disagreement with Habermas, ICT allows for the possibility of post-metaphysical and postformal spirituality to emerge precisely where he projects a blank vanishing point, that is, under the disenchanted and linguistified conditions of postmodernity. (See Habermas, 1987, figure 28, where the bottom two spaces are left blank, indicating reduction of all sacred contents into profane domains of validity claims. This is precisely where I would theorize in ICT an emergence of postmetaphysical and postformal spirituality.)

Now Wilber adopted the Habermasian linguistic structure of three validity claims and the distinct nonlinguistic rationality of systems theory into the structure of four quadrants. The four holons (the wholes that are simultaneously parts of some other whole) of the integral AQAL perspectival structure (subjective, intersubjective, objective, and inter-objective perspectival wholes) correspond roughly to Habermas's three validity claims of communicative action (intentional or truthfulness speech claims, cultural or normative speech claims, and behavioral or objective speech claims) and the noncommunicative systems rationality (social or inter-objective, functional imperatives of markets and administrative power). At this juncture Wilber and Habermas share all that comes under the sixth stage of postmetaphysical critical theory. The key to my thinking is not what Wilber takes over from Habermas but rather what he impugns to him, namely that his social evolutionary model stops with formal stage of communicative rationality and neither allows for postformal stage of consciousness (read: individual, social, and

cultural) development nor for nondual postformal states of awareness. Habermas adopts Weber's reading of Kant's three critiques (reason, morality, and art) and Hegel's three spheres of culture (science, morality and law, and aesthetics). On that view social rationalization of modern cultures resulted not only in a disrupted, fragmented value spheres of expert knowledges (laboratory, jurisprudence, museum and aesthetic criticism), but also in a thorough reduction of the differential rationality-deficit between sacred and profane domains. In brief, social evolution has ushered our age into a thorough postmodern disenchantment with all spiritual or religious claims about subjective, intersubjective, and social worlds. If there has been a line of religious or spiritual development, like the evolution of dinosaurs, it ends with the linguistification of its claims to validity because those very claims are now answered by the expert cultures and the formal (I, you, we) perspectives we can take on all contents (it). Habermas, just like Wilber, integrates post-Darwinian, Piagetian, Kohlbergian, Hegelian models of human evolution but unlike Wilber stops short of allowing for religious evolution after Weber's and generally critical theory's disenchantment with religion. The postformal model of human evolution is, like Habermas's, based on a reconstructive social science, yet unlike Habermas, it theorizes experience and claims of individuals who already today develop stages and states of consciousness beyond formal rationality. This permits us to raise spiritual claims to existence *after* the postmodern disenchantment with religion; indeed, certain atheism or "death of God" may be assumed in such postformal and nondual claims.

Nothing in Habermas's model precludes, Wilber (2001) writes in response to him, postrational stages and states of consciousness because the unfolding of new patterns cannot be read off the accomplished forms of understanding. And so in responding to Habermas's brand of critical social theory, Wilber boldly calls for an integral "critical spiritual theory." While Habermas's "religion or ultimate concern," is communicative rationality beyond which he finds "no alternative to postmetaphysical thinking," Wilber proposes to develop "a thoroughly postmetaphysical, post-Kantian spirituality." And he hopes that this can be accomplished in part within a Habermasian formal framework, as a reconstructive science, yet with new sets of evidence of postrational development offered by those with developmental competence in the dimensions of postmetaphysical spirituality. To sum up my discussion of the seven stages leading up to the ICT, let me cite Wilber's (2001, Part 1) most important statement about Habermas's research program in critical theory:

I consider Habermas [to be] the world's greatest living philosopher. This does not mean, however, that I agree with all of what he has to say. But in very general terms I do find much agreement with his quasi-universalist approach; his developmental perspective; his dialogical methods; his three domains and three validity claims (art, morals, science—one version of the four quadrants); his championing of the lifeworld in addition to the systems world; his attempt at a reconstruction of the pragmatic history of embodied consciousness; his normative boldness; his blend of both transcendental and context-bound claims; and his critical stance.

I respectfully disagree on many of the details of those broad programs, however; and I strongly part ways with Habermas on his treatment of both pre-linguistic and trans-linguistic realms. Habermas relates humans to both preverbal Nature and transverbal Spirit in ways that I believe are profoundly incorrect. A more integral (or "all-quadrants, all-

levels, all-lines, all-states”) approach allows us to handle a much larger view of the Kosmos than Habermas allows.

This brings me to the second area that impacted my current thinking about ICT, my on-line exchange (Wilber & Matušík, 2006) on stages and states of development. In that conversation I proposed something analogical to my published work on Habermas and Kierkegaard, namely that we introduce an existential dimension into the The Wilber-Combs Lattice (Wilber, 2006, figure 4.1), the integral model of stages and states, and that we do so by drawing a distinct transversal axis that would complement the vertical axis of stages and horizontal one of states. This proposal addresses the question of whether there might be a need for a third, transversal axis, in addition to states and stages of consciousness, in order to account for Kierkegaard's spheres of existence. This is the two-fold background to my question: First, to resume from the previous discussion of stage six of critical theory, Habermas's analysis of social evolution gets us to the amber level of modern and perhaps also higher postmodern consciousness, yet Habermas requires reduction of the rationality differential between sacred and secular, and so requires a translation of spiritual faith-based *mode* of human development into the validity and cultural value *domains of modernity*. In this translation the religious value sphere drops out. Second, Kierkegaard's study of existential spheres admits (with Hegel and so also with Weber and Habermas) that there is no existing religious culture in modernity; there are no Christians in Christendom, though there are nationalist, herd-religious forms and Christians in despair. We are thus required to change the entirety of our sphere of existence. I argued in my book, *Postnational Identity*, that Kierkegaard's transformation of individuals is required by the type of social evolution posited by Habermas, otherwise it falls into anomie and meaninglessness and remains too weak to resist fundamentalist and nationalist modes of individual and group formation (consciousness falls back into tribal-ethnocentric stage).

I agree that we cannot jump the stages of consciousness, or as Habermas, with reference to Hegel's and Marx's developmental theories, would say of social evolution. I also agree with Wilber and against Habermas that the modern Enlightenment reduced all enlightenment to its particular stage of development, and so it now treats all religious states as ego- and ethno-centric, traditional, pre-critical, requiring falsely a full translation of the spiritual into the secular. And the fundamentalist forms of that archaic-cum-postmodern consciousness then clash with the modernist critical view represented, e.g., by Habermas's formal rationality. Iran's treatment of its philosopher Ramin Johanbegloo, who likes to quote Habermas among others, is the case in point (Matušík, 2006). But I want to hold that we need, besides the vertical axis of stages and the horizontal axis of states also the transversal, or genuinely vertical-inward axis of existential self-transformation. It is true that one cannot jump the stages, but in a non-evolutionary sense the spheres of existence, as shown by Kierkegaard, are available to everyone at every stage of consciousness. Yet existence spheres are not exactly the same as states of consciousness. Kierkegaard criticizes Hegel for confusing transition with transformation, evolutionary developmental dialectic of both-and with existential transformative dialectic of either/or. We need to posit in contrast to Hegel-Marx-Habermas-Piaget-Kohlberg-Gilligan, etc. and their evolutionary models, something akin to Kierkegaard's existential spheres of existence (esthetic, ethical, ethico-religious, generic and higher level-religiousness) as a motivational-inward prerequisite for the very possibility (condition of possibility) of evolutionary change. And since states are not the conditions of the emergence of stages, then we cannot speak of spheres of

existence simply in terms of states either. My model of ICT assumes that we can introduce a three-pronged lattice or axis with stages and states of consciousness and spheres of existence. Enlightenment is vertical (stages of conscious and social evolution leading to the fullness of content), horizontal (states of possible awareness receding to the emptiness of form), and transversal (existential spheres moving ever deeper to the awakening of spirit in the witness self).

## Three Fields of Needs, Three Dimensions of Ideal

Beginning with the seventh, integral stage of critical theory, let us imagine a triangle: At the base of the triangle are material needs (IT as represented by the objective behavior and body and inter-objective functional systems of markets and administration) and social-political needs (YOU/WE of intersubjective and cultural interaction), at the top are self-transformative or spiritual needs (I-I no longer as a metaphysical soul or transcendental ego but as an integer and existential witness, awareness within stages and states of consciousness). Speaking of needs and dimensions of ICT indicates that critical theory must operate in both incarnate and ideational modes. The needs represent the basic nourishment necessary for sustaining the very human existence. Each type of nourishment has its own field for growing and harvesting. Ideals become critical tools when we lack certain needs, and the time and place where one stands while envisioning what one lacks in the present condition is not a field but a projective dimension (*utopos* has no place or field, yet it exists in a dimension of ideal, hope, waiting, possibility). Any impetus for transformation of the field of needs thus comes from the recognition of the dissonance between the reality and the ideal, thus from the material, political and cultural, and spiritual dimensions of critique and possibility.

One field of ICT pertains to *material needs* and resources for their satisfaction. Its corresponding dimension encompasses *critique of political economy*, whereby it articulates vehicles for just economic distribution of material resources for the satisfaction of bodily needs. Another field concerns *social and cultural needs* for recognition and institutions for their expression. This dimension of ICT develops *critique of society*, whereby it seeks political vehicles for social integration, democratic participation, and cultural reproduction. The third field articulates ultimate concerns or hope—*spiritual needs* for the self-transformation. The dimension of *spiritual critique* in this field is to unmask not only the secular but also the religious idolatry of *finite absolutes*. In this triple approach, an ICT would promote ways of human self-transformation, practices aiming at spiritual liberation, and communicative channels to redemptive hope.

No one field of needs can be satisfied by another field (any such attempt would lead to suffering and violence); hence no dimension of critique can be overtaken by another dimension (any such attempt would lead to ideological reductionism). Material scarcity can be overcome by social justice, while the scarcity of recognition is met by reducing the democratic deficit in social, political, and cultural institutions. The scarcity of hope can be overcome neither by economic nor political means. Political economists, critical social theorists, and social activists presuppose hope for their work but do not have access to its renewable resources. The ultimate concern or hope is not like addressing an inconvenient political truth about the climate and energy decline, e.g., by converting soybeans into biodiesel or switch grasses into ethanol. Hope is not the same as hopes, one can have ultimate concern, hope (verb) yet one must not project

one ultimate something, a hope (noun). As Rabbi Cooper (1997) says, “God is a verb.” No critical theory can get off the ground without hope in the verbal, active, performative sense, yet this dimension is recovered only within the seventh stage of critical theory that integrates material and sociopolitical hopes with redemptive hope. The scarcity of hope calls for a redemptive dimension of critical theory (Matušík, 2008).

ICT addresses three non-reducible *fields of human needs*—material, social and cultural, and spiritual—developing *three dimensions of critique and possibility*—political economy of social justice, politics of recognition, and ultimate concerns for self-transformative and redemptive hope. These are laid out in Table 1.

**Table 1. Dimensions, Fields, and Ideals of Integral Critical Theory**

<i>FIELD OF NEEDS</i>	<i>DIMENSION OF CRITIQUE</i>	<i>REGULATIVE IDEAL or POSSIBILITY SOUGHT</i>
1. material needs	critique of political economy	social justice: economic redistribution of resources
2. social & cultural needs	critique of society	deliberative democracy: political & cultural recognition
3. spiritual needs	critique of secular and religious idolatry	redemptive hope: spiritual liberation & existential self-transformation

## The Basic Modes of Deficit

When fields, dimensions, and their projected idealities are conflated or reduced into one another, major deficit and even violence may occur. I introduce some *basic deficit modes*, where in the following “-” indicates a deficit and “+” a reduced (truncated) addition of a field or dimension of ICT. For example, “(2) - (1) + idolatrous (3)” means a perspective that focuses on sociocultural needs, does not adequately consider material needs, and supplements with an idolatrous interpretation of spiritual needs.

(2) - (1): If we try to meet social and cultural needs without attending to the material needs, we get an *economically deficient model*. Safeguarding democratic institutions, access to opportunity, and even political pluralism and multiculturalism, yet doing so without addressing the material conditions for their very possibility yields the economic deficit of bourgeois liberalism. For example, Hegel formulates in his *Philosophy of Right* a social ideal of a rational state in which he reconciles various modern conflicts, such as those between the individual rights and social duties, by envisioning a higher-level ethical whole. In such a higher-level whole, the individual finds his or her fullest self-expression in and through the social institutions of the state, not against them. Yet Hegel, against Kant who proposed before him the League of Nations and even perpetual peace for the end of all wars, leaves all nation-states in the international state of nature in their mutual relations, each state exposed both to hunger and war. Poverty, class-based racism, gender ceiling, and international struggle among warring nations are all conceded as necessary evils by Hegel’s ethical state as well as by the other great modern theorist of political liberalism, John Rawls.

(1) - (2): We get a *politically deficient model* if we reverse Hegel's ideality and focus on the economy alone without safeguarding the institutions of the lawful state. This deficit is best exemplified in the Soviet Marxism or Stalinism. Of course this deficit can plague both classical market liberalism that has but few minimal legal protections against wild markets and neoliberalism that has taken away as many of such protections as possible. This is the meaning behind calls for the withering away of the state (Lenin) as well as for starving the state with reducing social spending (market liberalism). The protests against the lack of political and representative democracy in the World Trade Organization on the other hand call for more political transparency. In state socialism (defined by Webster as *etatism*) state becomes a badly run corporation and all citizens are at its mercy as its employees without any independent legal protection. Without deliberative democratic institutions and sociopolitical recognition, the markets and attendant corruption rule by their not so invisible hand, as we see in many a post-Communist country today. Before them, the party directives for economic redistribution relied on models of social totality. All real existing socialisms, not just the Soviet and Chinese Marxism, tended to reduce political, legal, and multicultural sphere to the economic. Just as Hegel balked at Kant's hope for perpetual peace in the League of Nations, so Marx, unlike Hegel and Habermas, never saw the need for a philosophy of right.

(2) - (1) + *idolatrous* (3): Take the economically deficient model and add to it an idolatrous form of religiosity. The major difference between secular political liberalism and *religious conservatism* does not lie merely in the economic sphere to which they tend to be inattentive (or which they treat with minimalism), but rather in their pseudo-religious means of legitimating and justifying persisting social inequalities. Idolatrous religiosity elevates as ultimate one or another political or cultural or economic need. Dostoyevsky's literary figure of the Grand Inquisitor describes idolatrous satisfaction of spiritual needs. Moral majorities and televangelists, whether among the believers or from the bully pulpits of churches, mosques, synagogues, and political parties, emulating the Grand Inquisitor, offer the angry and pliant individuals and masses false redemptive hope, for they promote vengeance against and fear and envy of the hated other.

(1) - (2) + *idolatrous* (3): Take the politically deficient model and add to it an idolatrous form of religiosity. Insofar as the cults of personality in Stalin's Russia, Mao's China, or Castro's Cuba replaced, and so stealthily supplemented, the ultimate human concerns, they exemplified *in that field* the worst Caesaro-papist excesses also described by the portrait of the Grand Inquisitor. The secular idolatry of the party or progress or personality cult (the ultimates or practico-inert absolutized hopes supplied by to so-called atheistic states) differs only in kind from the religious idolatry of conservative religious-moral majorities in developed West (the ultimates or practico-inert absolutized hopes supplied by nationalist or state interests). While the deficit of the model (1) - (2) + *idolatrous* (3) can justify someone to claim that 9/11 was God's punishment on the sins of homosexuals and feminists in America; the deficit of the model (1) - (2) + *idolatrous* (3) justifies violent revolutionary means of the present as a necessary sacrifice for the secular-cum-divine future to come.

(3) - (1) - (2): The model that jettisons both the economic and the political needs and tries to meet both spiritually yields myriad forms of *religious oligarchy and theocracy*. These modes of incarnate (economic and political) deficit within the religious forms of life entrench priestly or other religious elite, which then lives from natural wealth and the toil of the poor it serves. All

along the elite cult imposes on the people strict codes of behavior, perhaps exhibiting more of a drive for power than for the divine. These deficit modes are rare in the West ever since the end of the Middle Ages. But they define a great part of the Middle and Far East. The Shiite Ayatollahs of Iran or the Saudi Arabian Sunni rulers could care less for their own poor or even for the poor Palestinians, whether these poor happen to be Muslim or Christian believers. The impact of a religiously informed ICT would be to speak as powerfully to established *Islamist* order today as Kierkegaard did to the powers that be in Christendom, to develop a religious critique of certain spiritlessness, to ask where are the Muslims in Islamdom? A religiously informed ICT would unmask any notion of a “holy land” as a piece of a prized real estate that must be won at all cost, even that of social and economic oppression.

(3) - (2) + *supplement of (1)*: When religious groups attempt to satisfy material needs while suppressing political freedom, we get a postsecular convex mirror of the state socialist or *etatist* deficit model. *Fundamentalist religious movements* try to meet the material needs of economically oppressed and politically unrecognized groups through institutions of social welfare, but they bind the hearts of the masses with strict adherence to a religious-nationalist doctrine. The success of Hamas or Hezbollah mirrors the initial success of the welfare policies in the Communist East, perhaps also those of the Kibbutz movement (both socialist and religious) among the early Jewish settlers in Israel. The success lies in their program of economic sharing and redistribution. Religious fundamentalists and the orthodox vanguard (whether on the Left or on the Right) alike suffer from democratic deficits. The secular idolatry of the Communist cults differs only in kind from the religious idolatry of fundamentalists.

## But There Are Alternatives!

One often hears from the liberals that there is no political alternative to modern democratic institutions, and so, we hear, we must learn to live with some economic deficits and even with war. One often hears from the leftists that there is no just economic alternative to commanded (revolutionary) redistribution of material resources, and so, we hear, we must learn to live with some democratic deficits and even with class conflict and the transitory dictatorship of the poor. One often hears from religious conservatives, fundamentalists, and even many a sincere believer that there is no spiritual alternative to their real existing religion, and so, we hear, we must learn to live at times with economic and at times political deficits and even with ensuing religious conflicts.

*TINA—there is no alternative*—is a condition of paralysis, a failure of imagination, thinking, and hope, cancer affecting all three fields of needs, dimensions of critique, and ideals sought. TINA has been originally formulated in the field of material scarcity and its dimension of economic critique as a claim that there is no economic alternative to the economy shot through with some social injustice. But, secondly, one could speak more specifically about material, postmodern, and postsecular forms of TINA.

The postmodern TINA condition affects the field of the political and its scarcity of recognition and social critique. It is the claim that there is no alternative political narrative and thus viable ideal of liberation. The postmodern TINA condition expresses the scarcity of critical resources (it asserts the impossibility of formulating normative critique and liberating narratives).

Thirdly, the postsecular TINA condition affects the field of the spiritual and its scarcity of hope and requisite critique of secular and religious idolatry. It is the claim that there is no religious alternative to the scarcity of hope. The postsecular TINA condition aggravates the scarcity of hope, namely the sinking sense that no alternatives exist to fundamentalist and secular wastelands of the present age.

The reductionisms of analysis of human needs and the deficits of critical thinking about alternatives have crippled experiments in economic, socio-political, and religious change affecting the last two centuries. The human race has been producing unparalleled economic, political, and spiritual wastelands in the last hundred years. The productivist, functionalist, and technological paradigms of thought and action have dominated both the evolving capitalist mode of production and real existing state socialism that just wanted to best it. The inconvenient truth about industrial socialist experiments is their ecological devastation carried over to the wild free-market economies in the post-Communist East. The fear of open thinking and exchange of ideas in the East and the market manipulation of the liberal field in the West have produced several generations of people incapable of thoughtful democracy. The Chinese economic miracle is underwritten by Western internet companies willing to close off free access to information. The authoritarian political models are the preferred ones from Asian economic tigers to Islamist theocracies to Bush's America. Wastelands of spiritlessness in modern times (just like any serious ecological devastation) are scary in that they might be irreversible—from outright annihilation of religious life and ancient wisdom traditions not just in Russia and China but also in Albania or in the most atheistic of European countries, the Czech Republic, to spiritlessly reactive world-religious formations of rising Christian, Jewish, and Islamist fundamentalism.

My programmatic thinking about the possibility of ICT had but one aim, to begin to come to terms with globalization of economic, political, and religious conflicts and from it the emerging need to develop serious integral thinking and living in the fields of the economy, politics, and spirituality as a matter of global survival. In taking a step in this direction, I described distinct fields of needs and their historical modes of economic, political, and spiritual scarcity. In relation to the incarnate fields of needs, I distinguished corresponding ideal or redemptive dimensions of transformation from which alone any critique of the present gets its impetus. Would we be able to recognize our fields of scarcity without a dimension of anamnesis (recollection of the dangerous memory of our future) or without an existential repetition forward of our possibilities (active, redemptive hope)?

I showed how the deficits result from the reduction of fields as well as dimensions of inquiry to each other. The regulative idealities yielded the triple disenchantment housed in the reductionist claims (theories, ideologies, forms of life) of economic, postmodern, and postsecular TINA. The best work done today in each field of needs, dimensions of critique, and redemptive idealities is the integral thinking in which there has transpired an astonishing learning curve from the past and present failures. To mention just a few very specific examples: Addressing material needs, Schweickart (2002) dares to think about alternative economic institutions *after* the failures of state socialism and capitalism. His ideal is stimulated, among others, by economic cooperatives of Mondragon, Argentina's bankrupt companies that were saved and rejuvenated by their workers, as well as China's hybrid environment of postcapitalist attempts at economically viable socialism. In the area of struggle for recognition, the late rapprochement between Jacques

Derrida's impossible hope invoked as religion without religion, the works in feminist and race theory, and Jürgen Habermas's communicative paradigm of morality, law, and democracy all stimulate thinking about institutions that could accommodate our multicultural lifeworlds. Beyond the skeptical postmodern claims, a new critical postmodern theorizing is at once normative and self-limiting (see Matušík, 2001, 2008, part 1 on Derrida and Habermas). Finally, we are hoping against hope because we live in the crisis of idolatrous ultimates or under the conditions of the "death of God." There is growing a worldwide community of thinkers and meditation practitioners, theorists of developmental studies and integral spirituality introduced models of stages and states of human development suited for understanding the inward dimension of global human flourishing. Beyond the postsecular claims of aesthetic religiosity and secular idolatry, integral spirituality introduces post/modern stages and states of consciousness that envision the divine as at once opening the doors to social justice, multicultural worlds, and the priority of one's inherence in spirit over the adherence to doctrines.

There is one astonishing implication of taking steps in the direction of ICT: What we are suffering in the twenty-first century is neither solely an economic class war, nor Samuel Huntington's clash of civilizations, e.g., between modern West and traditionalist Islam, nor simply religious wars. The revolutionary subject of true human needs, critique, and hoped-for ideals is not to be sought along one single trajectory: either economic or political class or orthodox religious brand-names. ICT requires us to rethink the fault lines of conflict as collisions of frameworks among material, political, and spiritual levels of development. Such collisions arise both from disturbances within the frameworks and in hegemonic struggles among them. The economic analysts need to focus on models best suited to local and global justice. Political theorists and social critics cannot resolve market efficiency and distribution questions, but they must develop legal and political safeguards for deliberative practices and social recognition. Economists and political theorists, whether secular or religious, should in their domains hold their tongues about ultimate concerns. Marx was not the first, Bush is not the last who misspoke from left or right sides of their mouths on religion. It is always disastrous when politics cross-dresses in religious costumes, or when religion underwrites politics, or when economic welfare buys religious adherence.

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**Martin Beck Matušík** is a Professor of Philosophy at Purdue University where he has been teaching since 1991. Matušík was 11 years old when the Soviet tanks invaded Prague. In 1969, at 12, Matušík published a photo from the funeral of Jan Palach, a Charles University philosophy student who immolated himself in protest of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia that took place in August 1968. While a first-year student at Charles University, at 19, Matušík signed "Charta 77," the Czechoslovak manifesto for human rights, issued in January 1977 by Václav Havel, Jan Patočka, and Jiří Hájek. He became a political refugee in August of that year. As a Fulbright student of Jürgen Habermas in Frankfurt a/M in 1989, he witnessed the historical November fall of the Berlin Wall and the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia that led to the election of Václav Havel as the first Czechoslovak President after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Matušík lectured at Prague's Charles University as a Fulbright fellow in 1995.

Matušík is author of six single author books, two edited collections, and a co-editor with Patricia Huntington of *New Critical Theory*, a series at Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. Among his books are *Postnational Identity: Critical Theory and Existential Philosophy in Habermas, Kierkegaard, and Havel (1993)*; *Specters of Liberation: Great Refusals in the New World Order (1998)*; *Jürgen Habermas: A Philosophical-Political Profile (2001)*; and co-editor with Merold Westphal of *Kierkegaard in Post/Modernity (1995)*. His most recent publication, *Radical Evil and the Scarcity of Hope: Postsecular Meditations*, is forthcoming from Indiana University Press in 2008.

[matustik@purdue.edu](mailto:matustik@purdue.edu)

<http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~matustik>

# ILLUMINATING THE BLIND SPOT: AN OVERVIEW AND RESPONSE TO THEORY U

Jonathan Reams

## Introduction

There have been numerous attempts to make a contribution to the conversation about how we can make the world a better place. These cover a full range of approaches including scientific, political, economic, social, new age consciousness and so on. Many of these attempts focus on the value of seeing the world through the lens, discipline, doctrine or ideology of a particular approach, and thus advocate for the primacy of that approach. In other words, they preach the latest gospel that can bring salvation to a troubled world.

To see the world as a troubled place is not hard. In fact, many would say that if you saw it otherwise you must be blind or seriously in denial. And so efforts to make the world a better place are a response that arises in many forms. The question then arises; what would an integral approach have to offer? How might it go beyond any particular ideology, discipline or doctrine? What if instead of creating models responding to the ongoing problems of the world, we looked at illuminating the blind spot lying within such models, and generated a more comprehensive framework for seeking to understand the underlying processes behind change itself? This is one way to look at what Otto Scharmer has been working on with the development and publication of *Theory U. Leading from the Future as it Emerges. The Social Technology of Presencing.* (2007. Cambridge, MA: The Society for Organizational Learning, Inc.). It can be seen as a way of understanding the underlying processes behind deep change, and of enabling the enacting of such change processes.

In this essay, I will present a substantial overview of Scharmer's new book. The aim of this overview is to give readers a good feel for the scope and depth of this book, (even entice them to read it for themselves), as well as to set the stage for my own comments that follow. These comments will offer responses on two levels; one focusing mainly on cognitive development concerns and how they might have implications for his work, the second focusing on combining some specific points in Theory U and their implications with my own views and pointing to a perceived tension and possible blind spot.

## A Whirlwind Tour of Theory U

My plan is to invite you along on the journey I took in reading this book. I will describe the work as I encountered it, chapter by chapter. I will summarize the main points and try to weave together a picture of how Scharmer unfolds his view. He covers a great deal of territory, so settle in for a long journey.

## Introduction

The introduction to the book lays out the scope of territory that will be covered. Scharmer begins with a discussion of social inequities in the world, and describes current trends as pointing to a crisis in our society that is making the old forms of institutions and social

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structures obsolete. He sees them as falling apart, and in the midst of their rubble, something new has the possibility to arise. “What I see rising is a new form of presence and power that starts to grow spontaneously from and through small groups and networks of people” (p. 4). This is the new social field Scharmer sees emerging, and he sees the blind spot of this or any social field as “the place within or around us where our attention and intention originates” (p. 6).

His insight to this blind spot is derived from Bill O’Brian’s observation, derived from years of studying and practicing organizational learning efforts, that the “success of the intervention depends on the *interior condition* of the intervener” (p. 7). From this, the underlying question Scharmer poses is: “How can we act from the future that is seeking to emerge, and how can we access, activate, and enact the deeper layers of the social field” (p. 8)? Thus Scharmer lays out the core issue that his work revolves around.

Scharmer also opens by drawing on his farming background, using the term “field” from this context as a metaphor to describe how he views the “*field structure of attention*” (p. 10). The combination of the two elements above (our interior condition and acting from the future seeking to emerge) leads him to working with this “field structure of attention” as the mechanism that links what we say and how we act with where we operate from, or our blind spot. He begins to point to the ways in which consciousness (where we operate from) creates experience as the process or principle in operation in the construction of social fields. “The same activities can result in radically different outcomes *depending on the structure of attention from which a particular activity is performed*. Put differently, “*I attend [this way] – therefore it emerges [that way]*” (p. 13). This distinction leads Scharmer to delving deeply into how our attention is and can be structured as a major portion of the book.

Once this foundation is laid Scharmer sets out to build upon it and has three aims for book:

1. To provide a social grammar of the social field that illuminates the blind spot.
2. Exemplify this grammar by revealing four fundamental metaproceses that underlie the collective process of social reality, moment to moment: thinking, conversing, structuring and globally connecting (global governance).
3. Outline a social technology of freedom that puts this approach onto its feet and into practice through a set of principles and practices of presencing.

This leads to a call for “discover[ing] a more profound and practical integration of the head, heart, and hand—of the intelligences of the open mind, open heart, and open will—at both the individual and collective level” (p. 20).

## **Part I: Bumping into Our Blind Spot**

### **Chapter 1: Facing the Fire**

This brief chapter sets the tone by revealing the earliest intimation of Scharmer’s work. He describes the day when he was sent home from school to find the family farmhouse burning down, and how he stood watching everything he was identified with disappear. He then describes his experience of realizing that this burning away of his old identity allowed him to be present in a way previously unknown, that he was drawn out of his body and into being the “seer,” the true Self. He then relates this to a realization of two selves, which he frames as one being connected to the past, and the other as “who I could become in the future” (p. 25).

## Chapter 2: The Journey to “U”

Much of this book describes the journey Scharmer has taken in coming to his understanding of how we can access and enact the future that wants to emerge through us. It begins with Bill O’Brian’s comment quoted above about the interior condition of the intervener. Scharmer calls this the blind spot of how we have approached change. He describes levels of subtlety at which change takes place as going from re-acting to re-structuring to re-designing to re-framing to re-generating. This last one he calls presencing, or “seeing from our deepest source” (p. 29).

Scharmer then describes his encounter with economist Brian Arthur and his description of two levels of thinking, a kind of reflex downloading and a deeper kind of knowing. Arthur’s process is described as lots of waiting and reflecting, or “observe, observe, observe, retreat and reflect, then act in an instant” (p. 34). This is then related to Francisco Varela and the core process of how one becomes aware, leading to the “three gestures of becoming aware. They are: suspension, redirection, letting-go” (p. 35). These then become the journey down the left hand side of the U. Going up the right hand side of the U is characterized as letting come, enacting and embodying. This creates a total of seven cognitive spaces: downloading, seeing, sensing, presencing, crystallizing, prototyping, performing/embodying. From this Scharmer calls for “a new type of social technology that is based on three instruments that each of us already has—an *open mind*, [IQ] and *open heart*, [EQ] and an *open will* [SQ]—and to cultivate these capacities not only on an individual but also on a collective level” (p. 40). The essence of presencing is described as our two selves (past and future) talking to each other.

This model of moving consciousness, collective or individual, is further shown to be marked by three gate keeping processes that go on in our minds. These are described as the three enemies of the journey down the U; the voice of judgment (VOJ), the voice of cynicism (VOC), and the voice of fear (VOF). Each of these can abort the process of deepening the field structure of attention. Scharmer says that all of these situations drive us to the need for examining our blind spot, or the source of our attention.

## Chapter 3: Fourfold Learning and Change

This chapter focuses on a discussion of how the unintended consequences of our actions frustrate us. Four levels of change are described:

- *Reacting* or manifest action.
- *Redesigning*, or process and structure.
- *Reframing* or thinking.
- *Presencing* or the sources of intention and creativity.

How prior organizational learning efforts were based on single and double loop learning is shown to be limited by only being based on learning from the past. This is in contrast to presencing, (the combination of presence and sensing) which is about learning from the future that wants to emerge. As a step in this direction, systems thinking is shown as being able “to help people close the feedback loop between the enactment of systems on a behavioral level and its invisible source of awareness and thought” (p. 55). This is highlighted in Scharmer’s interview with Peter Senge and his reference to Master Nan and the core issue facing the world of “*the reintegration of matter and mind*” (p. 54).

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## Chapter 4: Organizational Complexity

This chapter examines three types of complexity: dynamic, social and emerging. Dynamic complexity appears as systemic types of framing that systems theory addresses. Social complexity appears as a postmodern recognition that stakeholders have different views/perspectives. Emerging complexity is about disruptive patterns of innovation and change. Scharmer describes the movement of attention from products to processes and then finally to the sources of processes/products, and provides good examples of this movement. One example involved how people from Ford and Toyota both looked at an old Ford plant and saw very different things, and how this allowed Toyota to innovate in ways that gave them huge advantages. This different type of seeing was perceived to have arisen through the application of systems thinking. This led to a call for cross institutional places for productive conversations among relevant stakeholders.

## Chapter 5: Shifts in Society

This chapter looks at three major shifts in society; the rise of a global economy (as distinct from a world economy), the rise of a network society, and the rise of a cultural-spiritual shift. The first of these shifts tends to reflect a socialist view of the need for economic equality as a right of sorts. Otto tells a story that reveals how his participation in an anti-nuclear protest shaped his journey in this work. During the protest police attacked protesters, and his group non-violently resisted, with the police gradually relenting. This event is shown to have significantly influenced his drive to work on changing “that system” that has dominated the global economy.

In discussing the networked society, he shows the changes in social capital from traditional forms of social relations typified by Putnam’s book *Bowling Alone* to NGO type social networks working quietly to change the system. He then describes the cultural-spiritual shift, defining spirituality “as the source of our creativity. It is distinct from religion, for it concerns experience and not belief systems” (p. 90). He also focuses on working across ecological, social and political streams of experience and institutional structures in an integrated manner.

Scharmer then goes into a deeper analysis of the structures or arenas of experience historically, identifying objectivity, inter-subjectivity and trans-subjectivity as arenas of clashing forces related to each of the three above domains. This produces a nine square grid, where he feels that each square needs to be taken into account. He identifies the most significant clash as being in the spiritual domain, between self and Self. In his framework this means who we have been and who we can become, our highest future possibilities. He mentions Ken Wilber and AQAL theory as the most comprehensive meta-framework developed to date to comprehensively address all of these domains.

He also uses the notion of the blind spot to highlight what he perceives as the issues not being addressed by any given approach, and calls for knowledge that enables the creation of the realities we talk about. He then says this requires us to “trust our own senses, experiences and insights – without having a clue as to where that journey will lead next” (p. 104).

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**Chapter 6: Philosophical Grounding**

A pause is taken here to recount the journey so far, and pay attention to the epistemological and ontological roots of the inquiry. Husserl and Heidegger are mentioned as setting the stage for deepening our collective inquiry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Scharmer lays out a matrix showing the movement of systems thinking from linear to non-linear and on to self-transcending systems as a source point, and on the other axis the movement from explicit to tacit knowledge to “self-transcending primary knowledge” that is not yet embodied. The first four cells of this matrix have been developed and explored, but there is grey area in the domains of the third movement along each axis. He cites David Hawkins as he lays out the territory that this kind of knowledge is about love as being global and rising about the separation that we normally experience.

**Chapter 7: On the Threshold**

Scharmer then looks at thresholds in a way that describes the process of developmental shifts very clearly. In many ways this process follows Robert Kegan’s description of the developmental transitions. The movement across the threshold involves a kind of dying, a letting go of the old identity. He sees the key discipline of our time as being the capacity to attend to cracks that open up in our reality and to go and flow with them.

**Part II: Entering the U Field**

After presenting his rationale for why we need to look into our blind spots in Part I, Part II of the book goes into depth describing the processes and stages of the U process. The introduction given in Part I to this model laid out the basic territory, and now Scharmer proposes to take us on a deep journey into the “way we pay attention, the *field structure of our attention*” (p.117).

**Chapter 8: Downloading**

Here Scharmer introduces us to downloading by telling a story of a company that enacted old patterns of behavior used by the first and then subsequent three CEO’s, showing how they set the tone and culture of the organization. He points to four failures of attention that this story illustrates about downloading (recalling the language of the field structure of our attention).

1. Not recognizing what you see (decoupling perception and thought).
2. Not saying what you think (decoupling thinking and talking).
3. Not doing what you say (decoupling talking and “walking”).
4. Not seeing what you do (decoupling perception and action).

These four are shown to be barriers to learning and change within organizations. Reversing them leads to crossing the first threshold and entering into the second space of the U process, seeing.

**Chapter 9: Seeing**

The first shift occurs in moving from downloading, the result of this denial or decoupling, to seeing. In this process the field structure of our attention moves from being encased in the

center of things to seeing from the periphery or boundary. Here we can see the data in front of us instead of only perceiving the downloaded images of the past. An attitude of wonder is highlighted as essential to keeping the capacity for seeing open.

Scharmer borrows from organizational learning and change literature by reframing Bohm and Isaac's notion of dialogue from being the 'art of thinking together' to the art of *seeing together*. He then uses a story that recurs throughout the book of a patient-physician forum in Germany that shows how this quality of seeing was present when people moved from an outcomes downloading approach that left the room deadened, to one of looking into first person experience and focusing attention on what was present in the room at that moment. This then moves into chapter 10 and the notion of "sensing."

### **Chapter 10: Sensing**

The story of the patient-physician health care group experience continues in chapter 10 as the group clearly sees its assessment that the system they are working in and using operates at the mechanical/downloading levels, and that their desired notions of health care are much more holistic. Then the mayor, a teacher and a farmer all point to the same issues being present for their communities of practice. Scharmer uses this to describe the field structure of attention in sensing as allowing perception to move from individual heads to coming from not just the periphery of, but outside of organizational boundaries. The process of moving into this stage of the U involves:

1. Charging the container.
2. Deep diving.
3. Redirecting attention.
4. Opening the heart.

The story of Parsifal and Scharmer's meeting with the Circle of Seven (seven women who had formed a group for supporting their deep process work) then illustrates this process of opening to the wisdom of the heart. This leads into the work of Henry Bortoff and a distinction between counterfeit and authentic wholeness. Counterfeit wholeness is seen as attention within the mental constructs, while authentic wholeness is about sensing from within the field, having a perception from wholeness. This is linked to the story of Plato's cave, redirecting of our attention away from the mental shadows on the wall and around to the sources of those shadows and beyond to the reality outside.

### **Chapter 11: Presencing**

This chapter on presencing goes deeply into the core of the Scharmer's work and the U theory. Presencing is described as a combination of sensing and presence. It is "a moment when we approach our self *from the emerging future*. . . . The key difference is that sensing shifts the place of perception to the current whole while presencing shifts the place of perception to the *source* of an emerging future—to a future possibility that is seeking to emerge" (p. 163).

This stage of the U journey is characterized by two core questions at the heart of creativity. Scharmer discusses his interview with Michael Ray as having best articulated these questions as who is my Self and what is my Work? The capital S self is one's

highest/authentic self, and the capital W work is not our career but our purpose for being here on earth.

Scharmer talks about the field structure of presencing by telling of his pursuit of the source of the Inn River in the Swiss Alps. There he found no single source, but a host of glaciers all contributing to a small lake, and realized the distributed nature of source being everywhere. In this way the field structure of our attention is not only outside of our normal horizons, but surrounds it as a sphere would.

He then goes into Eleanor Rosch's distinction between conventional analytical knowledge and "primary knowing" or wisdom awareness. This knowing is characterized as being open and has unconditional value. He goes on to tell how she described a very Eastern spiritual view of the source of this knowing and how it can act in the world. "That knowing capacity actually is the field knowing itself, in a sense, or this larger context knowing itself" (pp. 168-9). This is followed by examples of a sculptor whose hands know what to do, a businessman falling apart to break through, and a participant in a workshop for an organization breaking through a membrane to get at a vividly living question that transformed the project. He also continues with the patient-physician dialogue story, as well as another group project.

The Circle of Seven then describe what they call the presence of the circle being, which arises when someone in the group steps over a boundary and lets go of their normal way of being in the world. This leads to the identification of three conditions of deep listening: unconditional witnessing, unconditional impersonal love, and seeing the essential self. The presence of this circle being is described in terms of time slowing down, ears ringing, not speaking casually and a palpable shift in energy. Otto then gets to experience this as they ask if he would like his work held in this circle.

Scharmer lists principles of presencing as;

- letting go and surrendering,
- inversion or going through the eye of the needle,
- the coming into being of a higher (authentic) presence and self, and
- the power of place: creating a holding space of deep listening.

Otto's experience with the Circle of Seven brought an authentic quality to his description of the presencing phenomenon. While his interviews and research with leading scientists bring great knowledge and a learning journey of great depths, and his experiences of facilitating experiences for others illustrates the principles very well, it is this disclosure of his own experience of being held and seen in the way he is describing that conveys to the reader an energetic quality behind the theory and stories, infusing them with a more authentic and vibrant feeling.

## **Chapter 12 Crystallizing**

Here we begin moving up the U, and learn the steps seen as critical to moving into the world from this deeper place of presencing. It is the work of keeping the connection to higher Self that is made at the bottom of the U that the next chapters focus on. The stories used in previous chapters continue to illustrate this stage of the U process, and this helps to give the reader a fuller sense of the richness of each story.

The early intuitions that arise about what wants to emerge from the future, or from our highest possible future, then require some clarification and grounding in forms that we can act on. Crystallizing “facilitates the surfacing of a living imagination of the future whole” (p. 195). We can create visions from anywhere, even downloading, but harkening back to O’Brien and how the interior condition of the intervener determines the success of the intervention, creating a vision and intention from the highest self is clearly a very different thing.

Crystallizing uses principles of the power of intention, and here Scharmer uses another personal story of creating a global peace university with five student colleagues after being inspired by the pioneering Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung. The next principle involved is letting come, involving the question of “how can you tune in to that intention?” (p. 199). The issue is letting go of the old ways of thinking and perceiving to make space for something new to come and the capacity to listen to the new deeply. Scharmer then describes the principle of operating from “grand will” and quotes Martin Buber to illustrate the surrender that is required to let go of the ego or small self’s habitual action of inserting itself and its images into our will. Finally he talks about venues for waking up, or environments/contexts that facilitate sustaining the attention in this consciousness.

### **Chapter 13: Prototyping**

Using the concept of prototyping from the design industry, Scharmer shows how we can help to maintain this consciousness of the higher Self by utilizing the wisdom of our hands/bodies to act in ways that our heads can only catch onto later. He talks about the tension between and care to navigate between “two major dangers and pitfalls: mindless action and action-less minds” (p. 205).

The principles involved here begin with connecting to the inspiration, maintaining our connection to the source at the bottom of the U. This requires daily practice at making and keeping that connection. He has Joseph Jaworski describe how he stays connected through daily practice, then holds that deeper intention as much of the time and as long as possible, finally noticing and seizing opportunities when they arise.

The second principle is being in dialogue with the universe. This is working with synchronicity, trusting that the universe is a friendly place and that it will help you find and refine opportunities in alignment with your higher self. Then prototyping is connected to failing early and leaning quickly by putting things together and out for feedback before they are finished and polished.

The final principle is creating strategic microcosms, or landing strips for emerging future possibilities. This means doing things under the radar, or incubating them out of the glare of the kind of attention that can crush such projects by unnecessary criticism while the seeds are still tender and new.

### **Chapter 14: Performing**

In order to carry the field of presencing into this stage of enacting in the world, Scharmer talks about how we need to stay connected with the macro level while acting personally. Attention moves to the larger kinds of institutional ecologies that our work is embedded in. The field unfolds in a more integrated way with the center flowing out to the periphery as an

integrated whole rather than a crossing of boundaries. The principles involved in this include systemic integration, innovative ecosystems, and field shift of the evolving ecosystem. He then lists eight observations that he has noticed over time that support this kind of work; core group composition, primacy of praxis, practice fields and tools, parallel learning structures, purpose and shared principles, passion or personal embodiment of purpose, perception-driven participation and finally products.

This completes the in-depth tour of the U process, and paves the way for examining how it can address the issues outlined in Part I.

### **Part III: Presencing: A Social Technology for Leading Profound Innovation and Change**

Here Scharmer lays out the rationale for this work, reiterating the importance of moving beyond examining what we do and how we do it to the inner source from which we operate, or our blind spot. His proposition boils down to being able to distinguish that any action we take can emerge from one of four sources or fields of attention; “from the center (I-in-me), from the periphery (I-in-it), from beyond one’s periphery (I-in-you), and from permeating all of one’s open boundaries (I-in-now)” (p. 228). How we learn to navigate these fields is seen as depending upon learning a new grammar in order to be able to make appropriate distinctions on our journey.

#### **Chapter 15: The Grammar of the Social Field.**

Scharmer has 21 propositions that outline what he calls the grammar of the social field. He is explicit in building on the early work of Kurt Lewin in describing social systems as fields. These propositions are in effect laying out a way to make distinctions about the U process his research has revealed, and are the core tools for learning how to direct the field structure of attention. They cover much of what has gone before, and package it in a concise manner. However this is not a cursory outline of highlights. Each of the 21 propositions is explored in sufficient depth to get a good feel for what is involved in actualizing it. This lengthy chapter is also full of diagrams that build on previous diagrams to illustrate how various propositions reveal the implications of the U process. Many matrixes are the result, showing how this pattern of movement shows up in a comprehensive array of human experience and endeavor.

This mapping also includes the opposite movement that is not only possible, but in many ways dominant. The differences between presencing and its U cycle of activity are compared to the cycle of absencing, which results in not seeing, de-sensing and absencing/hubris, followed by self-deluding and aborting and destroying, and how this shows the archetypical pattern of the anti-cycle. That we as humans live in the tension between these is pointed at, but not so clearly illustrated is how these tensions may hold us in the center, not moving too much through either cycle.

#### **Chapter 16: Individual Actions**

In this chapter Scharmer focuses on choices we make as individuals, leading to mapping out the “anti-space” of the U, which depicts the processes and outcomes that arise when we move in the other direction and allow the seeds of downloading or reenacting the past to drive out attention and actions. The anti stages are *blinding* leading to not seeing, *entrenching* leading to de-sensing, and *holding on* leading to absencing/hubris. From this place begins the

processes of *manipulating*, *self-deluding*, *abusing*, *aborting*, and *annihilating* all leading to destruction. In this cycle open mind becomes stuck in one truth/view, open heart becomes stuck in one world/ us versus them, and open will becomes stuck in one self/will. He calls this the space of social anti-emergence, or the shadow space of absencing. He describes how we can flip quickly between these two spaces, and points to staying awake as the way to stay connected to the source, or our highest Self.

## Chapter 17: Conversational Fields

In this chapter, Scharmer lays out his work around how conversations can move through different fields. This incorporates and extends the work done by Bill Isaacs on dialogue, which itself helped to bring the original impetus that David Bohm brought to the field. This is summarized by using the matrix of the four fields used throughout the book to describe how conversations can evolve.

- The first field of downloading is enacted by speaking from what others are perceived to want to hear. This brings about the kinds of polite routines and empty phrases that we know so well. Central to this is not saying what you think, creating an *autistic* system.
- Then the second field of debate emerges when people begin to speak their minds, and is characterized by “talking tough.” People speak from what they think, and are embedded in and identified with their point of view. The system here is *adaptive*, and people say what they think.
- The third field, or dialogue emerges when reflective inquiry begins and when conversation arises as speaking from seeing one’s self as part of the whole. Instead of defending the viewpoint that was identified with at the previous stage, participants are able to inquire into other viewpoints. A *self-reflective* system emerges, with the capacity to see and reflect on one’s own part in the creation and maintenance of the system.
- Finally, in the fourth field, presencing occurs and is characterized by a generative flow. Speaking arises from what is moving through the field, which has qualities of stillness, collective creativity and flow. It becomes a *generative* system with an identity shift to the authentic self.

Scharmer then maps these four fields of conversation onto the figure showing the anti-space of absencing. Here the movement begins with the same kind of downloading or talking nice of habitual conversation. Moving in the opposite direction, it goes through silencing the views of others through blaming others to absencing and hubris. From there it moves through intrigue and disinformation, and harassing and bullying, resulting in collective collapse. He describes the result as “conversations that pollute, poison and pathologize our collective thought (through intrigue and disinformation), that poison microcosms of emerging futures (through harassing, bullying, stifling innovation), and that eventually destroy the structural collective ground itself (collective collapse)” (p. 287).

The dynamics between the U space and the anti-space are seen as dialectical and non-linear, being able to flip back and forth instantly. He brings up the question of how can one awaken and train a capacity to perceive the threshold between the two, which is seen to exist at a very subtle level. He describes “this eyelike entity, from which sparks of our attention and intention originate, is what I call the *I-in-now*. It’s the invisible origin of your real presence and power” (p. 295). Examining how the different places of origin open up spaces

for different levels of conversational possibility, he charts the precursors of each of the four conversational fields, showing how the movement to each level or field is dependent on the origins of the communication; whether they are originating from downloading, factual connections, personal connections, or source connections.

Scharmer notes that most individuals do not aspire to enact the anti-space, but to live from the deeper levels of conversation, and asks why it is that our institutions seem to be stuck in the grip of pathological patterns of conversation and action. He maintains that this is from our lack of ability and capacity to direct attention to the sources of our conversation, especially the deepest source or our highest Self. He identifies the key to developing this capacity: "That journey is about deepening our attention *first* before we start to act on an impulse" (p. 299).

### **Chapter 18: Organizational Actions**

This chapter applies the same structure to examining the evolution or devolution of organizations.

- Level 1 organizational structures are characterized by centralization and machine bureaucracies. The source of power is the hierarchical structure and complying with central rules. They are center driven and have a logic of economies of scale around production.
- Level 2 organizational structures are characterized by decentralization and work through divisions. Their source of power is market success so they operate by meeting market demand and are thus periphery driven. The operating logic switches to economies of scope related to customers.
- Level 3 organizations are networked, and have relational or matrix structures. The source of power is networked relationships, and thus they are relationally driven. They operate on a logic of economies of innovation, focused on product innovation.
- Level 4 organizations are seen as ecosystems of innovation, whose sources of power are the field of emerging possibilities. These organizations shape innovation ecosystems which are driven by this emerging field. The logic is economies of presencing and system innovation.

Stories of DEC and Enron help to illustrate how organizations have fallen due to either not moving to deeper levels (DEC) or from falling prey to the operations of the anti-space (Enron). This anti-space begins in the same place, or in centralization of the organizational structure, but the movement is characterized by institutional ignorance, arrogance and hubris leading to disinformation, sclerosis and collapse. Each of these is illustrated though following the collapse of Enron and of the socialist system in Eastern Germany.

He closes the chapter by pointing to the deeper aspects behind the development of the different levels of organizational structures, showing how functional processes and centralized structure, core processes, stakeholder conversation process and ecosystem innovation processes are the sources of the four levels of organizational structures.

### **Chapter 19: Global Actions**

This chapter brings the focus of the U theory to the domain of global development issues and the core structures underlying them. The example of health care opens the discussion by

showing how little attention is placed on support for changes in lifestyle that have clearly been shown to have a strong impact on the highest cost (in terms of dollars and quality of life) health issues. Scharmer identifies three areas of activity at this level, business, politics and civil society.

- Communication between these sectors at the downloading level takes the form of things like commercials, propaganda and bribery, soft money and lobbying. The inequities in the current structures of society are shown to work with these forms of communication to reinforce the dysfunctional operation of systems in our world today.
- At level two, the realm of debate, we get consumption as the beginning of two way communication between business and civil society, elections as communication between politics and civil society, and regulations between politics and business.
- Level three communications, dialogue, shows up between business and civil society as stakeholder dialogue, between politics and civil society as referenda, and between politics and business as public conversations.
- The fourth level sits in the center as collective presence and co-creation that operate across all of these boundaries.

The examination of the field structure of attention in this domain has:

- Level one centralized structures of government systems with emerging private sectors. The source of power is in the court and state and the coordination mechanism is center driven planning. The driving force is the politics of the court.
- Level two is characterized as decentralized with market competition and an emerging private sector. The source of power is capital and business, coordinated by a periphery driven market. The driving force is then the demands of this market.
- Level three is characterized as networked, with negotiation and dialogue with an emerging civil sector. The sources of power are public opinion and NGOs. They are coordinated by dialogue and are relational driven. The driving force behind this level is a values based civil sector.
- Level four is characterized as ecosystem presence, with emerging cross-sector action. The source of power here is the presence of the emerging whole and presencing is the coordinating mechanism coming from the emerging field. The driving force is cross-sector awareness and action.

The U and its anti-space are described as beginning from the public sector in terms of the state and government hierarchy, and with the suspension of state-centric power the private sector emerges with its capital, business and markets. The redirection of market-centric power leads to the rise of the civic sector and the focus on people, NGOs and dialogue. The letting go of system-centric power allows for the emergence of ecosystems of innovation and collective cross-sector creativity. Going up the left side of the U, letting come brings communities of cross-system co-creation. Enacting these leads to strategic microcosms of the future, and embodying these brings about deep direct democracy.

The anti-space is described as the public sector being stuck in or blinded by one power mechanism. This leads to a special interest state and lack of competition. The entrenching of this leads to being stuck in one world or logic, producing structural violence and a lack of dialogue. This is furthered by being stuck in one self, and a holding on that brings us to a collective absencing and disconnect to the emerging whole, or being stuck in the old self.

From there, the downhill ride continues with manipulating and public disinformation and anomie. The abusing of this brings about societal sclerosis and an inability to redirect attention which brings about annihilating and the destruction of democratic foundations and social cohesion.

Scharmer then outlines a way that can be used to support the transformation of capitalism and democracy through the leverage point of infrastructure innovations. He outlines innovations in democratic, market, cultural and power place infrastructures. His analysis also leads to identifying a lack of leadership “capacity to collectively sense, shape, and create our future” (p.352). This leadership must have the capacity to address the four meta-processes of the social field covered here, those of thinking, languaging, structuring and evolving.

## Chapter 20: Catching Social Reality Construction in Flight

As we approach the end of this journey through the social fields, Scharmer takes us to the next level of reviewing and integrating all that has been covered at a meta-process level. He describes how the core capacity of being able to notice differences between the field structures of attention can allow us to alter their structure and direction. The place from which we can overcome our blind spot is described as the *I-in-now*.

He invites us to conduct a thought experiment by thinking of these social field structures as living entities, and to envision our jobs as being to help them become aware of themselves and evolve to the next level. He then proceeds to review the journey thus far that has taken us through multiple domains of inquiry and see what meta-patterns and processes are at the heart of the whole.

- Field one is characterized as being made up of *autistic* systems. This is from seeing that nothing new gets into systems that operate by downloading or any other level one quality. Responses to the environment are limited to automatic reflexes, habits and routines from the past.
- Field two is characterized as being composed of *adaptive* systems. There is now an opening to data from the environment and other level two characteristics across the domains encountered. One good example of how integral or meta-systemic Scharmer’s Theory U is emerges when he discusses how the work of living systems describes this field of activity through the mechanism of structural coupling. The view that social systems are auto-poetic entities is popular in this approach, and a powerful framework for understanding living systems. Applying the U theory framework to the domains covered by structural coupling, Scharmer identifies the truth that this perspective brings as well as the limitations of the approach in that it does not recognize the other three levels or fields in how it views the world.
- Field three is characterized as being composed of *self-reflective* systems. He notes that the simple test to see if you are in field three is if you begin to see yourself as part of the system. In this way the system is able to see itself, and thus is self-reflective. When the capacity to operate from this system is present, environmental stimuli can trigger responses or reacting (level 1), adapting (level 2), or self-reflecting (level 3). Thus the range of choices available expands significantly, and the potential outcomes along with the different sources that can be chosen. Another feature of this field is that instead of boundaries being closed as in level 1, or when

entities influence one another across boundaries in level 2, boundaries begin to open and even partially collapse in level 3.

- The shift to field four has yet another fundamentally different quality of being *generative*, that Scharmer characterizes as moving from being connected to the current reality to “connecting with the deepest presence and source of the best possible future possibility that is seeking to emerge” (p. 361). One can now notice that “*I attend* [this way], *therefore it emerges* [that way]” (p. 361). The shift to this field is also characterized by a collapse of the boundaries between systems, and a sense of wholeness becomes much clearer.

He then presents a summary of the grammar of the social field that outlines all seven stages of the U process (downloading, seeing, sensing, presencing, crystallizing, prototyping and performing) in ten categories (gestures of paying attention, place of operating, seeing the world as, knowledge, social space, social time, collective social body (complexity) as, primary causal mechanism, episteme and self). The last three categories are then examined more closely (the others having already been covered). Different types of causal relations are categorized according to the four fields or levels and Aristotle’s four types of causation (material, efficient, formal and final). How we epistemologically move through the U is explored briefly, and a section looking at how the self is experienced is explored. This section is of relevance for those familiar with developmental models, as Scharmer demonstrates how the stages (sliced and named somewhat differently by different researcher’s foci) describe a universal human condition. He is clear that this aspect is “the most fundamental grounding condition” (p.375). The movement of the self “progresses through stages and states that shift from emphasizing the subjective, objective, intersubjective and trans-intersubjective” (p. 375) realms.

## **Chapter 21: Principles and Practices of Presencing for Leading Profound Innovation and Change.**

In this final chapter (other than the epilogue) Scharmer moves from the theoretical and technical discussion of Theory U to providing readers with a “how to” approach, the practitioners view. This involves 24 points, complete with examples and practices for each. This provides the reader with a shift in perspective, allowing the theory to come alive in a new way that is more active. Passing over the same territory with another iteration taken from a different slant enables a kind of triangulation for the reader. It helps to emphasize that the theory has resulted from practice and experience as much as reflection.

Suggestions for how to engage others in this process, how to apply it in various contexts and situations, and how to prepare one’s self in the navigating the various transitions all round out the picture in a rich and engaging manner. It also demonstrates that this is not just a theory, that Scharmer has practiced what he preaches.

## **Epilogue**

The closing few pages of the book tells more of Scharmer’s story, activities and aspirations for his work. He is very candid about his hopes and dreams, and the unknowing and trust in the emergence of the open will or surrender to the higher Self and its capacity to act for the greater good. There is much to be inspired by, as his enthusiasm flows through and between the lines. A kind of transparency of self is present, and you can *feel* your way into the space he creates through his stories. The epilogue is in a sense a call to action, an

invitation, although not explicit. How readers choose to respond to this call will be the next phase of the story.

## Critiques and Reflections

I will now offer some critiques and reflections on Scharmer's book. Beyond my general interest in the field of leadership, I have focused on the intersection between understandings of higher state and stage structures of consciousness and leadership in particular. This area of research overlaps with the territory that Scharmer covers in his book, in particular the aspect of deepening consciousness and leadership's relationship to the capital S higher Self.

I begin with a response of gratitude for Scharmer having taken the time and effort to distill what is clearly a life's journey into a clear, coherent and well organized volume. Scharmer presents his material in an accessible manner by taking an initial overview and then unpacking it through multiple iterations. These iterations cover what is revealed near the end to be the meta-process underlying all of the various iterations. There is also a deep underlying coherence in how the work hangs together. An example is the way in which the figures (which do a great job of illustrating the text) are able to repeat and add in different aspects of the process to show how this meta-process manifests in various forms.

From this stance I will now examine a few ideas presented in the book that could benefit from some further elucidation or development. The first thing that drew my attention was that it seems that the further up the right side of the U Scharmer goes in his description, the thinner the details and descriptions of how we can actually embody and engage the consciousness of presencing are at these later stages. This may be because there is simply less to say about it – the preceding groundwork makes it evident where the leverage points are, in getting to the bottom of the U. If we don't get there, we don't get the full benefits on the upward side anyway. Or it could be that there is less known about how to operationalize it in the world. Either way, the emphasis is clearly placed on the left side descent to the bottom of the U.

Chapter 15 on *The Grammar of the Social Field* contains Scharmer's 21 propositions for understanding social change. These offer a summary of Scharmer's view and understandings in one concise area, and I will frame my comments around selected points.

## Identity and Creative Being

In point six, I perceived a potential blind spot related to notions of identity. By talking about the move from level three to level four, Scharmer says that an open will "requires *letting go* of old identities and intentions and letting come new identities and intentions that are more directly connected with one's deepest sources of individual and collective action and energy" (p. 242). This description is reminiscent of Robert Kegan's discussions of transformations between levels of consciousness, and I think would fit quite nicely within this framing of the process of how identity shifts with development.

However, Scharmer has in places drawn on David Bohm's work, and I find that there is a subtle distinction that Bohm offers that is relevant to how this point is framed. While I agree with the letting go of old identities, this misses Bohm's point in his inquiry into the concept of thought as a system, that the most essential blockage or incoherence occurs from the process of identification itself, and that a more *creative* sense of being is more appropriate. I

think that this is one area in Scharmer's work where some further exploration of what is going on at this deeper level could help to clarify the depth of demands that this stage is making.

At point 16, Scharmer does address the issue of identity at the bottom of the U in another way that aligns more with Bohm's sense of a creative notion of being. "Here the self functions from its open boundaries and its surrounding sphere as a generative vessel through which a new collective reality is coming into being. There the self is no longer locked into the center, rather, it co-evolves by participating in the coming into being of a new social collective" (p. 254). This also comes up in point 14 where Scharmer recounts an incident related to this. "When I returned that evening, I was no longer the same person (implying that somewhere along the way I must have had an encounter of connection with my emerging self)" (p. 251). This very interesting quote reveals something about the relationship between an identified sense of self and the "emerging self" or "highest potential future self" which has a more creative than identified focus. On the next page this comes through as well; "to an authentic self that is identical to our highest future possibility and that comes into being through the open boundaries of the human body field, both individually and collectively" (p. 252).

These points reveal to me some of the complexities and challenges involved in attempting to convey the subtleties of conceptions of the self that are outside of the normal conceptual constructs of general public discourse. While the notion of changing identities is covered in point six in a way that is easy to understand, the more fluid and creative, process oriented descriptions of being in points 14 and 16 could benefit for further clarification, and I believe that Bohm's notion of a creative notion of being would make a good a good ground for this. Later in this review, I offer further considerations on this point and what I perceive as implications for Scharmer's work.

## **Developmental Issues**

In point nine, Scharmer talks about an open heart as the "capacity for empathic listening, for appreciative inquiry, and for 'exchanging places' with another person or system" (p. 244). While this is indeed a valuable quality, what are not discussed here are the prerequisites for doing this. One may have an open heart in many ways, but there are specific action-logic stages at which the capacity to actually take another person's perspective emerges and goes through degrees of growth. While many adults have a rudimentary level of this capacity, it also seems apparent that many people do not have some of the more complex degrees of this capacity. For instance, Bohm points to the reflex defenses of the system of thought that can hide self-deception. Noticing, illuminating and suspending such reflexes of thought entail a capacity to notice complex internal processes that are relatively rare in society today.

What then is the implication of this? Is this another case of the implicit curriculum making demands that place people "in over their heads?" Can this lead to presencing and the U theory being limited to an elite spectrum of the population such as the so-called "cultural creatives?" Scharmer addresses this in one way in chapter 20, where he talks about how "the collective serves as a gateway to access the deeper states of awareness and knowing" (p. 375). I have also discussed this with others as how a facilitator can use their own access to higher states of consciousness and action-logics to create a space or container where people can "draft" into it and engage deeper levels than they might on their own. However these

issues sort themselves out, I think that there is further work to be done here to clarify and strengthen how the U process deals with these issues.

One area in which this is discussed to some degree is in chapter 17 on conversational actions. Here I think that it would further strengthen readers' ability to apply the U process by having a discussion on the relationship between the process of dialogue (as one involving participants moving through the four stages outlined) and the capacities required in terms of action-logics. Key issues could be framed in terms of a distinction between *structural* stages (relating to relevant action-logics as centers of gravity) and *state* stages (relating to this aspect of the field of attention).

Another approach could be to examine in more detail the relative impact of the structural stage capacities present in individuals within a group on how well a structured process can facilitate people moving into these higher state experiences of reflective or generative dialogue. What level of higher order cognitive capacities are necessary, or how much can this process act as a holding space for structuring state experiences? How much of any of this is dependent upon or facilitated by the level of cognition and or state experience and presence of a facilitator?

It is these kinds of questions that arise from reading through this section of the text. As this happens, my attention is drawn to inquire into what other areas of the work are also dependent upon higher action-logics. At the same time, I also reflect on how other aspects of our being in the world may be able to influence or open up space for this kind of work in ways that can transcend developmental limitations. This is an ongoing area of research fueled by conversations with colleagues and personal experience.

## **A Blind Spot?**

I think that for me to engage the U theory and process at its deepest level, it might be helpful if I were to make some of the underpinnings of my view explicit first, to allow you to take into account my biases going into this. I will use a story to illustrate the essence of my view. I have a Jesuit friend with whom I have had an ongoing conversation about the nature of the relationship between human persons and soul. What I hear from his theological perspective is that we humans have a soul, (kind of like we have a liver or a right foot). The underlying connotation is that we *are* this physical body and that any idea of a soul must be some kind of appendage, situating itself in relation to the body. I would argue that this didn't make sense to me. I said that from my view, humans as physical bodies are transient and temporal (we live and die in time) while soul is eternal and various other qualities of a transcendent nature. How could the transcendent end up as an appendage of the transient? It made much more sense to me that we *are* soul, and that the relationship between soul and being human was that soul was having human experiences.

This view is seldom relevant in most of the conversations that I have, but in this case I found myself noticing how it could be relevant to a number of issues that arose for me in Scharmer's text. I use the term soul in a manner that I interpret Scharmer describing as our highest Self, our highest future potential, or our authentic Self. (Further framings of a more non-dual nature are also possible to use about these distinctions, but for current purposes the distinctions as laid out serve a relevant purpose). This is in contrast to the self that is constructed by habits and past experiences. The mechanical self acts in the world from a place of disconnect from the present as well as from the wholeness that is seen to be at our

authentic core. The authentic Self acts as the *I-in-now* and comes from this place of wholeness. While it can be present to the current realities surrounding it, Scharmer makes a distinction about it primarily acting to bring forth what is proposed to want to emerge from the future. I highlight the similar meanings apparent in our use of different terms to emphasize what I perceive as a common aim.

From this common ground, I want to point to a tension and possible blind spot I perceive emerging from bringing together two points from the text and introducing an implication of how these are potentially impacted by a different view I will introduce. The first point from the text is O'Brian's insight that the success of any intervention depends on the *interior condition* of the intervener. The second point is how we need to deepen our attention and connection to our authentic Self *first* before we act on an impulse. The view I want to contrast arises from a reaction I noticed in myself to a number of characterizations of the state of affairs of the world, (and that I point to in my opening remarks), is that there is something fundamentally wrong or unfair about the world in its present condition. I want to contrast this with a view of the world as being *exactly as it should be*.

As I mentioned in my introduction, most people would (and will) think that you (I) must be blind or in serious denial to think other than that the world is unfair, in a mess, or headed for destruction unless we do something soon. There are a number of places, such as the introduction to Scharmer's book, where this view is put forward as a kind of assumption about the current state of the world. Later (p. 299) Scharmer lays out a similar critique (that gives the impression of a rant) of how children are raised and schooled through TV, violent video games, downloading schooling and drugs to treat attention deficit disorder, that display this underlying perception.

In contrast, what is described as emerging in the world has to do with many efforts at making this world a fairer and equitable place, eliminating poverty, distributing economic rewards more evenly and so on, and indeed there are many such efforts underway today. The reaction that arises in me reading these kind of descriptive statements is that the only acceptable response to the current state of affairs is moral outrage and activism to change things. I am reminded of a saying I once saw posted on a door to the effect that – “if you're not outraged you're either asleep or not paying attention.” This sentiment is not particular to Scharmer. I find it in many places in the world. I also want to make clear that I see this particular perspective as a part of the larger view presented in the book. (I want to be clear that this does not mean that I think we shouldn't do anything to make the world a better place. I feel that one of the core purposes of our existence here is to learn how to leave things better than we found them).

This brings me to the tension I perceive arising from the application of the two points from the text to the difference in view I present. If our interior condition impacts the success of our interventions, then the view we act from is the highest leverage point we have. The need to pursue the source of our connection to the whole, or our highest future selves, as fully as possible before taking action in the world seems to me to be central to our interior condition. The view that arises for us would also seem to be connected to the route we take and how far we have gone on our journey.

The tension I perceive is between poles wherein the world is fundamentally flawed or exactly as it should be. Where one views the world from along this continuum will have a significant impact on the interior condition being applied to any intervention seeking to help

make the world a better place. I would characterize the pole viewing the world as fundamentally flawed as a “social consciousness.” While the social consciousness often wants to “save the world” from its fundamental flaw, the view arising from the other pole can offer a degree of non-attachment and alleviate the “should” energy of the social consciousness. I would propose that this quality of energy arising from the social consciousness pole of this continuum could impair the interior condition of the intervener and lessen the effectiveness of any interventions. There is a razor’s edge here, between the desire to be of service to the world and one’s fellow human beings, and the quality of energy one brings to these acts of service.

Thus what I perceive to be at issue here is a mix of views. On the one hand there is the social consciousness that is driven to save the world from the view of a flawed world. On the other hand the U process drives consciousness to deeper and deeper connections with something beyond self that in some spiritual perspectives arrives at a place of non-attachment, acceptance and compassion. This view can coincide with seeing the world as being exactly as it should be, and can make space for a different quality of energy in the interior condition of the intervener.

This brings to my mind Bohm’s inquiry into the root causes of challenges in our society. His view was that it is incoherence in our thinking that continues to worsen the situation. To solve these problems we think about them, but are not necessarily using thought from our highest Self, or soul in my vernacular. Instead, we allow thinking to be in charge, allowing the social consciousness (my view of it as being a symptom of the reflexes of thought) to hold sway and continue to perpetuate conditions that maintain and justify the view that the world is fundamentally flawed and in need of rescuing.

The view I introduced of our being soul and having human experiences can shift the view and place from which we make our interventions. It is much easier from this view to let go of an existential identification with or attachment to the human body as the ultimate source of our existence, which can shift energy away from the social consciousness pole. The creative process of an unfolding sense of being can be seen as soul continually revealing and coming to know itself in the actions of being in the world – being in this world but not of it. The locus of Self is not ultimately dependent upon the condition of the world. At the same time, from a place of non-attachment, acceptance of the world as it is, and compassion for all, the interior condition of our interventions aimed to make the world a better place can have a better chance of success.

This is a potential blind spot I see in how the U theory and process is described by Scharmer. The tension between the two poles described of a spiritual and social consciousness, and the tendency prevalent in our society today to act from an interior condition charged with energy more from the social consciousness end of things could be a limiting factor in attempting to solve the very issues the approach is intended to deal with.

## **Epilogue**

After writing this overview and reflections, I had the opportunity to discuss them with Otto Scharmer over breakfast. Our intense and stimulating conversation covered many facets of these ideas and areas for future inquiry and research. As well, in response to my description of a potential blind spot, Scharmer made a comment that I felt revealed the sense of depth of view that came through between the lines of his book. As I described the

widespread consciousness of the world as fundamentally flawed and in need of rescuing, he replied that his writing reflected a phenomenological reporting of a kind on the times he had grown up in and experiences that shaped his view. This revealed to me a feeling of him being able to talk about his entire body of work on Theory U as an object of reflection, something that he could take a perspective on. While my reading of his book gave me a sense of something between the lines beyond what was being said, it was not so clear until the moment of his response to my critique. From this experience, I came away with a deeper sense of the potential that Scharmer's work with Theory U has, and at the same time how much it is a work in progress and a rich avenue for future research.

**Jonathan Reams, Ph.D.**, *is Editor-in-Chief of Integral Review and currently an associate professor in the Department of Education at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, where he teaches organizational counseling, coaching and leadership, and is pursuing research in the areas of leadership, dialogue and counseling.*  
[Jonathan@Reams.com](mailto:Jonathan@Reams.com)

# Sent to Play on the Other Team

Josef San Dou

The star player on the soccer team that season was my six-year-old son, Jack. As the team's coach, I once made him play on the opposing team. I have been asked, why did you do that? And what happened when you did?

In our soccer league, the teams of the same age group often have their practices at the same time. Ours is U-6 team with players from age four to six. We usually use the last 30 minutes of field time to play a scrimmage game with another team. As unofficial games, scrimmages are another form of practice, but of course with a more serious feeling tone about them than when the team practices by itself.

This particular day, we were going to play scrimmage against a team we had beaten every time we scrimmaged that season. It also happened that this team was short of players that day, something that had never happened before. We could not have a scrimmage if one of the teams was short of players.

I explained to the boys and girls on my team that the other team needed one more player. I asked which one of them was willing to play on the other team so we could have our scrimmage. No volunteers. So I told my son Jack to go over to the other team. He didn't want to, but I pushed him to agree. He went grudgingly.

Once the game got underway, Jack played just as if he were playing on his own team, giving it his best. History was made that day: his goals won the game for the other team, its first-ever win. Afterwards, Jack got an unhappy earful from his teammates. Even his then-four-year-old sister, a first-year soccer player and spectator of the whole event, gave him a chiding look for causing his team's defeat. With all that pressure, he was very sheepish about it afterward. I just smiled to see all the commotion. Later, I pulled Jack aside and mentioned to him that he did a good job and had played really well. He seemed to feel better about it.

That other team had a lot more experience with feeling sheepish, but not about winning. With no wins in their record till that day, it was always obvious to me how discouraged its members felt before a game. It was great for them to win that scrimmage, and to have the encouragement that came with it.

And that kind of encouragement is what my coaching philosophy is all about. It explains why I chose Jack to play on the other team when no one would volunteer. The way I put a team together is based on balance of strength, and I want to have two teams with equal strength. Although that day was the only time I sent a player over to another team, I work for such balance in all our games. I don't want other teams to feel discouraged that they lose all the time. It is an attempt to shift the strength when things are out of balance. That way, all the kids from both teams can have an enjoyable and exciting game.

The last official game of that season happened to be against this same team that Jack had played for. But this time, Jack played for his original team. By half time, we were up 4-0 with Jack doing most of the scoring. I held Jack back in the second half and let others play. This way, both teams had an exciting game in the second half. The game ended with a tied score. I was happy to see both teams having fun. Even though there is score-keeping, I want to keep the balance between the two objectives of having fun first and then hopefully winning the game.

The players' experiences and perspectives are not the only thing to balance: there are also the parents and the grandparents of the players. They want a good game, too. They come to root for their kids and they want them to be successful. Understandably, they don't want to see their kids cry when they fail.

For teaching soccer skills to kids aged four to six, I have only two expectations: that they learn the correct kicking techniques, and that they learn to kick the ball to the right direction. You know, sometimes they kick the ball to their own goal! It takes practice. Coaching is like gardening. You plant the seeds in the ground by teaching the kids the right kicking technique; you water it by regular repetitive practice; and then you hope they will continue to grow and produce beautiful flowers that are going to bloom some day.

Just as each kind of plant is cared for differently, the way I deal with each player is also different. I evaluate each player's strengths and weaknesses and try to empower them from there. Some players learn faster than others, but I believe each player has his or her time to bloom. This past fall season, we had a player who didn't do anything but play with the grass both during practice and during the game. Her parents were so discouraged that they wanted her to quit after our second game of the season. But with eight games to go, I encouraged them to give her a chance at least till the end of season and see how she did. So, she kept coming to practice, and in the last two games, she came around and played really well. Both she and her parents were really happy about it. Their patience paid off. I was proud of her.

Patience is another important element in teaching these kids in the early years of playing. The principle is really the same as for gardening: to patiently water the seeds and young plants so that flowers can bloom someday. In its own time, the flower will bloom.

In a way this is really my approach to life, including the way I manage at work: I identify the strengths and weaknesses of each person and assign them at the right post so things work effectively. Well, it is like any sport, say football: you cannot expect a lineman to play as a wide receiver or vice versa. But if everybody plays according to their strengths and plays in the right position, you will have a good team. I am biased of course, but I think we also have a good team in the department where I manage.

My motive for having a good team is really to have a good time. When I was growing up in Indonesia, I played soccer almost every day. Between chores we had to do, playing soccer was our main avenue to have fun. Winning or losing are just byproducts of the game. If you win, you win, and if you lose, you lose. We didn't really emphasize winning or losing. We just had fun.

In Indonesia back then, we didn't have a system like here in the U.S. Starting kids playing soccer at very young ages in an organized league is an excellent system. But the system will work only if we are patient and realistic about kids' ability and timing of development. Quite often, parents have unrealistic expectations. Understandably they want their kids' team to win. But in my opinion, this makes it hard for kids. This will be even worse if the coach has the same mentality. Let the kids grow and as the saying goes, winning is not the only thing.

The focus of the game should be enjoyment of the game itself. If you play without any pressure or expectation to win, most of the time you will win the game. When you try to play with the intent to win, more often you lose the game, and quite often it hurts more. It's better to approach the game just for the love and enjoyment of the game itself. It's like watching the flowers in your garden. Of course you want them to bloom right away, but that's not going to happen. Just enjoy the moment and in their own time, the flowers will bloom. As I say often, winning or losing are just byproducts of playing a game. It goes back to balancing the team, having the enjoyment of enjoying the game, rather than the winning of the game. That's the real win.

My son Jack has never asked to be sent over to an opposing team since that day when I forced him to. Just as in any sport team, there is a tribal energy in a team, a sense of belonging there, especially because they practice together so much. In his team's case, with Jack being the best player, I found they relied on him a lot. So it was a good opportunity for them to have to do without him that day. They got to rely on themselves and have a chance to break the habit of relying on the star to win the game. When we take the star out, we can see others develop. And that's what this soccer gardening can do really well, when we approach it with the aim of keeping the strengths and weaknesses balanced: Develop our kids so they can bloom.

*Josef San Dou, M.A., M.Div., BCC, Director of Mission & Spiritual Care Services, SSFHS-St. Margaret Mercy Hospital, Hammond, IN. The author can be contacted by writing to [ireditors@integral-review.org](mailto:ireditors@integral-review.org).*

# Art and the Future: An Interview with Suzi Gablik by Russ Volckmann

*One day, I was interviewing a particle physicist (Basarab Nicolescu, Integral Review 4) and he called my attention to the work of an art critic. I wondered to myself if this was a case of transdisciplinarity. Well, in a way it was, at least at the level of valuing meta approaches to life. He indicated that the art critic, Suzi Gablik, had referred to transdisciplinarity and also the integral theories of Ken Wilber in her book, Has Modernism Failed? Well, I just couldn't let that drop. It was just too intriguing to see if I could find the themes that brought these two unique individuals together. I wanted to play in that sandbox, too.*

*First, I turned to Gablik's book, Has Modernism Failed? Here is a summary of what I found that encouraged me to take the next steps. Her thesis is that the world of art has become competitive and exploitive and that the focus in the world of art had become profit. Not only are these limiting to artistic expression, but they ignore essential concerns of art: aesthetics and ethics. "Aesthetic autonomy is a deeply rooted idea—autonomy implying moral and social separateness as the condition of art-making," she wrote. She saw the need for a unified vision of the world where art and ethics would not only coexist, but cooperate.*

*Gablik found in the works of Ken Wilber the promise of integralism where diverse perspectives can be engaged to address the world as one undivided whole with the "well-being of each part is the responsibility of every part." Here she found a promise for an end to art dominated by economics and consumerism, an art liberated to be an essential life of individuals and of communities. She found examples of this in the world of art. Two high school teachers engaged their ceramic students in the Empty Bowls project to help a local food drive. This simple project has grown into a nonprofit organization, The Imagination/Render Group, which supports drives around the world.*

*She then turned to Basarab Nicolescu's Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity, which she sees as pointing the way to dealing with multiple levels of reality at the same time. Gablik observes, "Also, it has a unique goal: to propel us beyond either/or thinking into a coexistence of nested truths." This leads to the potential for the individual artist to become an integral component of a larger social network, which she sees as a generative creative force. Seattle's ARTS UP program that pairs artists with communities around the United States has led to engage in a civic and artistic dialogue. These dialogues have led to numerous projects "founded on the idea that art can have a vital role in community building, and in giving voice to those whose lives are otherwise unrecognized or isolate."*

*Her book closes with a note of optimism in which she senses*

that significant changes in power relations are occurring as these decentralized network structures now offer the possibility for artists to interact with each other, and share information, in a democratic and cooperative atmosphere that was mostly absent within the hegemonic, competitive, institutional structures of modernism.

*This would lead to “a new kind of art that can help realize needed change in the world.”*

*Now this was going somewhere interesting, I thought to myself. This sounds like a whole new perspective on growing a healthier world. The edition I read was published in 2004 (1984 was the original), so here is an opportunity to explore that perspective. After setting up a date to have the interview with Suzi Gablik, she helped me access a couple of her other books.*

*Conversations Before the End of Time (1995) is a series of interviews about the themes related to the development of a relationship between art and community, art and a healthier future for the world. It includes discussions with James Hillman, Thomas Moore and many others more directly involved in the world of art. Living the Magical Life: An Oracular Adventure (2002) is an intimate focus on her own life at a time when she seems to be a coming to peace with her having moved to Virginia from London in 1991.*

Everything is collage. In a sense, the parts ‘give themselves.’ Living the magical life means learning to recognize and connect them to the whole. We are translators and mediators in the field from which our experience arises. In this field, all is analogy, relation, revelation, by the laws of correspondence. Imagination is what opened the connection between one level and another.

*She has learned that “the universe is a better organizer than you could ever think of being, so give it a chance and stay out of the way. Surrender to the world, receive it in your stillness:*

And it will happen. For miracles gravitating  
To earth, know just where people will be waiting.  
And eagerly will find the right address  
And tenant, even in a wilderness. (Joseph Brodsky)

*Her account of relationships, experiences and explorations leads ultimately to this:*

Psyche’s secret has finally become transparent to me: Let go of the consciousness of disappointment. Release your belief in the promise unfulfilled. Sacrifice the need to know, and trust the invisible processes that are at work. Develop a mind that can work with whatever happens. Allow everything to be all right as it is and simply remain true to the quest. When you learn to stop struggling and do nothing, everything is possible. Submit, surrender, become an embodiment of the feminine principle. Don’t assume you know the right answer in advance. We are simply part of the vaster design that is unfolding.

*I hope that these glimpses into the work of Suzi Gablik prepare you for this challenging interview. It is challenging, perhaps, because I have not yet learned Psyche’s secret.*

— **Russ Volckmann**

**Russ:** *Suzi, it's a great pleasure to talk to you. I've read three of your books, and it seems as though you've been on a quest—perhaps more than one. Initially it seemed you were concerned with the commercialization of modern art, particularly in the New York art scene, and next, the relationship between art and the ecological and sociological crisis we face in the world. Then, you seem to go on to looking at the role of esthetics and ethics in art. Finally you have engaged in the discovery of the mystical in your own life. How would you amend that summary of your quests?*

**Suzi:** I don't know that I would amend it. I think it's nearly perfect. I definitely would say that my initial concerns with the idea of art being so commodified, and my subsequent search for alternative models of art making are still a concern to me. Since I first started writing and talking about these things, a kind of alternative parallel art scene has developed that is quite fluent and rich, but at the same time, the hard-core art world is more commodified than ever, and is still firmly entrenched in those same patterns of behavior. So in one sense things have changed, but in another, nothing much has changed.

**Q:** *One of the things that really struck me in thinking about art in some very new ways as a result of reading your work was the idea of art as a social expression, as a political expression, and so forth. A colleague of mine called my attention to a quote from the German artist, Joseph Beuys, which states:*

Only on condition of a radical widening of definitions will it be possible for art and activities related to art [to] provide evidence that art is now the only evolutionary-revolutionary power. Only art is capable of dismantling the repressive effects of a senile social system that continues to totter along the death line, to dismantle in order to build 'a social organism as a work of art'...every human being is an artist who—from his state of freedom, the position of freedom that he experiences at first-hand—learns to determine the other positions of the total art work of the future social order.

*Does this comment of his, written in 1973, and the kinds of work that he did in Germany in the '80's with, for instance, the 7000 Oaks project, represent the sort of thing you are looking to have happen in the art world?*

**A:** I would say very much so. In many ways, Beuys was possibly the first person to put forward a significant and radical idea that ultimately became a ball many of us took up and ran with: the idea of "art as social sculpture." With this small phrase, Beuys laid claim to the idea that art doesn't have to be made from specific physical materials like wood and stone, or paint and canvas, but rather you could sculpt society itself, shaping it through ideas and modeling behaviors. He made use of social processes and contexts that went beyond familiar art institutions, like museums and galleries.

Beuys is a particularly interesting figure, however, because he was like a shaman in that he could navigate freely between different worlds. Many of his art works consisted of things like projects for planting trees and he was even the founder of the Green

movement in Germany. But he was also quite comfortable making art in more traditional modes, which he exhibited in the usual art world channels. They were not necessarily the most predictable kinds of objects, however—his sculptures were often made from bizarre materials like fat and felt. They were exhibited in a huge retrospective show at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. Beuys was unusual in the way he was able to straddle and bridge two worlds. Most artists tend either to follow the predictable, lockstep scenario for becoming “professional” and competitive in the art world, or they go off in a completely different direction and make their own path. Beuys was interesting because he did both.

*Q: I recently read your book, Conversations Beyond the End of Time, and thought it was just an extraordinary work. I don't think I've ever seen anything quite like it where over a period of about a year and a half, you had conversations with all kinds of people—artists, critics, psychiatrists, sociologists, and more—discussing these themes. You were able to create a work that shows art as a developmental path, not only an expression of the individual, but as an evolving social expression as well.*

*A: My work over many years has been to articulate the vital role of artists in society, and along the way, to create a new paradigm as well. In my early years of writing art books, I was very influenced by New Age, or new paradigm thinking—that included things like systems theory and the eco-philosophies that burst forth on the scene during the 1970s. Many books were written that influenced my own approach greatly. I tried to apply these ideas to the sphere of art.*

I guess I've always been trying to deconstruct the cultural narrative which pins art to careerism, self-promotion, and the creation of “art stars,” and which is linked to the obvious gallery and museum nexus. I wanted to validate and expand the possibilities for art making, so that they could include many more options than that. This was not meant to negate the former, but rather to help those artists who found careerism a deadening path break out of the mold. I wanted to encourage them to feel validated if they work outside the familiar contexts.

Others have taken up the same banner, so at this point there is a whole world of post-studio practices, and of artists who see themselves not just as makers of valuable commodity objects, but who see themselves as active participants in a global world, and who are willing to make art in the service of something more positively social or environmental. Many of them set out to try to solve social and ecological problems as artists. That often entails embracing what probably interests you most in my work: a willingness to embrace a healthy confusion of genres, to cross boundaries and disciplines at will. In a way that often decentralizes the act of creativity. This stands in direct contrast to the heightened individualistic modality of “look at me and admire what I've done” that is so much a part of the art scene.

*Q: There are several themes in what you've just said that are really interesting. I'm reminded of how during the Depression, artists and architects were used to create public works, be they paintings, buildings or sculptures, to try and help bring some income to*

*them, as well as make a contribution to the public. We had an example of an economic crisis that brought a very special role for art in the culture. Would that be an early example of what you're talking about, at least in the last century?*

A: Up to a point. But those public works' projects, in the context of the time in which they happened, pre-date what we can call the "paradigm shift," which refers to a change in the whole modus operandi of making art. Mural artists then were still making art in acceptably traditional ways, although they were oriented towards a different kind of public and site, and they were more socially directed in their imagery.

Q: *In more contemporary terms, I've seen public programs that work primarily with at-risk youth who paint murals on public buildings; they're being guided by muralists, and that's another example of the same phenomena.*

A: Yes, but there's an important difference between the two. Both produce murals, but in the more community-based art of today, there are other creative social processes going on, such as building communities for these youth, and positively altering their lives in the process, by giving them a sense of purpose, or bringing out artistic talents they didn't know they had. It offers a more healing component rather than just a purely visual experience.

Q: *That's one of the streams that I think your comments brought out—that of the healing potential of art. Another one is that art can be an expression of a desire for change. It is a desire to have the world be more aligned with aesthetics and beauty, perhaps even with social justice and other humanistic criteria. Is that also a stream you were alluding to?*

A: Yes, definitely. The whole idea being to open art up to a larger definition of itself, and allowing it to engage with more aspects of life and the world than is possible if you are functioning alone, behind closed doors in a studio. A lot of this sounds pretty old-hat now, but at the time that I first started writing and talking about it, these ideas were pretty blasphemous. Sometimes I'd be greeted in a lecture hall as "that woman who hates art objects." At other times, I'd get a standing ovation, so it was a very emotionally intense kind of stand to take at the time. What I was saying really challenged accepted ideas that were strongly in place and still are, for that matter, in terms of the culture. If you work with young people (which I don't do much anymore), you will find that, in any group of art students, there are always the ones who want to go the accepted cultural route. That is to say, if there are megabucks to be made, they are certainly up for it, willing to give it a shot and abide by all the rules of that game. Then there are others who are not drawn by that at all. They want to pursue a kind of art oriented towards a different vision of "success."

Q: *You talk about ecology as well. In the nineties, the threat to our world was very prominent in your thinking. Is that accurate?*

A: That is accurate, but it can't hold a candle to where my thinking is now. My distress at what is happening to our world is so consuming now that art has just about dropped below the radar and become almost irrelevant.

Q: *So are you saying there is no role for art in trying to address the ecological challenges we face?*

A: No, I wouldn't precisely say that. I still consider that an "eco-vention" by an artist—meaning, for example, the reclaiming of a contaminated landscape or restoring a polluted river, is arguably a more honorable and interesting form of engagement with the world at this time than seeking to get one's work favorably reviewed in a major art magazine. That sounds very judgmental, I know, but I'm only speaking for myself here.

Q: *But with the intensity of the ecological crisis we have in the world, that's what's calling your attention, is that correct?*

A: What is calling my attention right now is a book I'm reading, called *Endgame*. Its author, Derrick Jensen, puts forth a rather unforgiving and radical thesis—one which those of us who have been thinking about these things for decades already know, but haven't ever quite put in such drastic terms. Jensen claims that civilization is unredeemable; it has catastrophically degraded the planet and has given us license to destroy life on many fronts—species, plants, humans—in order to get whatever resources it needs to keep itself going and continually moving forward. Meanwhile we've vastly overreached the earth's carrying capacity, yet we continue to expand as if this were not the case. Jensen calls this a "traumatic situation," because no action we can take at this point is of any avail.

There is a second volume in which he actually encourages the dismantling and destruction of civilization—taking it out before it takes us out. I think he's right about the intransigence of the cascading crises that confront us. I don't think there is any escape from situations like the polar ice caps melting. Nothing we can do at this point is likely to reverse that, and this is just one example of an intractable situation.

There's another way that we are under total threat as a civilization and as a species and that is the virus of holy war. I've spent the last year reading about the threat of global jihad and the clash of civilizations: jihadism versus democracy. What it comes down to is a sort of lust to annihilate at any cost. For us, it's a matter of taking control of markets and devouring resources to sustain our way of life, whereas jihadists want to take over the world under the umbrella of a very sinister religious control. If we think that America is bad in the department of imperialistic agendas, I can tell you that al Qaeda is far worse, albeit for different reasons than ours.

Q: *That leads to a kind of pessimistic perspective that is a little different from 1994 when you were talking with Laurie Zuckerman in your Conversations book about the ecological crisis. You had some sense, then, of optimism about a paradigm shift. I remember one statement in which you were talking about living in a transitional time, when the values*

*and way of life we've been taught to live by in our culture have come to be seen as toxic. This brought up issues of healing and transformation. You said, "It seems as if there is a spiritual and social obligation to participate in this process of healing our world, however one can." Does that mean that if things are as bleak as you've just described, that you've moved away from that?*

A: I don't know what I think at this point. I'm trying to come to terms with the unpalatable fact that despite decades of so-called "paradigm shift," little has really changed for the better. It seems instead as if things have gotten much worse. So I think I would want to frame your question differently: "If you were on a bus going down a mountainside, and you realized that the bus was careening out of control and about to go over a cliff, what would you be doing? Would you be looking out the window, or would you be hiding your eyes?"

Q: *I guess I'd be looking out the window.*

A: That may be our primary task at this point: to come out of denial and bear witness. To really confront the sheer deadliness of our present circumstances. It's a moot point as far as what the human race can do about all this now, since too many genies are out of the bottle and we can't put them back in. The human race has proven itself to be deeply dysfunctional. We've known for a long time that we're destroying the planet, yet we continue to do it with no let-up. Everyone knows that this war in Iraq is lethal, but we've managed to create a situation where nothing we do can solve the problem. Whatever we decide to do, the truth is we're trapped—or as Jensen prefers to put it, more grandly, "We're fucked."

Q: *Back in 2004 when you published the new edition of Has Modernism Failed?, your closing chapters indicated that you had an interest in transdisciplinarity and integral theory—in the works of Basarab Nicolescu and Ken Wilber. It seems that you saw something about the work they were doing as providing frameworks or perspectives that added value.*

A: I definitely believe that's true and I haven't changed my mind about that. Integralism is a great antidote to perceiving reality in the dualistic mode that plagues Western civilization. It calls for reciprocity and equality among all the levels of reality, and all levels of being. If I seem to have developed what you might call a bad case of "disheartenment," it's because I see that all the information we need is out there—all the philosophies and spiritualities that could guide us through—were we but to espouse them. But make no mistake, we haven't espoused them, and now our problems may no longer be amenable to amelioration by such means. So the question really is, "What is it about the human race that prevents it from following its own wisdom?" We've learned so much, but failed to put it to use.

Q: *Do you have an answer?*

A: Like I said, I think we're a flawed species, and we've managed, unwittingly, through our many technological advances and our unwavering belief in them as desirable, to write ourselves out of the picture. Obviously this is very unfortunate, both for us and for all the other species of the world that we're taking out along with us.

Sometimes I think I shouldn't be talking like this at all—I don't enjoy the Cassandra role. A friend of mine sent me an article that she had written a year or two ago about "peak oil," and how supplies are running out. She described how whenever she brings the topic up in conversation at dinner parties, she never gets invited back. This is not the kind of thing that people want to hear.

There's a conversation I had with an artist friend of mine, James Marriott, who does environmental art work in England. (I think you can find the text of it on the website of [www.greenmuseum.org](http://www.greenmuseum.org)). We get into an old idea of James Hillman's and Michael Ventura's from their book *We've Had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy—And the World's Getting Worse*. What should you be doing when the ship is going down? I don't know that anybody has a suitable answer to that question. Something James and I discuss is, at what point do you actually accept the fact that the ship *is* going down, and how does that affect what you think or can do about the situation?

Q: *One of the things that seemed to happen in your life, and was expressed in magical ways in your memoir, Living the Magical Life, was that you seemed to turn to a larger sense of life and to invest yourself at the level of faith. Is that still there?*

A: Yes! I still find synchronicity the most interesting spiritual phenomenon that I've run into in terms of human experience. I consider it to be the biggest pointer to the possibility that there is indeed something out there that we can't see, something that may be orchestrating events in a way that we don't understand. If I were to say I had any hope for the human race—and to counter everything else I've said so far—it would be that if there really are such forces, they may be operating now in a way that could save us.

I saw a movie recently about the Mayan calendar ending abruptly in 2012. The speculative thesis about what this could mean is that maybe time as we know it, time as delineated by historical narrative and the continuity of a certain way of life, will suddenly come to an end in 2012, precipitated by we know not what. But the spin that many scholars have put on it is that there will be cascading crises that will lead eventually to opportunities for evolution. We will come out in a place of higher consciousness. I would say that it's possible. But the odds don't look that way to me. However, I'm only one person, and I may not have any special insight into the future.

Q: *One of the comments you make in Living the Magical Life is that the universe is a better organizer than we are. We just need to stay out of the way. Is that a principle that still applies under current circumstances?*

A: I am basically Taoist in my spirituality. Non-interference is a very Taoist approach. So yes, I do think that many of the problems we are experiencing in the world at this time

are the result of human actions, especially untrammelled ego and ambition and greed. If you are a Taoist, you are trained to see yourself more as a speck of dust than as a towering rock star. Taoism says instead of striving for something, going somewhere, needing something, be happy over long periods of time with almost nothing. Economize. Simplify. Do not try to continue the pretense of more opulent times, as the *I Ching* counsels.

*Q: If the bus is going over the cliff—*

*A: Russ, do you think it is?*

*Q: I don't know. There's a very good chance that it is. History suggests that there are surprising things that happen that we can't predict. I don't know if it is, but I'm concerned for my children and my children's children.*

*The question that came up for me was, if we're going over the cliff, and all we can do is either watch or close our eyes, is there anything about the transdisciplinarity or integral approaches that you see that helps us, at least if we keep our eyes open, better to comprehend what we're seeing?*

*A: I am of the persuasion that knowledge and the ability to confront and metabolize what's happening is the first order of the day. I absolutely agree with Alice Walker in this regard, when she says that even if there is nothing you can do personally—for instance, to stop the war—it's important to face what's really going on. People often avoid confronting how bad things are because they feel vulnerable and helpless, and are afraid of becoming too depressed. Alice Walker says we need to have the courage to be more depressed! I agree with that. She says that in today's world, where we are, who wants to be Little Miss Sunshine anyway? It's scary.*

*Q: Could you be more specific about the things that you think help you get a sense of the whole picture that you're seeing?*

*A: I'm a collage artist with a special gift for synthesis. It means that I can take the bits and pieces from everywhere and see how they connect, perhaps in ways that someone else might miss. That is, of course, the ultimate integral theory—which is that everything is interconnected. There is a wonderful Zen saying that embodies this: "When you pick up one piece of dust, the entire world comes with it." This is a basic idea that seems very hard for our atomized and individualistic society to grasp.*

Richard Rorty, the philosopher who recently died, once said there is no big picture. He is very highly thought of, but personally, I think that is a stupid statement, an essentially misguided idea. I believe there is a big picture, and integralism—moving between inside and outside realms, between individual thoughts and collective worldviews, and seeing how all these things interact and interconnect, is very helpful. It creates a multi-dimensional, non-compartmentalized view of reality in which boundaries are permeable and divisions are transcended. Only then can one begin to grasp the infinitely complex

cat's cradle that is out there. Without that grasp of the totality, it's no wonder that no one has any workable idea for a solution, say, to the Iraq problem, or any way to navigate through this awful maze.

*Q: If the bus is going over the cliff, and you're keeping your eyes open, even if there are only a few minutes to be able to pay attention, is there anything you would be doing for your fellow passengers?*

*A: I think it's one of those situations that until you're in it, you don't know. If the real question is, "What is our task?" I suppose our task is, at the very least, to be constantly vigilant in considering what our task is, rather than mindlessly pursuing our own agendas. We can enter into the Apocalyptic mysteries, as one writer I read suggests, by looking seriously into the realities of the times. This is a "gift" to the community. Obviously, beyond that, we can try to mitigate whatever suffering we can and undermine the levels of destruction.*

*Q: A friend of yours is promoting a different way for us to be in the world. Riane Eisler's new book, The Real Wealth of Nations, continues to build on her partnership model versus the dominator model.*

*A: Her model of partnership was very influential for me in my early writing about art, to construct a notion of art that's built around relationship, participation, collaborative communities, and interaction with others. This is in strong contrast to the modernist construct of art as radically individualistic. The whole possibility of art as dialogue rather than monologue (an idea I also borrowed from David Bohm), puts it back into a *social* context, instead of the artificially constructed context of the marketplace. Putting art into the marketplace is, for me, a bit like putting animals into a zoo.*

So much has come down the pike since then that much of this seems quaintly historical now, but the *modus operandi* for being an artist in this culture is still very much in lockstep with the idea of selling yourself and becoming an art star, even if it's only for the fifteen minutes that Warhol so astutely allotted. When you start to bring in something larger, such as a social purpose or a use value for art, you will still run into vociferous opposition from people who consider art's value to reside in the fact that it serves no purpose beyond itself. It's the paradigm of freedom and autonomy.

*Q: The diagnosis of the world being already at its end is terminal, so it cuts out all possible interventions—we can keep talking until it happens—but the interventions of someone like Riane Eisler to shift to a partnership model, or the use of dialogue or any other human creation, doesn't it make all that seem rather pointless?*

*A: These ideas have been out there for a long time now. Riane's books, my books, many other peoples' books, have been out there for some 30 or 40 years. These ideas have taken hold on a certain level in the culture, but in terms of affecting any real transformation and change, what is your view? Do you feel that it's all happening, that we're getting closer to where we need to go?*

*Q: For me, it's important to keep the focus on trying to create what's important, and that includes the survival of the planet. I'm not so sure there's a lot we can do at this point; that's partly why your position is so strong in my opinion, and difficult to react to other than with a sense of loss.*

*A: And it was not what you expected.*

*Q: I wasn't really expecting anything in that regard. I knew that your more recent writings were strongly about the political and ecological challenges we face.*

*For me, as long as there's life, there's hope. I'm in agreement with you, Suzi, that we all need to do whatever we can to try and make a difference.*

*A: Have you read *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy?*

*Q: No, I haven't. Maybe I'm avoiding the pessimist.*

*A: Well, Russ, you're hardly alone in that! In the case of *The Road*, what McCarthy has done is to write a novel which takes place in a post-apocalyptic world; it is so cinematic and intense and drastically simple that you actually get to live inside that experience. You follow a father and son, who are two of the rare survivors in a disfigured landscape where everything has been destroyed. It's raining all the time and everything has become ash, and the two figures are slowly walking south, hoping to get to a warmer place. The scene McCarthy sets seems to me to be a more likely outcome of all these impending crises than this big transformative thing, but I could be dead wrong.*

*Q: Others are suggesting that destruction of the human race is a step in the evolution of the universe. Who knows what our destruction will make room for? I'm reminded of a close friend whose grandmother taught her as a child to expect an apocalyptic event, the Nostradamus predictions that people see as predicting the end of the world. In our culture the doomsayers have always been people to laugh at, ignore, or treat as strange. It seems like the case you're making is that it's really where we need to be thinking these days; it's where we need to focus.*

*A: It's a question of how reality-based one is, and how willing to enter into painful spheres of thinking. I agree with Alice Walker who says that we are living in "probably the most dangerous, frightening, unstable times the world has ever known." It's not a position that I necessarily want to defend; I'm just speaking from my heart, and that is how I see things. Pipe dreams and soap bubbles aren't working at this point. It's hard for me to deny what I see. Perhaps I have got a kind of negative spin on things. Who knows? But I can tell you that spending a year reading some ten books on jihadism has made me understand that we are in way over our heads. I don't know whether our government truly doesn't understand the forces it has unleashed, or whether they can't afford to admit what they've done—but what is clear is that I don't think we're going to emerge from this gracefully or intact.*

*Q: Is there another book in Suzi Gablik's future?*

A: I don't know—some of my feelings about this can be found on my blog. I've perversely taken to blogging, given that I think technology is part of what's going to undo us in the end. Al Gore's newest book says that because of computers and the Internet, we can revivify our stolen and dismantled democracy, and rebuild it again at the grass roots. He doesn't mention the fact that the biggest tool for the Islamists is also cyberspace. It's the place where the jihadists are recruiting their terrorist converts and selling their anti-American propaganda around the globe. What we have defined as the "war on terror," they call the "war on Islam."

Q: *The point there is that any tool can be used for various purposes.*

A: No, I'm afraid it's not as simple as that. Technologies like the car and the computer are *not* neutral. They change us. They arrive in our world, and society builds all these narratives celebrating them. But then, they actually change our lives, and we become addicted to them. Only much later do we discover that we've got holes in the ozone, that we're destroying the biosphere, rewiring our brains, or that there is such a thing as cyber-terrorism. But by then, we've become prisoners of these technologies, and it's too late to change. We feel like we can't survive without them. Eventually, we hardly remember there was once a world where you could actually do things without having to mediate it all through machines.

The way we're going, there will be less and less that you can do that isn't mediated by technology. Once that happens, it will be very hard to live our lives any other way. So it's not just a matter of technology being good or bad only in relation to some hypothetical user's intention; technology affects things in ways we don't foresee and didn't figure. By the time we find out the consequences, it's too late to do anything about it.

Q: *What is your blog address?*

A: <http://virgilspeaks.blogspot.com>

I feel timorous that I sounded so bleak. You wouldn't know it, but I'm a great lover of life and believer in life. It's very painful to watch it all going under and being systematically destroyed. I find myself like an alien member of the human race—how can people act like this? How did this happen?

Q: *If you weren't such a lover of life, then you wouldn't feel the pain.*

A: Well, I suppose that's true. Sometimes I find myself thinking of the small bands of Eskimos that Gretel Ehrlich describes in one of her books. Even when they are starving, they laugh and enjoy life. They are not fazed.

Q: *Thank you very much Suzi.*

# Reactivity to Climate Change

Jan Inglis

For many years, public discourse concerning climate change seems to have been divided into two main camps: those who did believe it was occurring and cited experts and years of research that proved the planet was warming up, and those who did not believe that these indicators were anything more than isolated events. A subtopic of the former position also divided into two camps: those who thought climate change was due to human causes and those who thought it was just a natural cycle. These debates have preoccupied attention, polarized local and global consideration, and failed to contribute to any coordinated responses. Instead, they seem to have prevented or at least distracted a process in which such responses could be initiated. The structure of these arguments has largely been conceptual and factual.

Once connections were made between tsunamis, Katrina, wild fires, floods, droughts, ice storms and undeniable changes in weather patterns, a picture of the whole constellated. The discourse eventually moved from conceptual and factual arguments to lived experience and pattern recognition. It seems that a “tipping point” in public recognition of climate change has been reached. At least from my North American observations, during the middle of 2007, a profound shift in public discourse has been occurring. It indicates an acceptance that climate change is really happening now, and that it is growing exponentially due to human activity. General public sentiment seems to have landed on the side of agreeing that we have a very real problem that needs to be faced collectively. The discourse has moved well beyond its former argumentative positioning to a place where shared meaning is possible.

This new shared meaning might herald a take-off point that could support a comprehensive societal response. However, within just weeks or months of the development I described above, I have noted the formation of yet another polarity in the discourse. Both poles share the characteristic of faulting the other. One camp is faulting those who present forecasts of climate change as being too alarmist and too negative with potential to cause people to be overwhelmed and then shut down. The other camp is faulting those who present positive images of the future and human capacity to make a difference as being too soft, and not really dealing with the incredible challenges we are facing. The fault-finding voices have replaced conceptual and factual arguments.

I have also observed a subtopic of that debate arising: the question of whether those who espouse the need to take action are themselves “pure.” For example, Al Gore, recent winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, has been publicly criticized for his large house and its energy usage. David Suzuki, Canada’s environmental guru and geneticist, is criticized by people who check out his grocery cart in the line to the teller, and then announce publicly that some of his food choices are not as wholesome as they “should” be.

My observation is that the topics have shifted but the style or structure of public discourse underlying the topics may have remained the same. In each of the cases noted above, the structure was dualistic, one set of arguments or judgments pitted against another.

These dynamics have consequences. Embedded in this apparent need to categorize, label, and judge is the framing of climate change as an “out there” thing. When put “out there,” that “thing” seems to motivate a narrowing of public attention to focus on which camp one belongs to with respect to the “thing.” This distances *us* from *owning* the issue, which happens to be *our* issue. It interferes with the necessary exploration of the full gamut of concerns and responses that are naturally arising. So our discourse can become perilously reduced to talking about others talking about the “thing” without addressing the thing itself.

The kind of thinking behind this discourse does not help us make vital connections, such as seeing the whole picture *and* seeing ourselves in that picture *and* seeing the causal links to the ecological challenges we face. When we do not recognize that our own thinking and behaviour is contributing to the issue—i.e., has causal links to the very development of the issue—we ourselves, by our limited perspective, hinder adequate responses to the issue. I see these dynamics as splitting apart things that already form a whole. This then blocks the whole from being in our line of vision just when we need most to see it.

The . . . world begins by making splits, then drawing boundaries, then solidifying these boundaries. Then we fool ourselves into believing what we have made ourselves see. Solidifying boundaries is very comfortable, because it allows us to deny our experience . . . We miss the whole system. (Bateson, 1978, as quoted in Campbell, 2006)

I have been considering these observations through the lens of developmental dynamics. In particular, I have been categorizing these as transitions from tasks at one stage of hierarchical complexity to another (Commons, Rodriguez, Miller, Ross, LoCicero et al., 2007). Commons et al. describe steps that range from thesis to antithesis to relativism and then through a chaotic “smash” to an eventual synthesis. Earlier arguments, described above, were thesis-antithesis ones, e.g., from there is no climate change problem to yes, there is a climate change problem. And, from it not being human caused to yes, it is human caused. A movement seems to have occurred but are we now sidetracking ourselves, procrastinating, in a hidden relativistic either/or phase, e.g., either we will or we will not step up to the plate and tackle this problem? Does this pattern of drawing boundaries and labelling camps suggest a reticence to move out of the reactive phase of relativism, into the chaos stage?

The chaos stage brings with it recognition of unknown outcomes. In the case of climate change, it also includes the need to commit to engage the issues enough to understand their multiple layers (including personal and cultural values and behaviours), to create and sort options, and to consider all the various responses. This represents a movement *toward* the issue, and *toward* synthesis. By contrast, to frame the topic as a debate of “us and them” and “for and against” camps keeps the discourse at a superficial, possibly more distant, and thus more comfortable level. Such approaches represent a movement *away from* the issue, and *away from* synthesis. They take us back to the antithesis phase of transition instead of forward into the chaotic stage of working things out.

In summary, my observations suggest that at present, intense focus on climate change and pent up concerns seem to be milling around in the comfortably familiar territory of dualistic dynamics rather than moving forward. More complex styles of thinking are needed to shape public discourse and to bump up our attention to climate change to a higher level so we can get focused on effective cultural engagement to address it. Such forward momentum may allow us to move beyond the seemingly natural slide to comfortable dualisms. While these are natural, even necessary parts of the transitions process, they are unproductive on their own for addressing such a complex and pressing issue as climate change. By naming these dynamics and reflecting on their impact, perhaps we can see our way into that forward momentum—and maybe even to addressing climate change with the complexity of engagement and coordination it demands of us.

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**Jan Inglis** specializes in developmental and integral approaches to complex social issues. She is the director of the Integrative Learning Institute, [www.integrativelearninginstitute.com](http://www.integrativelearninginstitute.com), which offers coaching, consulting, and training to individuals and organizations committed to comprehensive social change. She has a background in community development, adult education, psychotherapy, and art. She is a board member of ARINA, Inc., and lives in Nelson, B.C.

[janinglis@telus.net](mailto:janinglis@telus.net)

# **Developing *Integral Review*: IR Editors Reflect on Meta-theory, the Concept of "Integral," Submission Acceptance Criteria, our Mission, and more.**

## **Introduction**

Over the past three years our journey as editors of *Integral Review* has been full of rich learning. The processes of providing authors with feedback, going over reviews of articles as well as writing ourselves have all contributed to our growth. The primary forum for this learning has been the many conversations amongst us to deal with the various issues that arise in publishing IR. Our intention in this brief piece is to share some of our reflections on this learning journey with you. These will take the form of contributions/reflections from individual editors, allowing us to share with you the particular issues we feel of value in this process.

By writing these short pieces, we aim to provide additional resources for understanding how IR works. While we have guidelines and criteria for submissions on our website, it seems that narrative voices from individuals may add some flesh to them. Relating how we perceive issues around writing for an “integral” journal offers a supplement for engaging these criteria, and will hopefully bring them to life. As well, we hope that our writing provides insights into how and what we think about issues relevant to IR’s mission. These pieces reflect the unique voices we have as editors of *Integral Review*, and demonstrate some of the thinking and passions behind this journal.

## **Russ Volckmann**

I believe my most significant contribution to *Integral Review* during this “start up” phase has been the interviews I have done with people whose insights and publications contribute to our processes in significant ways. By processes, I mean the community’s ability to reframe and build a metatheory that allows us to incorporate the brilliant ideas and perspectives so often confined to academic disciplines or labels that often exclude, rather than invite.

*Integral Review* is an invitation, foremost. It is an invitation to participate in and contribute to a process that I hope will lead to approaches to framing our world, our experience, and our aspirations in ways that generate far more hope for our future than fragmented approaches are capable of doing. There are some arenas in which the fragmentation is welcome; after all, specialization leads to a quality of expertise that brings us products and approaches that help us address the challenges we face. We can find such specialization in many, many places. By adding a meta-theoretical perspective, however, my hope is that we can reduce the unintended consequences that lead to the destruction of the planet, its societies and its people.

Those I have interviewed represent interests in integral theory, management and leadership, conflict management and the work of defense organizations, art and the complexity of our world, and particle physics and transdisciplinarity. Each is interested in ideas and action, equally. One without the other is, well, full of hope, perhaps. I know of no other publication that would provide a home to such diversity and richness. Things I have learned from this process include that there are individuals out there who have been working from an integrative perspective for decades. This has led to pessimism on the part of at least one, to more creative work on the part of all, and the creation of an intellectual space intended to support the vision that I hold for engagement in a generative lifestyle and the purpose that *Integral Review* serves in support of this.

## **Thomas Jordan**

It is probably impossible to summarize the criteria of good scholarly work in a way that the academic community would agree on. Here is, however, one view that might serve as a starting-point for discussions. There are many paths to meaningful knowledge, the path the scientific community has chosen is only one, but one that has certain strengths. These strengths come with limitations as well, which means that science should be seen as a particular genre in the broader quest for knowledge. The goal of science is to produce tenable knowledge. We are nowadays aware of the perishable nature of absolute truth claims, because we know that all such formulations depend upon the characteristics of the discourse in which they are embedded. Therefore we no longer think of science as step by step building an ever larger body of true statements about reality. But still, the task of science is to strive for knowledge that is as tenable as possible, which generally means that when we make assertions about anything, we are supposed to have good arguments for the validity of the assertions.

A lot of the criteria generally used to define the genre of science follow from this basic task formulation. We expect scholarly texts to be stringent in their use of concepts. We expect that authors take care in formulating the purpose and research questions of their investigations; to describe how they have proceeded in order to seek answers to their questions; we want to have explicit and precise statements about what conclusions the authors have made; and we expect the authors to support their conclusions by arguments that are transparent, stringent and reasonable. A very characteristic quality of the academic community's style of knowledge seeking is that we are very sensitive about validity claims. As soon as an author makes any kind of assertion, i.e., claims that a certain statement should be regarded as valid, the academic instinct is to check whether the validity claim is reasonable. Some assertions need not be supplied with supporting evidence or arguments, simply because nobody would challenge their validity. If I say that WW2 ended in 1945, I don't have to prove this assertion, because it is generally known and accepted as a fact. But as soon as a validity claim is not self-evident or generally accepted as valid, the author of a scholarly text should take care to specify what evidence or argument the author feels is strong enough to support the validity claim.

In a scholarly text, authors cannot simply make assertions about reality just on the basis that something seems plausible, sounds reasonable or is appealing because it conforms with the authors' values or expectations. We expect authors to be more critical, to discuss supporting evidence (e.g., empirical data or logical arguments) and alternative interpretations. A text that

formulates a theoretical framework mainly by formulating principles and specifying details by deductive reasoning may be a valuable contribution, but then the author should stick to the realm of theory formulating. As soon as a statement is made about reality, it is not sufficient that the statement sounds plausible or attractive; there must be reasonable arguments that support the validity claim.

We sometimes get manuscripts that seem to be the product of an author trying to make sense of a particular field by interpreting it through a theoretical framework. It seems that the main criterion used by the author when making validity claims is that the framework seems to make sense to the author him- or herself. Developing a theoretical model may be a perfectly valuable contribution in a scholarly community, but it is problematic when the author simply claims that the concepts used in the model explain or correspond to certain empirical phenomena without really examining whether there is supporting evidence for making such claims.

## **Bonnitta Roy**

It seems to me rather unfortunate that the term *integral* has been associated with the notion of “A Theory of Everything.” In a recent dialogue hosted by *Integral Review*, a revision to “A Theory *for* Everything” was proposed—but even that seems to me to be problematic. While I consider the term “integral” to refer primarily to noetic enterprising, the notion of theorizing about everything seems somewhat at cross purposes to the integral embrace of body, mind and spirit. I believe that what is integral about *integral* is the capacity for integrating thinking, doing (including communicative acts) and being.

While an important critical component of *integral* is the articulation of distinctions, too much abstract theorizing results in the stratification of existence into a dizzying complexity of parts, and the hyper-intellectualization of the person at a loss for the whole being-in-Being. The product of this kind of hyper-intellectualization is the belief that reality is really composed of the discrete parts that we continue to identify. This puts us in the unfortunate position of having to create complex frameworks to explain how the parts fit together to retrieve a *really whole* reality.

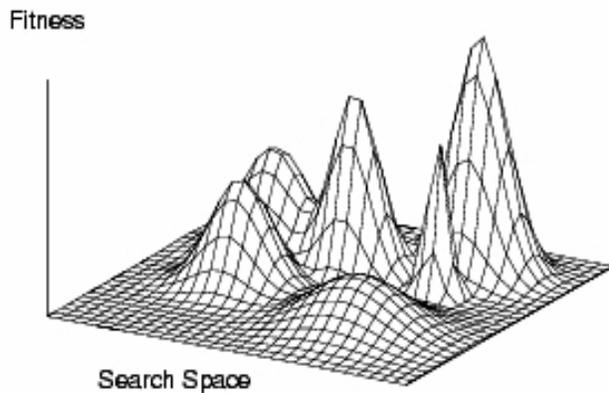
Humpty Dumpty fell off a wall . . . all the king’s horses and all the king’s men . . .

Rather, it seems to me that *integral* is the art of nuancing the whole—in teasing the creative flavors of our being from the whole of Being. It is as if we are children lying in the deep grass on a sunny day, watching clouds. I spy a rabbit and then you see it too. You spy a wizard, and then I see it, too. Joy.

Then again, it seems to me there is an inherent telos associated with the notion of *integral*—a *direction toward increasing view*. Here again, it is unfortunate that it is fashionable in some circles to imagine integral as the *one view* from 30,000 feet that captures everything else. This has created a kind of reality TV mentality in the integral community, where we get to vote people off our island until one guru remains. This can be quite ugly at times. If instead of thinking of view as a complex abstraction that contains everything and everyone—truly a great hubris that dogs the integral community—we imagine the telos of *integral* as being a direction

toward increasing degree of freedom. I have argued in this journal and in the dialogues hosted by IR, of just this notion of *view as degree of freedom*.

It occurred to me recently to think of *integral* in terms of a noetic *fitness landscape* where there are several views from 30,000 ft, and 25,000 ft, and 5,000 ft—and they are all equally relevant to the meaning of *all things integral*. This notion of fitness landscape has been used to understand evolution of all kinds of systems, including economic and biological. A graph of a fitness landscape looks like this:



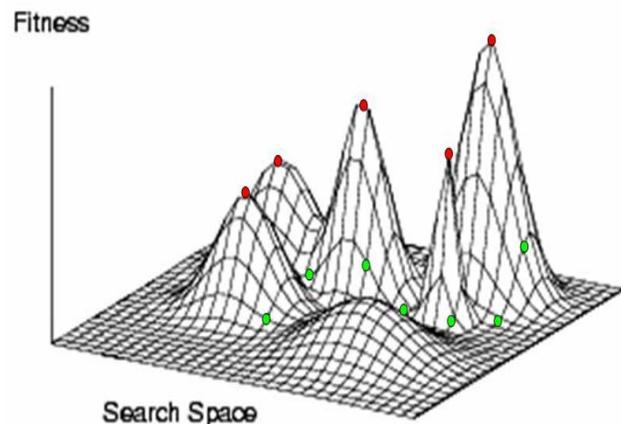
The hypothesis behind a fitness landscape is threefold:

1. The system seeks to maximize novelty.
2. The system is wholly autopoietic, that is, inputs and outputs are coupled and co-generative.
3. Agents and environment (figure and ground) are co-creative.

When thinking about evolutionary dynamics, the tendency is to in-animate the environment and animate the activities of potential agents with respect to the environment. The environment becomes a passive and negligent ground of activities among agents. This is at odds with both the notions of a wholly autopoietic system and the co-creative process between agents and environs. Not surprisingly, such a system does not maximize novelty.

When we focus mostly on cognitive adaptations, or a single summit of knowledge—that is the mistake we are making. We are dispossessing the environment and the process of their role in maximizing novelty. When I think of the noetic enterprise, *integral*, in terms of a fitness landscape, I think of the search space as the ground of Being, the contours of the landscape as the ascents of our being, and the summits of the landscape as the novel noetic points that emerge in a wholly autopoietic, generative process. If in this landscape, I plot specific noetic points (the red and green dots) as shown.

I can ask myself what are the kinds of relationships between the noetic points, the topographic scales and the relative heights of the summits. If *integral* is a noetic enterprise that emerges from a wholly autopoietic process, then the red points represent the greatest novelty (most emergent ideas) in the system. I imagine these points collectively as *integral thinking*. I imagine the topographies as *integral doing* – the paths that takes being there. And I imagine the search space as the ground of Being.



But when imagining the telos of *integral* as degrees of freedom, my interpretation shifts. The red dots are actually older, more stratified noetic points, and the new forms are continually being renewed from the fabric of the search space. In other words, the up rush of the tectonics of freedom *are from the search space, the very ground of Being*.

As the word *integral* generates new meaning(s) for us, I think it would be helpful to be mindful of the whole of which *integral* is not any single summit, but an essential part of the landscape of being-doing-thinking from which its own creative novelties are emerging. As we speak.

## Tom Murray

"My well written AQAL-based paper was rejected by *Integral Review*—what's up with that?"

In many circles the term "integral" is so strongly associated with Ken Wilber and the Integral Institute that it is worth taking some space here to clarify *Integral Review's* relationship to Ken Wilber, his work (particularly the AQAL model), and the Integral Institute which he founded, in part to help potential contributors understand how we evaluate submissions for publication. As I do so I will also discuss why we look for works that take a metasystematic perspective on one or more models, rather than simply apply a model.

Wilber's prolific, popular, and deeply insightful writing has been a major force of influence on the community of thinkers drawn to integral, holistic, trans-disciplinary, and systems-theoretic philosophical approaches. Following Sri Aurobindo and Jean Gebser before him, Wilber began using the term "integral" to describe his model around 1983, at the beginning of what some call the "Wilber-III" phase of his writing. Because some associate integral theory entirely with Wilber, it is worth noting that his approach is one of many approaches (the most widely known) that wrestle with the philosophical questions drawing the integral theory community together. *Integral Review* is "A Transdisciplinary and Transcultural Journal for New Thought, Research, and Praxis" and its editors are interested in a variety of interpretations and treatments of integral theories, provided they are of sufficient quality and originality. IR does not limit itself to pieces that explicitly deal with "integral," but this essay discusses our approach to evaluating submissions that do.

At the center of Wilber's work is his AQAL model of "quadrants, lines, levels, states, and types" (see "A Theory of Everything," 2000). We at IR sometimes receive submissions that illustrate rather straight-forward applications of AQAL theory to some domain (education, leadership, health, art, etc.). Such papers illustrate how the theoretical and practical elements of a domain can be conceptualized as conforming to the AQAL model, and note how insights from the AQAL framework illuminate key questions of their domain. We usually suggest that the authors of such pieces submit them to the Integral Institute's AQAL Journal (<http://aqaljournal.integralinstitute.org>), which specializes in applications of the model. IR and its editorial board have no official affiliation with the Integral Institute (or its many branches) or AQAL Journal. Though the IR editors owe a debt of gratitude to Wilber for his influence in defining many of the key issues of the field, and for galvanizing wide interest in them, none of us

see ourselves as working strictly within the AQAL model, and we each have our own critical intellectual relationship to the AQAL model.

IR publishes a variety of genres, including scholarly papers, artistic pieces, and opinion essays. For scholarly papers, one can make a rough distinction between those that share a new finding and use a model or framework to explain the finding, from those that reframe known material in some new way through the use of a model or framework. In both categories the scholarly submissions are of course evaluated in terms of rigor and originality, and (among other things, see <http://integral-review.org/submissions>) whether there is a clear indication of what the contribution is. For the former, it is the finding that makes the main contribution, and the model or theoretical framework constitutes the language used to communicate it. My comments here are mainly about the latter case, in which the main contribution relates to the model or theory itself, especially those offerings that promote or valorize a particular model. In such cases it is even more important to approach the model itself as an object to be examined.

In deciding what to publish we give preference to perspectives that employ what has been called vision logic, metasystematic thinking, integral-aperspectival reasoning, etc. (overlapping but non-identical post-formal reasoning signifiers with a range of meanings in the literature—I do not have the space to attempt to define them here). Though it requires this level of thinking to invent something like an AQAL model, the straightforward and uncritical appropriation of any model or theory does not exemplify this type of reasoning. This is not to say that such a work does not offer anything of value to the integral community, but only that it is less likely to be appropriate for IR. Integral or metasystematic treatments of abstract models or theories demonstrate an awareness of the epistemological and pragmatic limitations of such abstractions, and some reflection upon the limitations of the writer's context (though such awareness may be communicated implicitly or lightly).

Thus, submissions that are strongly based on a particular model (e.g., AQAL) should maintain a certain objective distance from that model. This level of reflection is one thing that distinguishes scholarly work at a metasystematic (or one could say "second tier") level from standard scholarly work, which often takes an embedded theoretical model for granted. Studies *exploring* a model should be constructed so that they can question, refine, or refute elements of the model. Treatments taking models as an assumed *starting point* should clarify how these assumptions might constrain the conclusions. *Applications* or case studies of models in realistic contexts should report "lessons learned"—i.e., what worked and what did *not* work as expected, with conjectures on the reasons and implications of failed expectations or refuted hypotheses. Papers proposing *new* models should supply ample support and clear examples.

Authors are encouraged to maintain or aspire to a certain objectivity, yet with an awareness of the "myth" of complete objectivity. That is, bias of various sorts is inevitable—authors work within the horizons of particular world-views and disciplinary paradigms, are subject to the "bounded rationality" ubiquitous in human reasoning, and come to their work favoring certain outcomes or valorizing certain beliefs. But each of these biases can be compensated for to some extent, or at least reflected upon. Integral forms of inquiry reveal subjective and intersubjective as well as objective factors that contribute to conclusions, to more fully contextualize these conclusions for the reader.

In closing I will mention that our formulation and application of article acceptance criteria is an evolving system. The explanations given above concerning publication acceptability are both in process and not straightforward to apply to each paper submitted. The journal is relatively new and exists to explore relatively unexplored territory with undefined boundaries and unclear standards for an emerging and equally nebulous community. Each submission has the potential to stimulate dialog among the editors about the interpretation or content of our acceptance criteria, and even about the makeup of our intended audience. In co-creating *Integral Review* we try our best, thrash, revel, and celebrate in the uncertainty of it all, and happen to enjoy the process very much

## Sara Ross

I harbor high hopes for the contributions *Integral Review* (IR) can make to contemporary issues and fields of endeavor. Those hopes come with challenges to realizing them. I want to use this space to articulate some of the challenges I see because some seem steep. I think these challenges go hand in hand with IR's mission, and for that reason, warrant public discussion.

For the scope I want to treat here, IR's mission can be summed up in a few words: To disseminate—and encourage more of—the awareness, development, and application of high stage action-logics to contemporary issues. Applications may take a wide range of forms, anywhere from research, theory-building, and analyses, to reflections, evaluations, creative works, and process designs. “High stage action-logics” refers to measurably complex behaviors including reasoning at stages called, for example, Strategist and Alchemist in Torbert's framework<sup>1</sup> and correspondingly, Metasystematic and Paradigmatic in Commons' framework.<sup>2</sup> These and subsequent stages are capable of and necessary for generating “integral” work. In my usage, *integral* draws on the dictionary sense of *essential to completeness* for the task at hand.<sup>3</sup> To me, in brief, such completeness means comprehensiveness that is both pragmatically contextualized and holistically so.

Given that scoping of the mission, what are the challenges that seem steep? I categorize them in terms of constraints. These constraints seem attributable to time, institutionalized demands, and conceptual assumptions. While these are interrelated in many respects, for the most part, I treat them only separately here.

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<sup>1</sup> Torbert, B., & Associates. (2004). *Action inquiry: The secret of timely and transforming leadership*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

<sup>2</sup> Commons, M. L., Rodriguez, J. A., Miller, P. M., Ross, S. N., LoCicero, A., Goodheart, E. A., & Danaher-Gilpin, D. (2007). *Applying the model of hierarchical complexity*. Unpublished manual, Dare Institute. Also available at commons@tiac.net.

<sup>3</sup> It would be great fun, and challenging work, to develop this idea in its own article, particularly the task dimension. There is a practical need for methods to evaluate and even measure sufficiency or “completeness.”

*Time*

I recall a professor telling his class years ago that when he was writing a paper, he required, on average, only one half hour to generate each page of writing. He was a speedy writer whose reasoning, I had noticed, was quite linear. By contrast, some people I know report that it often requires two or more hours to craft one or two solid paragraphs. I have worked with authors who require many months, in some cases years, to bring their complex understandings, theories, and analyses into an articulated, written form. I recall a scientist telling me recently that he had finally solved a question he had been working on for 30 years.

I have read published works by high stage thinkers who are making major contributions to understanding and working in our complex world. I have invited some of them to contribute an article to *IR*. Much of the time, despite expressed interest, they say they must decline for lack of time to do so. I know some practitioners, non-academics, whose insights and approaches would benefit other practitioners and genuinely deserve dissemination, were they ever written up. The world of published writing is not in their normal orbit, and the prospect of responding to an invitation to submit any kind of written work feels too challenging to take on alone. They would need a mentor or assigned editor to work with them, thus requiring a great deal of time for both parties.

The purpose of this litany is to highlight that high stage action-logics typically find it very time consuming to make written contributions. Whether short or long in length, the types of contributions *IR* is eager to publish require time in a world where time is a precious commodity.

*Institutionalized Demands*

For those who are academics, there is tremendous institutional pressure to get articles published. One might think that would support motives to submit works to *IR*. In the “publish or perish” world they inhabit, however, it is not necessarily that simple. There seem to be two related challenges here. One is that academic disciplines operate much like silos, with their contents segregated from others’ to maintain their distinct contributions. To remove walls that compartmentalize disciplinary knowledge still seems to represent, in many quarters, a watering-down of the disciplinary boundaries. To publish work in a transdisciplinary journal could be “as if” one had not published at all, apparently for two reasons. The first reason is access-oriented, the second is assumption-oriented.

Particularly given the continually growing plethora of electronic journals, one’s work in a given discipline could be more difficult to find by others in that discipline, depending on where it is published. Huge numbers of journals now exist. Indexed databases make their articles easier to search and find: some journals are indexed in traditional databases, some are in nontraditional databases, and some are in no such databases. Many databases are not open-access, but require paid subscriptions. Databases, like universities and journals, are assigned status based on experience and usually long-standing assumptions. To publish in a journal that is not indexed in the discipline’s expected databases can mean relative invisibility to target audiences. To publish in a journal that is not dedicated to one’s discipline increases difficulty to be noticed in one’s discipline. Yet, once one is integrating multiple disciplines’ approaches in one’s work, it

becomes more difficult to be accepted for publication in the home discipline's often silo-like journals. More and more, of course, there are multidisciplinary approaches taken under one discipline's umbrella, and this is reflected in some journals' missions: a hopeful sign of things to come.

The parallel institutionalized demand in the publish or perish world is to get one's work published in the journals with the highest impact factors. For those seeking tenured status, this matters: the higher the impact factor, the more weight assigned a published article, and the more articles published in journals given such weight, the better the tenure application looks. The faculty tenure system is a major institutional influence in the world of publishing.

Not all who wish to submit works to IR are concerned with tenure issues. Some are not in academia, and some are already tenured. They still may wish that people in their home disciplines read their good work in journals that serve the discipline, but not necessarily exclusively. People who want to publish in IR may tend to seek out transdisciplinary venues when their home fields are more specialized. Given these and other institutionalized demands—not least of which is, again, time to produce and/or to find and read articles!—straddling the disciplinary *and* transdisciplinary publishing worlds makes generating articles for “both/and” publishing solutions difficult for people to operationalize.

### *Conceptual Assumptions*

I suspect that realizing IR's mission in a fulsome way has challenges connected with particular concepts and assumptions about those concepts. The presence of a concept can present certain challenges just as much as the absence of a concept can present other challenges. To begin at the beginning, though, it is always advisable to define terms; a discussion of concepts is no exception. The dictionary meanings of “concept” are “something conceived in the mind (thought, notion)” and “an abstract or generic idea generalized from particular instances.” The dictionary does not unpack the significant social and developmental implications of those definitions. For example, the same concepts can *appear* to mean the same thing, yet at each stage of development, users can assign very different meanings to them.<sup>4</sup> Assumptions about certain concepts, one of my stated concerns, also have social and developmental implications. However, though they could enrich the points I wish to make, space here is limited and I defer those explorations for another day. As an alternative, I propose those definitions are useful reminders that concepts are mental constructs, and mental constructs are not “real things.” They are used to *refer to* innumerable things. Some of those things may be rather concrete, such as the concepts “dirt” or “chair.” Others may be quite abstract, such as the concepts “concept” or “theory.”

Concepts and assumptions about them inherently matter to any publication. It is also true for IR's mission, not least because its very title is made up of many concepts. Of those, ones that I think especially warrant examination are *transdisciplinary*, *transcultural*, and *integral*. Here, I prioritize only one, to discuss conceptual assumptions surrounding *integral*. As works published in IR have indicated, for some, this concept is tethered to something called “integral theory.” I

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<sup>4</sup> There is more discussion of this in Ross, S. N. (2008). The challenges of postformal (mis)communications: Speaking different languages. *World Futures: The Journal of General Evolution*, forthcoming special issue.

will call this Group A. For others, it refers to high stage action-logics that show up in such ways as perspective-taking, worldview, reasoning, and/or general ways of being-in-the-world (and many different concepts have been used to describe these qualities). These behaviors are independent of and irrespective of something called “integral theory.” People with these behavioral action-logics are very often unaware of that and thus unaware of others linking “integral” to it. I will call this Group B. Others are familiar with both Group A’s and Group B’s respective meanings of “integral” and move fluidly across contexts that use either. I will call this Group C. For yet others, none of the foregoing concepts are relevant. I will call this Group D.

If these seem to be more or less facts of life, how do they present any challenges for realizing IR’s mission? I think some challenges surface if there are implicit assumptions—and the focus here is on conceptual assumptions related to “integral”—that IR’s mission pertains to only one of the groups identified above. If they exist, such implicit assumptions spill over into decisions about submitting work, reading, and referring others to IR. These decisions directly impact IR’s mission.

Thus, there are authors who want to submit work for publication somewhere they consider a good fit (I will call this Group 1), potential readers of IR (I will call this Group 2), and others who hear of IR and may refer others to it, whether or not they have read it (I will call this Group 3). People in these three groups may fall into any of the groups previously identified (A, B, C, or D). These three “decision groups” are arbitrary divisions that are not mutually exclusive (e.g., someone who reads IR may also submit work to it).

These groupings result in the sorts of relationships between decisions and assumptions indicated in the following two tables. Decisions may be based on possibilities or constraints pinned to various conceptual assumptions. In Table 1, people in Groups 1 through 3 assume there is only one relevant way to conceptualize “integral” (implicitly, “my way”). Taken as a given, it poses no constraints on deciding (“X”) whether to submit, read, or refer others. This set of conditions poses no challenges to realizing IR’s mission.

**Table 1. Partial Portrayal of Decision Implications of a “Match” in Conceptual Assumptions**

	I assume IR’s use of “integral” matches or includes “my way” of using “integral”		
	<b>Group 1</b> Wants to submit work to a good-fit journal	<b>Group 2</b> May read IR	<b>Group 3</b> May refer others to IR
<b>Group A</b> Use of concept “integral” is tethered to “integral theory”	X	X	X
<b>Group B</b> Use of concept “integral” is unrelated to “integral theory”	X	X	X
<b>Group C</b> Use of concept “integral” is adapted to contexts of Group A and B	X	X	X

In contrast to the foregoing, Table 2 indicates some possible differences in conceptual assumptions, which would imply constraints in decisions to submit, read, or refer others to IR. Of course, anyone may be attracted to read an occasional article. But here, “read” means regular reading of IR issues. These combinations seem to pose challenges to realizing IR’s mission.

**Table 2. Partial Portrayal of Decision Implications of a “Mismatch” in Conceptual Assumptions**

	Decision if I assume IR means only Group A’s use of “integral” i.e., where Group A use of concept “integral” is tethered to “integral theory”	Decision if I assume IR means only Group B’s use of “integral” i.e., where Group B use of concept “integral” is unrelated to “integral theory”
<b>Group 1</b> Wants to submit work to a good-fit journal	If member of Group A or C, may submit; If member of Group B or D, unlikely to submit.	If member of Group B or C, may submit; If member of Group A or D, may be less likely to submit
<b>Group 2</b> May read IR	If member of Group A or C, may read; If member of Group B or D, may be less likely to read.	If member of Group B or C, may read; If member of Group A or D, may be less likely to read.
<b>Group 3</b> May refer others to IR	If member of Group A or C, may refer others; If member of Group B or D, may be less likely to refer others.	If member of Group B or C, may refer others; If member of Group A or D, may be less likely to refer others.

### *Conclusion*

The challenges identified and portrayed briefly above may be interesting to give much more attention in a variety of ways. These challenges are not likely to disappear any time soon, nor should they. My expectation and motivation for putting these challenges on our collective table is that they will benefit from public discussion. Such discussion may surface more such challenges, more clarity, and/or more concepts. All such discussion has potential to transform and re-frame challenges just as much as it has potential to broach possible ways to address them. I think we should welcome all of these potentials with hopeful anticipation!

## **Jonathan Reams**

Reflecting on the evolution of my perception of “integral” over the past three years, I find myself guided by a sense of not knowing. Taking understanding to always be provisional helps me stay open and allows me to learn a great deal from my colleagues, authors, and reviewers. For me to define “what integral is” would feel in some ways like reification, a deadening that could lead to a mechanical advocating for integral dogma. One of the goals at IR is to support a space for the exploration of “what integral is,” and doing this from a fundamentally inquiry oriented approach has led to a broad set of literature touching on many aspects of integral, from theory to practice.

While holding this openness to inquiry and “not knowing,” we also are guided by a sense of “knowing” that while having a kind of fuzziness to it at times, also enables us to recognize what we are looking for when we see it. While we may not always agree upon everything, our

collective inquiry of discernment around each submission produces a degree of coherence to the journal, and a great deal of organizational learning!

From these engagements with my colleagues, authors, and reviewers, the work of IR has deepened my capacity to make finer distinctions about the nature of things integral. Often it is through a process of finding that what I thought it to be is not quite it, or that there are nuances to be gained from taking a variety of views munched together and disentangling the enmeshed threads of thought. Serving in this role has also enabled me to broaden the scope of what I perceive as falling under the umbrella of integral, recognizing it in an ever-widening set of domains.

In my contribution to this editorial essay, I would like to quickly overview some of the learnings that have emerged for me. I will focus on three areas; the map and territory issue, the relationship of states and stages, and notions of integral and integrity.

One common issue we find in a number of submissions is varying degrees of weakness in mapping from a theoretical model (such as AQAL, but others as well). This often shows up as a kind of checklist approach to how the model applies to a given topic. While such mapping can serve a useful purpose in illuminating aspects of a topic often neglected, or in aiming for a synthetic overview of the topic, the challenge of doing justice to this approach makes the task very difficult. I often recommend to authors to focus on a particular aspect of the topic that the model addresses, and go deep into that territory.

Another type of challenge arises when we attempt to write about things that are on the horizons of our awareness. By this I mean that ideas we are currently exploring and trying to sort out are very hard to take sufficient perspective on and communicate clearly to readers. This is more of an example of being lost in the territory, and not yet having created enough of our own map to enable us to describe where we have been. Thus we may end up relying too much on the maps of others, losing our voice in the process.

This issue also touches on another ongoing conversation with colleagues, around the conflation of intellectual appropriation of a theoretical model with a subtle identification with the view of the model. Keith Bellamy posits an integral awareness developmental line<sup>5</sup> that identifies stages such as emergence, associating, proselytizing, rational, and discerning to note how our relationship to integral theory can grow over time. In addition to the time and experience it takes to go through such stages, there is also a factor in play related to the high degree to which we tend to equate intellectual activity with cognition and consciousness. From these (and likely other) factors, it appears that our ability to intellectually grasp a theory or model may lead us to also think that we are seeing things as the model (or the model's creator(s)) would. Yet reflecting on this in a number of conversations, it would seem that there is not yet enough widespread understanding of how stages of cognitive development or even states of consciousness will filter the theoretical model to fit within our already existing understanding. Thus we can fall prey to conflating our view with the view of the theory or model.

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.integralleadershipreview.com/archives/2006\\_03/2006\\_03\\_bellamy.html](http://www.integralleadershipreview.com/archives/2006_03/2006_03_bellamy.html)

This leads into the second area I want to discuss, the relationship of states and stages. It seems that there has been an emphasis in much of the integral literature on how structural stages or action-logics impact most everything. I think that this has been important, as the action-logics that we operate from will have a central influence on how we engage in the world. But as we study people and their behavior up close and personal, we recognize that there is more to the picture. Not everything can be accounted for by this method of slicing life experience. And of course an integral view explicitly includes many other elements. But how can we hold more of these elements in awareness at once?

One way of conceiving of the relationship between action-logics and states of consciousness has recently been put forward by Terri O'Fallon.<sup>6</sup> In her preliminary offering on this topic, she describes how observation of course participants (whose sentence completion test scores were known) led to recognizing the role that access to deeper levels of state experiences play in shaping the space we engage the world in.

This space can be mapped in a simple manner by drawing a V, with one side representing structural stages of cognitive development, and the other access to various levels of states of consciousness. The two points available to an individual can be linked, and a space delineated from this. This space is the territory they can roam in so to speak. Thus the range of options for engagement available to an individual are now able to be mapped in a rudimentary way as dependent on a combination of these two aspects of their makeup.

Further conversations have also explored ways in which structured experiences can be used to enable people to gain at least temporary access to deeper states of consciousness. (My piece on Otto Scharmer's U Theory illustrates one example of this). There is then a further question of the impact of the capacity of the facilitator to utilize their own access to states to enable others to experience them. These factors can then be examined in relation to action-logics, leading to asking what degree can people operate "over their heads" while supported by these other factors? A further question that arises focuses on how such experiences can support stage development. Sara Ross' description of her work in issue #2 of IR is an example of research in this area. These and more questions offer exciting avenues of inquiry for future exploration.

Earlier I mentioned Keith Bellamy's notion of an integral awareness developmental line. In that article he notes that his preliminary finding "cautions against the overt teaching of theory and argues the need to practice what we preach." This speaks to the third issue I will discuss, that of integral as integrity. The two words appear quite similar to each other, and there is a simple way in which being integral should mean having integrity. After all, if we have managed to integrate all of these various aspects of our lives that we are now more aware of through this powerful map of the complex territory of human experience, we should be able to enact a kind of alignment of values and actions. Or in other words, what are integral ethics?

This is no simple question. There are of course vast volumes of literature dedicated to questions of ethics, and one question could simply be what could an integral perspective add to what has already been said? While this is also an area open for future exploration, I do have one

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.integralleadershipreview.com/archives/2007\\_11/2007-11-article-ofallon.html](http://www.integralleadershipreview.com/archives/2007_11/2007-11-article-ofallon.html)

thought about the demands that knowledge of an integral view of the world can make on us. It comes from viewing integral as transcending and including the rational analytical mode of consciousness (see Jennifer Gidley's thorough description of this in her article) predominant today. In the transcending, a different kind of view of truth can emerge. This has to do with a notion of truth not as a noun, a thing to be found, pinned down and defined as in a rational view, but as a verb, a living engagement with life.

I have found this concept discussed in a manner that resonates for me by Parker Palmer in his book *To Know as We are Known. Education as a Spiritual Journey*.<sup>7</sup> Palmer talks of the ethics of knowledge by saying that it "begins not in a neutrality but in a place of passion within the human soul. Depending on the nature of that passion, our knowledge will follow certain courses and head toward certain ends" (p. 7). Palmer sees truth as troth, a living pledge. "We find truth by pledging our troth, and knowing becomes a reunion of separated beings whose primary bond is not of logic but of love" (p. 32). He illustrates this concept with a story of an early Christian desert father whose students came asking him to speak.

Some brothers . . . went to see Abba Felix and they begged him to say a word to them. But the old man kept silence. After they had asked for a long time he said to them, "You wish to hear a word?" They said "Yes, abba." The old man said to them, "There are no more words nowadays. When the brothers used to consult the old men and when they did what was said to them, God showed them how to speak. But now, since they ask without doing that which they hear, God has withdrawn the grace of the word from the old men and they do not find anything to say, since there are no longer any who carry their words out." Hearing this, the brothers groaned, saying "Pray for us, abba." (p. 41)

This story illustrates the integrity between knowing and truth, between self and our actions in the world. It allows us to conceive of knowledge as more than a static thing to be defined, but as something integral to how our essence manifests in the world.

Reflecting on this view, I find myself thinking that integrity is central to integral. As Keith says, we "need to practice what we preach" and what we are "preaching" or espousing as the value of integral stages of development is that they can enable us to better serve life. In looking for a marker for this, one could turn to Robert Greenleaf, who coined the term "servant leadership." For him, the test for such leadership was simple; are those served better off than before?

Why do we engage in this voluntary labor of love? Ultimately, it is to enable us to do as Greenleaf asks, to uplift those we serve.

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<sup>7</sup> Palmer, P. (1993). *To know as we are known. Education as a spiritual journey*. San Francisco, Ca: HarperSanFrancisco.