Jean Gebser was born in Posen, Prussia, in 1905. He was educated in Königsberg and later attended the renowned preparatory school in Rosseleben on the Unstrut. In 1931, Gebser encountered the Brown Shirts in Munich and promptly left Germany for Spain, free but impoverished. In August 1939, just hours before the Spanish frontier closed, he fled to Switzerland. He survived the Second World War to travel widely, including several trips to the Orient. Late in his life, he was offered a chair in the study of comparative civilizations at the University of Salzburg, but illness prevented him from maintaining the position. After several years of suffering from severe asthma, Gebser succumbed to the ailment and died May 4, 1973, in Berne, Switzerland.

During his life, Gebser’s work, especially his Transformation of the Occident (1943), gained a large scholarly audience in the German reading community. Between the publication of the first (1949) and second (1951) parts of his book The Ever-Present Origin, eighteen specialists in the arts and sciences at the Academy of Commerce in St. Gallen, Switzerland gave two cycles of lectures that presented evidence for Gebser’s contention that Western culture is currently undergoing a fundamental restructuration. Jean Keckeis has remarked that “a surprising unanimity of basic conception [about the contemporary restructuration of consciousness/world] emerged from these lectures: an openness toward questions dealing with transcendence; a scepticism about a self-satisfied rationalism; and a courageous humility vis-à-vis insights into man’s limitations of knowledge and perception.”

In 1965 Gebser was honored with Festschrifts: Wege zum integralen Bewusstsein (Ways to Integral Consciousness) and Welt Transparente
(Transparent World). The list of contributors reads like a veritable who's who of continental scholarship, including the physicist Werner Heisenberg, the biologist Adolf Portmann, the medical researcher G. R. Heyer, the prehistorian Herbert Kuehn, and the paleontologist Helmut de Terra. *Universitas*, a review of the arts and sciences, has asserted that Gebser is one of the three most important thinkers of our time, putting him in the same league as Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud. Among his personal friends, Gebser counted such notable individuals as Pablo Picasso and Federico Garcia Lorca. Still, despite such a stellar following and the efforts of the Bollingen Foundation and the late Professor Erich Kahler, the distinguished philosopher of history at Princeton University, Gebser's work has remained largely untranslated.

To date very little of Gebser’s corpus has been translated from German into English. One of his most important works, however, *Ursprung und Gegenwart*, which first appeared in German in two parts in 1949 and 1951 respectively, has been translated by Professors Noel Barstad and Algis Mickunas. The English version, *The Ever-Present Origin*, finally appeared in 1985. This massive work represents something of an “archaeology” (in Husserlian terms) of civilizational expressions and their correlative conscious structures across history and cultures. In his many books and articles, Gebser’s theory, especially his concept of “plus-mutation” (an explanation of discontinuous history), anticipates and surpasses such authors as Thomas Kuhn, Marshall McLuhan, Julian Jaynes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Gregory Bateson in both scope and evidentiary rigor. Indeed, Gebser’s work can be used to demonstrate the significance of these authors’ efforts, as symptoms of the fragmentation of modernity (as antimodernity) and the birth of the postmodern, aperspectival world.

This collection of original essays is intended as an introduction and application of Gebser’s theory. This is a first attempt to demonstrate how Gebser’s ideas may be of service to the many distinct and, in some cases, isolated disciplines that populate the contemporary academy.

E. M. Kramer

NOTE


INTRODUCTION: GEBSER’S NEW UNDERSTANDING

Eric Mark Kramer and Algis Mickunas

Because of its scope, complexity, and depth, Gebser’s work is highly regarded, both by serious scholars of comparative cultures and by a variety of seekers for a new age and a saving spirituality. While the esteem of the latter group may be warranted, Gebser’s work is much more profound and indeed relevant for deciphering diverse human cultures, their interconnections, and, above all, the ways that the so-called “past” modes of awareness continue to play a dominant—although unrecognized—role in our times. Moreover, his work demonstrates correlations among very diverse domains of cultural creations, from poetry through science. The correlations led Gebser to the conclusion that, despite various proclamations of the end of the Western world, there is evidence of an emergent and different mode of perceiving—the integral. This emergence offers a clue to broader scholarly ventures that seek to elucidate correlations of cultural phenomena across epochs and cultures.

Gebser pointed out that our age is not the only one that has experienced vast transformations in awareness. Gebser undertook the task of tracing the correlations of diverse cultural creations in order to show their connections and to decipher the types of structures of awareness that connect such phenomena. To Gebser’s own surprise, the phenomena suggested vast periodic transformations, mutations of awareness that restructure human modes of perceiving, conceiving, and interacting. Such mutations not only yield novel structures of awareness but also integrate and position other modes of awareness within the requirements of the currently predominant structure (whenever that may be). Gebser’s achievement hinged on his mode of research. He did not proceed from a presumed method or system, but followed the clues discovered among a variety of cultural
phenomena. He avoided the stock of methods available to and used by the post-Renaissance (modern) Western sciences and humanities. Gebser's reservations concerning such methods rested squarely on their limitations, specifically on the recognition that these methods belong to a particular structure of awareness and as such cannot be deemed to be universal. Moreover, Gebser was quite cognizant of the various conceptions, belonging to our own century, that suggest the impossibility of an impartial observer or of an application of some method that does not distort the subject matter under consideration. This is important, above all, with respect to cultural studies containing linguistic, aesthetic, and even ritualistic phenomena, to the extent that these phenomena are the very fabric that suggests a variety of modes of awareness required to access them. In other words, from the detached attitude of a rational observer, one cannot phenomenologically appreciate the direct experience of the sense of purification and cure induced by a Navaho “sing” rite, or the “internal conversion” expressed by the Balinese, or the feeling of iklas (detachment, resignation) felt at a Javanese funeral. Description of surface behavior, no matter how “thick,” is ontologically and phenomenologically distinct from that which is described.

Gebser’s effort goes beyond the post-Cartesian emic/etic distinction that characterizes the current ethnomethodological (phenomenographic) project that seeks to expose some folk “logic.” This approach is perhaps best exemplified by Erving Goffman’s (1959) rendering of humans as “vehicular units” functioning as “co-operatives” within “teams.” Similarly, Gebser did not subscribe to a linguistic totality, as suggested by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf, or to the fundamental “linguisticity” of the world promoted by Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer’s hermeneutics.

Gebser suggested that cultural studies should attempt to decipher sense connections among various cultural phenomena (1976: 124). This attempt should not result in a set of abstract conceptions but rather in a concrete understanding of the origin, position, and tendency of cultural ventures, including our own. In this sense, Gebser did not posit a dualism, whereby one would have an external view toward one’s own culture; he instead included our own tendencies and participation in cultural ventures. Thus, his research was done both to avoid fragmentation and isolation, which are predominant in many areas and constitutive of a pervasive attitude, and to show that what is fragmented in fragmentation cannot be understood without showing the connections among diversities—the genesis of meaning from comparative difference.

Gebser demonstrated that the major division of modern thought, that between the sciences and the humanities, functions effectively only at the level of praxis. Both “sides” of the modern object/subject incision (into the “flesh of the world,” to quote Maurice Merleau-Ponty) and their correlative literatures and polities, however, are equally reducible to the cultural level of symbolic origin. Though the current state of fragmentation has left the sciences and the humanities unable to speak to each other, Gebser maintained that they share this common ground of expressivity. Both are cultural inventions that share a fundamental characteristic. Each generates sense. Each springs from the liminal (threshold) between nothing and something. This is the essentially creative/inventive quality that all sense making shares.

While the sciences are oriented toward control, possession, manipulation, and prediction through the method of induction and the humanities confront understanding and deduction, the practice of cultural investigation is reduction. In order to be clear about this practice, Gebser pointed out that reduction is a final outcome. The practices that lead to this outcome are: (1) phenomenological; (2) comparative; and (3) coordinating. This suggests that even the results of the sciences and humanities must be understood and regarded as cultural phenomena, like all other civilizational expressions. The dream of immaculate perception rendered by an objective metadiscourse is a myth.

STEP 1: THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL SUSPENSION OF METAPHYSICAL PREJUDICE

Before opening a dialogue (textualization) with any civilizational expression, such as “What are you?” or “What do you mean?” the investigator must attempt to suspend or set aside all metaphysical prejudices that might preempt the exploration. Of course, the most difficult aspect of this process is the effort to become cognizant of one’s blinders, so that the attempt to remove them is possible. For instance, to appreciate voodoo as a different mode of being and awareness from some other cultural phenomenon, one must first be willing to accept it as it is and not immediately seek to explain it in terms of some other ontological basis, such as reducing it to brute physicalism (behavior patterns or neurophysiology). This is not to say that a physical description is invalid, but rather to make a commitment not to presume that a physical description is the only way to make valid statements about voodoo. To reject a priori—that is, to exclude any phenomenon (like spell-casting) from the field of investigation simply on
Introduction

the basis that it is deemed nonempirical—is to commit an unwarranted prejudice, based on a narrow metaphysical faith in materialism.

Because metaphysical prejudices may distort or even preempt investigations, they must be elucidated through self-reflexive critique and then set aside. Many scholars, including Edmund Husserl, Paul Ricoeur, Gilbert Ryle, and Clifford Geertz, agree that cultural phenomena call for a fiduciary attitude of generosity (of time spent with them and space on paper for “thick description”) and trust. Gebser’s approach is not amenable to ignoring entire classes of experience because they lack spatial extension, color, or weight. To help elucidate the differences and commonalities among cultural phenomena, including our own metaphysical prejudices, comparison with other modalities is essential.

STEP 2: COMPARISON

It must be noted that the practice of comparison is not equivalent to inductive generalization from multiple contingent cases to a general category. Rather, it is a discovery within a given phenomenon of its basic invariants; the latter, in turn, comprise the basis of comparisons leading to reductive recognition of basic structures across very diverse phenomena. In other words, the imaginative free variation (thought experiment) of any cultural phenomenon yields invariant properties that are essential to the identity of that phenomenon and that can then be compared with other invariants discovered among other phenomena. Invariants typically yield relational characteristics such that, for instance, it is not essential that a chair (any chair) have four legs, or a backrest, or recline, but all chairs have a common relationship to people’s posteriors. Such invariants manifest all pervasive structures of awareness that connect them. It is to be noted that any complex culture exhibits a variety of structures; hence, rationality in one situation may be the predominant (good and true) awareness, while under other conditions, reason may yield a very different, even marginal or evil sense. Note the extermination of the Coptics and Arians as heretics (after their having helped to define early Christian doctrine) because they valued Classical Greek-style analytics over faith. The conversion of former logicians to Christianity formed corps of apologists (Terrullian) and polemicists (Hippolytus) whose fervent attacks on pagan logic [like those renunciations by Lactantius, Arnobius, and Titian] reveal a particularly virulent backlash. Today the ridicule of theists by rationalists manifests the same chauvinistic cruelty and intolerance. Thus, in one sense, modern rationality is purely logical—all the way to quantification. But in another sense, it is emotive-magical with its own vital interest and investment in a particular version of reality. Care must be taken to discern differences among such structures, lest we become subject to unrecognizable forces that can lead to violence.

STEP 3: COORDINATION

What Gebser proposed to avoid is a one-sided scientism or positivistic methodological absolutism. He also proposed to avoid historical relativism that leads directly to irrationalisms. Such a rejection is implicitly an effort to avoid system construction in favor of the coordination of cultural phenomena. Coordination is guided by the distillation of invariants, which, in turn, is dependent on free and rigorous description, unbridled from metaphysical interests such as spatializing quantification. Thus, if science, even Weberian nonpositivistic systematics, seeks to build an allencompassing explanation, which itself may become confused with (via projective association) what it pretends to explain (reified diagrammatics, for instance), then for Gebser it belongs to modern Western culture with its pervasive and obsessive reliance on representational simulation—iconographic projection. The residual connotative and denotive effects of applying the word “system” to the world should not be overlooked. “System” carries with it the sense of dualism, basically of space and time. These can be expressed at other levels as object-subject, inner-outer, chaos-order, and even divine-worldly. It conjures abstract flow charts and organizational plots that real people are then compelled to live “up to” as implements. Such iconography assumes not only that imagery (a plan) facilitates security and control, but also the value of a managed, rational world order. In brief, a system can be built only on the basis of a static metaphor of space and time and on reification.

This is precisely the problem pointed out by the critics of the Club of Rome’s world models generated by Jay Forrester (published as The Limits to Growth, 1972) and Dennis Meadows (published under the title Mankind at the Turning Point, 1974). One threat to the accuracy of prediction is that changes that have not yet occurred, including “progressive” ones, cannot be factored into a model very well. But the more insidious threat to accurate prediction, which is described by Eduard Pestel in the book Beyond the Limits to Growth (1989) and acknowledged in the book Beyond the Limits (Meadows, et al., 1992), is the fact that making predictions about the future helps to spur change that makes such predictions inaccurate. Of course, it was the desire of the Club of Rome to make its projections about planetary instability based solely on current trends so as to motivate change. The intent of the authors of such gloomy works is to frighten world
leaders into changing policies so that they may become self-falsifying prophets in the sense of the Latin proverb utinam vates falsus (that I were a false prophet!). Indeed, in such cases as these, to be proven true is to face disaster. Unlike the common source of pride for the average hypothetical scientist, these authors would gladly sacrifice the accolades given for accuracy in favor of averting disaster.

In noting multiple, intertwined consciousness domains, Gebser used what he called “systasis” to articulate the ways in which such domains integrate, including rational efforts to assure self-falsification. Integration does not posit some static whole, but an incessant process that constantly traces all the latent and ever-present structures and the ways in which they complement each other. Latency is what provides clues for the active copresence of all domains of consciousness. One must not regard systasis as a method that decipheres consciousness historically. The latter approach is neither wrong nor right, but belongs to a mental structure that presumes linear causality as the cosmological/transcendental law. In the sciences, this causality is conventionally expressed as fragmented bits that function as material causes to fatal effects: t_1 \ldots t_2 \ldots t_3 \ldots

Gebser’s concept of “plus-mutation” is different from the conventional idea of a mutation. “Plus-mutation” describes a process of enrichment rather than destruction. The “past” state is not surpassed or abandoned, but instead, is added to. Thus, even though Gebser demonstrated that the mutation to perspectival consciousness erupted around 1400 A.D., this does not mean that the previously dominant mythic and magic structures ceased to exist at that time, but only that they became relatively “latent” (concealed via rationalization). Thus, a very rational individual, like an astronaut, ship’s captain, or fighter pilot, may feel compelled to name his vehicle “Eagle” or “Saturn,” assuming the connotations that these words embody. Such naming is usually depicted by conventional communication models with linear arrows. But the process is less than a transference than a transformation that is neither spatial nor temporal. This is more than a simple physical process. At the ritual of a christening or baptismal naming, which presumes a community, all relationships to the rocket(ship), including the talk about it and emotions for it, change instantly and simultaneously. It is literally a birth with all the attendant emotions, like pride, hope, and love—a celebration. Thus, one finds magic incantation integrally intertwined with the most modern of rational technologies. Hence, ultramodern skyscrapers have no thirteenth floors, and astrologers counsel leaders who command nuclear arsenals.

**DELIMITED WORLDS**

Gebser’s investigations indicate that there are distinct structures of consciousness, each having a predominant mode of experiencing. He articulated at least five structures: (1) archaic, (2) magic-vital, (3) mythic, (4) mental-rational, and (5) integral.

**The Zero-dimensional Archaic Structure**

The predominant mode of experiencing in the archaic structure is a sense of unity. The human is completely submerged in and coextensive with the world. Archaic consciousness is an awareness akin to dreamless sleep and has been hinted at in numerous metaphoric expressions, such as an initial human oneness with a divinity in paradise, the mystical visions of merging into the one, or the spontaneous rituals that dissolve the participants into a state of trance. It is a zero-dimensional consciousness, in the sense of not having any objectifying, vitalizing, or psychologizing valence or distance. As compared with the modern mental-rational effort to obtain abstract, transcendental truth, which divides the world into knower and representationally known, the archaic attitude can be called resentient identification. Mental-rationality separates the dream from the dreamer for analytic (directional) purposes, ontifying experience into a thing that can be symbolized and signified across semantic space. By contrast, in the third century B.C., Chuang Tzu wrote of the archaic mode of awareness: “Dreamlessly slept the true men of earlier times.”

**The Pre-perspectival Magic-Vital Structure**

With the mutation from archaic unity to magic awareness, a rudimentary sense of space emerges as does its correlate, the self. Spells are cast directionally and with a willful purpose to confront and control that which is external to the self. The magic-vital awareness is one of identity. Every event is vitally connected to and can be transformed into every other event; one can become the other. In vital awareness, the human has no specific egological identity or psychological self (image); rather, the human is identical with the powers that it embodies. Thus, a hunter who performs the hunted animal’s movements in dance or wears the animal’s skin consists of the very powers of the animal. The hunter does not symbolize the animal as if s/he had a permanent identity separate from it and was merely enacting the animal. In magic there is no symbolic distance. Thus, modern semiotics, with its post-Cartesian dualism of signifier/signified,
stresses the arbitrary and conventional characteristics of modern abstraction. A person who lives a magic life, however, may very well panic when s/he has lost a protective amulet or charm, precisely because the “sign” is not merely a symbol for a protecting force but is (identical with) it. The preserved finger of a saint in a cathedral is (literally) holy and manifests miraculous powers. The magic universe is not arbitrary but is saturated with absolute motivation. Everything is “connected” to everything else. Accidents, probabilities, and coincidence do not happen here. Things are easily offended.

Magic-vital awareness can assume a variety of forms. Instead of a ritual, one may engage in incantations, appropriate sayings, assumption of names, and even prayers. As long as the performance is regarded as identical with another event whose powers the former incorporates or becomes, magical awareness is at play. Nonetheless, concomitant with such awareness is the vital want, as a source of will to master and control, to make things happen and to obtain power. The very term “magic” unfolds into such European terms as the English “to make” and “machine” and the Germanic Machi (power), and Moegen (to want). In this sense, magic awareness tacitly integrates vital interests, technical production, rhetoric, and theater. For example, the latter is premised on the understanding that the actor “becomes” the role, that Richard Burton disappears and Hamlet appears. Rhetoric is not only a mode or a transparent attempt to convince but, more fundamentally, an incantation that identifies the addressee with slogans, sayings, promises, and images that draw power from an office, star status, a nation, or a flag. In contemporary but appropriate parlance, such events exemplify the “halo effect.” The magic “rubs off” quite without reason. Moreover, the making of implements and technologies that transform nature in accord with human vital wants, human will, scientific designs, and rationality, is modern magic. Thus, in its own context, magic integrates other modes of consciousness. This consciousness is one-dimensional, in the sense of an identity of one power or one event with another. It remains vital even in the most highly industrialized societies, among, for instance, urban youth gangs, military and sports organizations, and clubs (like the Masons). All exhibit totemic unity and identification. The ritual “opening” and “closing” of the Olympics is quintessentially magical, including the transference of the “Olympic spirit” via the ceremonial touching of the Olympic flag as it enters the arena and the maintenance of the flame.

Integration reveals how a given structure bears other structures within its own predominant mode. The magic-vital mode of awareness both functions in the vital identification of any part with any other part and includes wants and desires that are magical modes of willing. As an aspect of directed and rational activity, willing is equally contained in magic insofar as the latter exhibits an implicit ends-means correlation. While magical activities preclude symbolic distance, they contain tacit polarities that are an aspect of mythological psyche. The predominance of the magical structure thus does not mean that other structures are completely excluded. The integrating mode of analysis offers a means of accessing the ways in which a particular structure situates its ways of experiencing from those of other structures.

The Unperspectival Mythic Structure

The third structure of consciousness, as delimited by Gebser, is mythological. It must be emphasized that this structure has very little to do with storytelling or fables, although stories and fables usually manifest the ways, images, sayings, and human relations in which the mythological structure appears. While the magical structure contains point-for-point identification of every vital event with every other vital event, the mythical structure relates events polarly. The latter structure is to be distinguished from duality, insofar as polarity means the dynamic movement of one event, image, or feeling that provokes, attracts, and requires another event. The appearance of sky is also the appearance of its polar aspect, the earth; the appearance of love is likewise the appearance of hate, while the appearance of high, demands the polar presence of the low. One is never given without the other, and one may replace the other. Thus, gods and demons may exchange their positions through various deeds. Demons may become good and rise to the heights, while gods may become corrupt and sink to the low region. While this movement comprises a rhythmic and indeed a dancing and oral (synchronizing) mode of awareness, such an awareness is cyclically temporical. The cosmos moves in cycles that repeat themselves: from spring to summer, from summer to fall, from fall to winter, from winter to spring. The periodicity of mythical rhythm leads to cyclical repetition, still resonating in Nietzsche’s eternal return of the same. One of the best graphic symbols of the mythic mentality is the ancient Chinese tai chi, with its intertwining polarities of yin and yang that depict both movement and stillness at once.

Being temporical and not spatial, the mythical consciousness is expressed in images requiring no traversal of space for their movement. Gebser noted that myths are usually expressed by psyche and its polar arrangement of dynamically interchanging images, among which the oral imagery predominates. Psyche is not mind for this concept belongs to the mental-ra-
The Perspectival Mental-Rational Structure

The mythical consciousness does not retain its polarizing and psychic character indefinitely; it undergoes a mutation that leads to the preeminence of a mental structure of consciousness. The characteristics of the mental structure consist of various radically fixed aspects. First, this structure is dualistic, with preeminence given to the function called "mind" over matter. Second, mind is not regarded as an entity but as a function of directedness, orientation and finally, linearity. Third, orientation originates with a center called the ego—at least in the modern configuration—with a propensity to lend the ego a spatial position from which perspectives become constituted toward the "object out there." Here we acquire the concept of the egosubject in opposition to material object. Fourth, the egosubject, as an orientational function, may be treated at a deeper level as constitutive of linear time, while the material side can be regarded as a representation of space. According to Gebser, this implies a division of space and time. This division between the subject and the object is manifested in many different expressions such as the idea of dialectical knowledge in jurisprudence and the notion that media news coverage must be "balanced," as though "reality" is "balanced," leading to many epistemological disputes about "false" consciousness versus some external truth and "reality" versus propaganda (agenda setting and gatekeeping for instance). Is the dualistic mental consciousness thus coextensive with an awareness of time separate from an awareness of space? Gebser, believed that this prejudice is characteristic of modern thinking and that it leads to the reification of time as an indifferent measure of the linear motion of spatially located objects. It seems that modern mental consciousness is constituted fundamentally on a spatial metaphor. Indeed, all events and phenomena, in order to be real, must be reduced to spacio-temporal positionality and thus to perspectival fragmentation.

Despite the fragmentation, it ought to be pointed out that integration also plays a role in the mental consciousness structure. Integration is unavoidable at the level of mundane, everyday experience. Thus, a person living in mythical consciousness does not question her integration. Indeed, such questioning would make no sense (the explication of a given consciousness structure is only possible via contrast to another consciousness structure). The only other way of recognizing the unique qualities of a given consciousness structure, is by reflecting on its fragmentation and disintegration (deficient mode) and its maintenance in face of fragmentation and disintegration.

The Decline of the Perspectival

This double possibility of reflecting one mode of awareness offers a profound solution to the incessantly discussed theoretical and methodological issue of the access to both one's own and other cultures. At heart, the question is how it is possible to step outside of one's own culture (blind prejudices) in order to regard it and other cultures objectively. Gebser's analyses of consciousness structures as coextensive with cultural life show that each culture bears within itself consciousness structures that are
accessible to all structures and that provide reflexive moments from which the dominant consciousness structure can be recognized. In this sense, if any given consciousness structure becomes deficient, reaching a point of fragmentation, then other modes not only reflect it but also may provide the moment of integration. Thus, deficient (meaning ineffectual) rationalization reverts to magical consciousness in order to maintain its power.

During both the mutation from mythical to mental and from mental to integral modes of consciousness, the deficient modes are proliferated by the invention of new myths or by the production of new logics and ever-new calls for the subjugation of all areas of cosmic and human processes to quantitative research. Anxiety calls for heroes (shamans, soothsayers, statisticians, experts, and sorcerers) who know the true path to salvation. Thus, we all anxiously await a victory over AIDS, an unlimited and clean source of energy, a correction of the economic recession and its mysterious “market mechanisms.”

Nonetheless, during both mutations, a modicum of integration is achieved. Quite frequently such efforts are most strenuous and violent (virulent). Each new invention or effort to maintain the deficient myths or rationality claims to be the only “truth” and consequently demands the suppression and indeed even destruction of its own efficient forms. Such a phenomenon is prevalent among contemporary fundamentalist trends. Each claims to be the sole truth and calls for the destruction of all evil enemies. (This tendency is also present among the political technocrats with their best “humanistic” efforts to improve humanity.)

For Gebser, this phenomenon does not mean that the deficient mental consciousness accepts other modes of awareness in their efficient modes. Mythology thus assumes the form of progress. Progress is not a sign of purposeful activity but becomes a self-referential and self-enhancing repetitive structure: Progress is for the sake of progress. It turns back upon itself and assumes a mythological structure of cyclical repetition. Magical awareness, in the form of technology, is equally included in the deficient world of mental awareness. After all, technology bears the marks of want and willing, of the making and fulfilling of individual or social-national vital interests. If one couples quantification (as the mode of deficient rationality) with the ability to make and control, one notes that this coupling is coextensive with the incrementation of power. Power pervades all magical practices, to the extent that it initially deals with the making of equivalent identifications while serving volitional designs with instrumental rationality. If one were to push this magical base to the limit, one could say that modern magic is the will’s empowerment of itself or empowerment of its own self-proliferation as will.

As noted above, the condition for the possibility of mental consciousness is a specific constitution of time and space. The issue for Gebser is the extreme dualism of subject and object, and more fundamentally, of space and time. Immanuel Kant expressed this dualism in its basic configuration by showing that space is the external mode of perception, while time is the internal mode. Yet it is precisely this type of duality that cannot be integrated by mental consciousness, especially in its deficient mode. Hence, mental consciousness must presume that magic is an integral structure, in the form of the modern insistence on making, technology, and a continuous emphasis on the fulfillment of material wants. Modern industrial culture is obsessed with the magic of production as the common denominator and final purpose of all activities. At the level of magical consciousness dualism is avoided in the form of rampant materialism with an attendant glorification of power. For Gebser, this state of affairs explains contemporary power confrontations.

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

The current debates concerning the viability of qualitative methodologies do not comprise a novelty but rather an effort to enhance the continuity of the mental consciousness structure. Certainly the significance of this
debate cannot be overlooked. It reveals the adequacy of both the qualitative and the quantitative methodologies and demonstrates the need for a methodology of integration. This is to say, the objectivation of the two mental methodologies manifests a consciousness structure that defies magical integration and opens the ever-present \textit{integrum} that is prior to parts and wholes, to the one and the many, to unity and diversity, and even to time and eternity. Integrum is not a whole that unifies the parts or that is more than the sum of the parts. Rather, \textit{integrum} frees diversity from constrictions on openness and liberates the life-world from succession and structural rules. This, for Gebser, is the case of the twentieth century.

\textbf{The Emergent Aperspectival Integral Structure}

\textit{Transparency}

The integral consciousness is increasingly becoming manifestly predominant in every domain, from the physics to the poetry of this age. It comprises an explicit presence of what has been latent or implicit in all the other modes of awareness. Integral awareness immediately precludes the notion that integration is an arrayment, a recognition and acceptance of the different structures of consciousness. We can trace in each phenomenon the commonalities that are “transparent” precisely because the phenomenon is different from others. Gebser’s understanding of the integral, which is manifested basically by transparency, requires meticulous articulation. It should be clear that transparency does \textit{not} mean seeing through things by some mystical vision. At the first phenomenological level, Gebser accepted the consciousness phenomenon of meaning that does not signify any exclusively material or ideal “reality,” but rather comprises \textit{an event of mutual relationships and dependent differences}.

When we take a material object, a cube for instance, every dimension of it means other dimensions, thus integrating and in turn being integrated by them. The cubeness of a cube is understood as six planes that simultaneously rely on each other in order to form the object meant as a “cube.” Cubeness is an integral meaning that evaporates the instant one atomizes the object into six square surfaces. This is why mental reductionism ultimately fails as an explanation, for the cubeness of the object depends on the integrated relationships of all the surfaces at once. When it is taken apart (altering the relationships of the various planes to each other), the cube disappears. Likewise, a plane surface (\textit{meant as a side of a cube}) relies on being an integral (integrated) “side of a cube”—sideness. The instant that sideness is removed, its sense changes—the side becomes merely an isolated surface. To appreciate the covaluation and coconstitution of the meanings “cubeness” and “sideness” is to understand the \textit{systatic} quality of relative interdependence. In other terms, this is why persons often feel a loss of identity when they are laid off or retire from being an integral part of some larger organization.

To become integrally aware of the vital role difference plays in identity is to understand systatic integrality (interdependence of a sort). For instance, black pride in race relations can exist only if there are other, \textit{different} colors to relate to for comparison. The colloquialism “I can relate” usually means “we are the same,” but one cannot relate to oneself. Identity negates communication. Difference generates relativity and the potential for dialogue. Indeed, if all the world were one color, the word “color” would have no meaning. Diversity is enriching. Thus, one’s own value is dependent on one’s relative difference from others, and vice versa. Similarly, we can appreciate our magic awareness only because we also experience mythic and rational modes of being, and vice versa.

Once again, a side of an object means other sides, and it is thus both different from them and yet transparent with them, as they are transparent through it. In this sense, meaning points to other meanings that are different from and yet related to one another as different. Meanings integrate in their mutual call for each other and in their mutual differentiation.

\textit{Atemporality}

The second basic feature of integral awareness is \textit{atemporality}. Once again, some basic misunderstandings should be avoided. This term signifies concrete awareness of time as integral, prior to its abstract and linear division into past, present, and future. At the level of meaning, even that division suggests transparency of one through the others and their differential integration. Indeed, as numerous researches into time awareness have shown, purely sequential experience cannot yield any sense. Such an experience would be totally fragmented into disconnected temporal quanta. Any connection already takes for granted the presence of concrete awareness that is integrating—mutual implication. The atemporality of such integration means that prior to various constructs that are introduced to account for time (such as money, images, projections, and expectations), the consciousness of the presence of the whole is required. Thus, the integrating process of the previous, the present, and the subsequent is prior to their sequence and allows the perception of one through another. For Gebser, this perception is \textit{aeternal concreatum} and is the basis of aperspectival awareness depicted by the artists of this century.
Without atemporality, there would be no aperspectivity as a way of seeing something from all perspectives, as omnipresent. Atemporality integrates spatial perception of perspectives, allowing an awareness of something from all sides without a succession of mental functions; grasping cubeness at once. This state of affairs can be explicated even in the familiar language of mental consciousness. To have the presence of a perspective requires a copresence of a previous or a subsequent perspective. But such a requirement is possible only if atemporality is experienced such that the latter makes copresent the previous and the subsequent perspectives as integral aspects of an awareness of the whole. Thus, at the level of materiality, atemporality is an integration of spatial perspectivity.

In brief, the future is not something that is coming but is copresent as the difference between the given and its variants. The future exists as present potentiality. The latter, in turn, integrates and is vitalized by the magical transformation of the given toward a variant meant as potential. It is a magic transformation that is atemporally present such that what is to be transformed and its variations are copresent. Aperspectivity and atemporality are essential to integrating differentials that allow for openness and yet transparent comprehension.

It would be a mistake to speak here of wholes as if they were pregiven structures, in contrast to the parts. In other words, such a linear conceptualization presumes the controversy within mental consciousness concerning the priority of parts over wholes and vice versa. Indeed, this controversy reflects the difference between the qualitative and the quantitative aspects of the mental structures, or between the efficient and the deficient phases of any structure. In other words, the notion of the whole within the integral consciousness must be regarded nondualistically, such that even the notion of one aspect becoming another, of energy changing into matter and of matter transforming itself into energy, or of psyche being the other side of the body and of the body being an appearance of the psyche, must be avoided. Gebser's view demands that we think integrally in a way that avoids dualism without the assumption of holism wherein, to paraphrase Hegel, everything is a night in which all cows are black.

While dualisms are premised on the separation of time consciousness from space consciousness, the integral consciousness is a concretization of time in such a way that space is dynamized. Indeed, this very separation, which leads to the mental, linear time, results as well in time being reified and an appeal to spatial metaphors for explication. The difficulty in grasping the integral consciousness as atemporal and aperspectival may be attributed to the hindrance of the prevalent discursive language which manifestly expresses dialectical mental-rationality. At the same time, other possible modes of expression offer themselves, beginning with conceptions of "openness," "probability," "chance," and even "chaos." Such terms preclude conceptions of spatial closure and strict localization. They suggest the eruption of atemporality within spatial rigidity and thus the disruption of such rigidity. This eruption, for Gebser, is not an intellectual invention but is traceable across the diverse cultural phenomena of our century, from poetry to physics. The eruption of atemporality avoids dualism and abolishes the language of inner and outer, expression and the expressed, meaning and the meant, or the now famous signifier and signified.

It should be noted that the integral does not abolish the other modes of awareness, nor does it simply aggregate them and tolerate their differences by allowing each to have its say. Rather, the other modes of awareness become subject, or even subordinate, to the integral. In this sense, rationality ceases to be fragmenting and merely instrumental, instead assuming a sense-making function that is continuous; ever-present. Sense-making is not purely logistic and argumentative but is also connecting within the context of the integral. It plays the role of tracing out sense implications and their never-finalizable intersections. This rationality sets transgressible limits that allow for openness and integration.

**DIAPHANEITY**

The task, for Gebser, is to articulate the integral without a loss of significant differentiations. These become most important in the face of various contemporary sociopolitical and theocratic movements. They seem to be reasonable, and yet what is to be noted is their immersion in various deficient modes of consciousness structures. Cognizance of such modes is a way to avoid becoming subjected by the deficient and at the same time extremely virulent enchantment, commitment, and action based on such modes of being. We know well the magic of Adolf Hitler and Ronald Reagan, the mythical sayings and magic rituals of all types of fundamentalisms, whether theological or political, that ply their trade under the protecting guise of rationality, the right to speak and "convince," and even the violent right to impose the fundamentalists' "truth" on all, for their own good.

What is required is a cognizance of the limits of one mode of awareness vis-à-vis other modes. Magic and myth integrate rationality, yet if one were to shift to a rational mode of awareness and its ways of integrating, one would be able to appreciate the limits of the other modes and would thus not fall prey completely to the direct, lived solicitations of the other modes.
of awareness. The same can be said of mental consciousness; in the context of the integral, the limits of the mental become transparent, not only in relation to other modes of awareness, but also through their all-pervasive integral dimension.

EVER-PRESENCE

The cognizance of the integration of differentiation also shows the common integrating ground. The latter is "ever-present" and in one mode or another precludes a complete collapse into fragmentation of any mode of awareness. At the same time and at a more fundamental level, the integral awareness escapes the above-mentioned issue of theoretical and methodological access to one's own and other cultures without having to transcend them. With integral consciousness, one can regard events within the context of the preeminence of one or another structure of consciousness of any given culture by noting the recurring though diversely expressed integration. This is to say, one can access events both atemporally and aperceptively. Thus, one need not appeal to some unconscious reality, material base, or instincts in order to extricate oneself from one's intracultural positiveness. These tandem, which are regarded as explanatory bases, attempt to avoid cultural closure but inevitably introduce elements that are outside of both culture and consciousness. For Gebser, even such explanatory offerings presuppose a specific mode of awareness that integrates them with other modes of awareness and does not allow one mode to be completely supreme. Indeed, the explanatory components are not some dead substances or mechanisms but are borrowed from another structure of consciousness.

The understanding offered by Gebser's investigations into specific consciousness structures—as coextensive with cultural structures—rejects both the evolutionary thesis as well as the teleological thesis of Western philosophies, which remain prominent under the silent sway of G. W. F. Hegel, Karl Marx, and even the mythology of progress. For Gebser, such teleologies are neither right nor wrong; they must, however, be located within their proper consciousness structures and evaluated with respect to their limits and their manifestations within the preeminence of specific modes of awareness. Indeed, in the context of integral consciousness, the teleological aspect is not abolished; rather, multipurpose horizons—an aperceptual understanding—is opened.

No doubt, Gebser's work is not complete; yet its depth offers multidimensional access to human awareness and cultures. The vast correlation of cultural phenomena and the analyses of all the consciousness structures that intersect such phenomena provide a contribution that is novel, profound, and replete with fruitful suggestions for future research. Much of this volume is, in fact, devoted to such research. After all, to be true to Gebser's work and insights, one need not repeat what has been done by him. Rather, the task is to extend human awareness concerning various current phenomena. The following essays were all commissioned with this idea in mind. All are original pieces with the exception of Chapter 2, on "The Physical Sciences and Their Socio-Cultural Impact," which originally appeared in German and has been translated for this volume by Professor Evelyne Lang.

Chapter 1, "Gebser and Culture," by Eric Mark Kramer, makes an extensive review of the idea of "culture" in light of Gebser's concept of perspectival abstraction. Kramer concludes that culture has come to mean all things that are not natural, but the idea of "nature" itself is revealed to be an invention. "Culture" and "nature" emerge simultaneously as a modern duality that enhances the power of material production. The deeper question addressed is what compels the production of this tandem itself.

Chapter 2, "The Physical Sciences and Their Socio-Cultural Impact," Friedrich G. Winter discusses the advancement of the disintegration of the world into smaller and smaller quanta. Individualization of all aspects of life and art promotes competition and many forms of violence epitomized by the cobalt and neutron bombs. Winter calls for an integral, "gestalted" attitude and style of thinking.

Chapter 3, by Joseph J. Pilotta, is entitled, "Media Power Working Over the Body: An Application of Gebser to Popular Culture." In this essay, Pilotta offers a new theory for understanding how the media exploit the magic power of animus—animation. He explains how various media, including speech, create the world via incantatory power and how this action moves people to imitate media messages.

In Chapter 4, "The Significance of Aperspectival Art in Light of Gebser's Work," Rosanna Vitale applies Gebser's theory to broaden our understanding of the efforts of several artists. Vitale explains the integral nature of Paul Cézanne's proto-Cubism, as well as Picasso's development of the idea. She also demonstrates the value Gebser's ideas have for our understanding of modern poetry and architecture.

"Magic and Technological Culture" (Chapter 5) by Algis Mickunas, demonstrates how modern metaphysics and ontology manifest the magical compulsion to enhance power through creative processes. He traces the sense of the technological world that ultimately reduces everything (in-
including humans) to particles in motion and then interprets them as an interchangeable resource base that is exploitable by will power.

In Chapter 6, "Gebser’s Understanding of Political Practice," Joseph F. Freeman explores the profound political implications of Gebser’s work. Freeman discusses what “empire-building” and the “founding ideas” of constitutional law mean and how they produce change. Gebser’s idea of an "open government" as a new way to think about political activity is reviewed. Freeman contends that constitutional order is abstract and outmoded. He argues that campaign practices and poor voter turnout indicate the deficient state of an overly abstract political system.

Chapter 7, "Gebser and the Theory of Socio-Cultural Change," by Vytautas Kavolis offers a broad perspective from which to compare Gebser’s ideas critically to those of other cultural theorists. Kavolis traces how Gebser’s work takes up the perceptual aspect of culture, which is largely ignored by conventional social scientific approaches.

In Chapter 8, "Gebser and Pedagogy: The Integral Difference," Elizabeth Lozano and Algus Mickunas apply Gebser’s theory of multidimensional structures of awareness to the classroom experience. They specifically discuss the experience of the Latin American child and various “logics of understanding.” They suggest that the traditional pedagogy used in the United States, being a print-centered ontological version of learning, is no longer effective with many children. Therefore, a fundamental change in pedagogical assumptions and practices must be implemented for the new multicultural classroom.

Chapter 9, "Jean Gebser, the Commonweal, and the Politics of Difference," by John Murphy and Jung Min Choi, offers a "postmodern" alternative to the current polity based on Enlightenment assumptions. They demonstrate how Gebser’s work anticipates the current political philosophy of many postmodern writers, including how Gebser’s idea of “systase” offers a solution to the modern dialectic that defines difference and order as antagonistic aspects of social life.

NOTE

1. In the oft-quoted article, “Etic and Emic standpoints for the description of Behavior" (in A. Smith, ed., Communication and Culture, 1966), the linguist Kenneth Pike attempts to take into account the “subjective” perspective of the social actor by suggesting that there are two perspectives that a researcher might take into account. The "emic" perspective is one whereby a researcher attempts to understand behavior from the actor’s point of view, while the "etic" approach is an attempt to understand behavior objectively by comparing it to other examples with an a priori category of interest to be applied across the samples.

REFERENCES


