

Gebser 2009 Conference Abstracts

Rick Muller

Suffering and Identity

Time constricted presentations require choices. Provide a narrow field with greater detail or something more general covering a wider range of disparate information? I tend toward the latter. For those unfamiliar with my style, I tend to present information in a screenplay-like structure rather than the traditional narrative. I present fragments, mini narratives that crisscross fields or leap from subject to subject all furthering a larger narrative. I attempt to challenge ingrained perceptual tendencies or judgments hopefully revealing a nuance not possible by expecting traditional means. My goal is not to provide answers but to find questions that are worth consideration that present differently to each individual.

David Worth

Alterity and Identity in Gebser and Levinas

While much of modern thought might not understand identity's genealogy as Gebser does, it has taken the self as the basis of ethics and as the basis of subjectivity for quite some time. The Enlightenment Subject has been famously examined in many academic quarters. It takes as its basis the self. The emergence of the individual as separate from the world (ego) is a central marker of the mental-rational. This approach is perspective-centric, as some have argued.

Levinas grants priority to the Other, arguing in *Otherwise Than Being* that alterity transcends, since we must adapt to it. This is a very different starting point for identity. Obligation to the Other, the questioning of the Other, the demand of the Face affect my subjectivity. For Levinas, the Other is infinite. Alterity is infinite. To define the Other is totality. Levinas gives priority to infinity, so his approach is pluralistic.

While admittedly comparative and therefore not diaphanous, this paper will examine closely the idea of identity in *The Ever-Present Origin* and in multiple works of Emmanuel Levinas. Central questions include exploring similarities and differences between the two, exploration of what each has to contribute to the other, and a look at the question of whether modernity and diversity are "incommensurable," as the call for papers asserts.

Jeremy Grace*Leadership as Our Collective Condition: An Inquiry into the Unfolding of "New" Leadership*

When solicited to create a new upper-level undergraduate course that would serve as a requirement for our university's undergraduate center for leadership I found myself relying heavily on the ideas of Jean Gebser to help serve as a foundational lens and rubric for the entirety of the class material. The class that would come to be called The Intellectual and Historical Foundations of Leadership was a transformative one. The following paper will trace student's understandings of the concepts of leadership as illuminated by Gebser's Four Mutations of Consciousness while also exploring the idea of leadership itself. The human ego has always thought of itself as unique and viewed its particular episteme as a series of remarkable and dramatic events since the Fall of Man. The Fall, the first great cosmic distinction, the separation from nature represents the origin-original-origin and all of defragmentation that awakens the archaic dreamless true men into the need for, and the creation of, identity, civilization, and consciousness: The creation of hierarchy. This longing, this desire to return to origin, nirvana, this invention of the negative and with these the ever-present relationship with hierarchy manifests itself in the practice and theory of leadership, whether as requirement or as reification, provides comfort as the great chain of causation, reducing identity, civilization and consciousness to essentially Sisyphean tasks: civilization as destruction and renewal. But as Camus reminds us: "One must imagine Sisyphus happy." "The rock is still rolling," and "One god after another is coming home..."

David Zuckerman*Toward a Systalic-Integral Multilogue Model of Peace-Building and Reconciliation*

Drawing on past published work on the deficient mental-rational and perspectival nature of symbolic identity in intercultural, sectarian and international conflict, this paper seeks to lay the philosophical foundation for a means of conflict resolution and reconciliation. While a work in progress, the author is currently attempting to ultimately offer a practical tool for resolving such conflicts. The current paper is the first step in creating this model, which situates these conflicts in Gebserian terms, then presents ways to experience identity integrally, allowing parties to conflict, to engage the Other without denigrating Self or Other. In addition to using Gebser, the paper brings in others, including Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Buber.

Tricia McCann

Adolescence at the Growing Edge: Exploring Emerging Identity

Rasia is an adolescent of a Middle Eastern culture living in the multicultural society of Australia. In conversations with an adult, she reflects upon her emerging identity in terms of her relationships with teachers, cousins, mother and potential mothers-in-law. She queries the many expectations, demands, and perceptions of others and seeks to find the absolute action and behavior that will lead to her universal acceptance. She muses upon her experiences in order to make meaning, understand and find comfort in her reflection. She reveals and revels in her Magical and Mythical consciousness in her mode of processing her life experience through story and narrative.

Peter Pogany

"Fifth Structure" - Emergence in Economics: Observations Through the Thermodynamic Lens of World History

The thermodynamic conceptualization of the human journey (my own project) provides further warrant to Gebser's contention that the mutation of the prevalent mental-rational structure of consciousness into the integral-arational ("fifth structure") is of survival significance for the world. This critical moment in collective psychohistory is inseparable from the transformation of the global socioeconomic system, which cannot occur without transcending mainstream orthodoxy in economic sciences. The paper concludes that economics, as taught and practiced today, remains a significant contributor to the preservation of mental-rational consciousness. Although heterodox critique is growing in both quantitative and qualitative terms, it still has not passed beyond marginal significance.

Taesik Kim

Contextual Understanding of Rapid Development and Diffusion of Communication Technology in Korea: The Structure of Consciousness in Relationship Between Technology and Society

This study aims to apply the structure of consciousness theory into socio-cultural context of rapid development and diffusion of communication technology in Korea. It reviews the mythical diffusion of social Darwinism in Korean history, and its close relationship with developmental states in the course of social mobilization for economic development. In addition, this study illuminates complex structures of consciousness in relationships among technology, economic development, state authority, and civil society, based on understanding the political economy of the development of communication technology in Korea.

Denise Scannell

Memoir of an Integral Nose: A Story About Space, Place and Ethnic Identity Told From Below

This essay sheds light on the role that plastic surgery plays in defining ethnic identity, and in determining self-presentation and perception. It also provides insights into the diverse meaning of ethnicity and the way it functions within the United States. Plastic surgery is a very old method of assimilation that is gaining popularity in the new culture of adaptation. I suggest that a more critical examination of the ways in which ethnic minorities negotiate this process be explored. It is important to understand how Western notions of beauty continue to influence body alterations and ingroup/outgroup ethnic membership.

Peta Heywood

Identity, Civilization and the Classroom: Tightening the Mind Forg'd Manacles

In this paper I will argue that the current systems of education (and I think this is true world wide) are working in the deficient form of the mental structure of consciousness, to such an extent that the minds of many are bound in what Blake has referred to as "mind forg'd manacles." The system's commitment to and demand for standardization, conformity and replication of current forms of knowledge seems to suggest that those in charge, the government agencies, must convince their constituents that money is well spent. This requires that the outcomes in terms of a limited range of educational measurement, namely numeracy and literacy, are those deemed most valuable in society. However, what society now deems most valuable can be challenged on many grounds. As one commentator has recently claimed, we have minded our children's minds in the same way that we have mined the earth, leaving both desecrated and empty. Education thus understood gives little or no heed to the spirit, the heart and the somatic nature of the children who must sit in classrooms often detached from life and relationship. Of course this is not true of all classrooms, and of course the increasing use of the global communications available through the worldwide web allows challenges to rigid thinking. However, the demands put on teachers and students by the governing bodies continue to reside in a structure of consciousness that becomes increasingly inadequate for the demands of modern life.

Michael Purdy

Presencing: The (Ever-) Present in Contemporary (Integral) Awareness

Presence, the living world of the ever-present origin, the integral, is only discussed generally in EPO. It will be the intent of this paper to explore the various modern and late modern conceptions, and lived experience of presence.

Eric M. Kramer*Integration vs. Assimilation/Adaptation*

Many people have written about identity in general and immigrant identity in particular. At an axiomatic level they presume a simplistic model of host society receptivity and the immigrant as an energy system that must adapt. There is no taking into account the complex mixture of different kinds of immigrants and the different kinds of host milieu they may be entering. Using dimensional accrual and dissociation, this paper briefly explores some of the combinations of consciousness structures that are evident in the United States, which is the largest colony on earth, began as a colony, and continues to be the destination for the most immigrants anywhere on the planet. Integration as opposed to assimilation/adaptation will be the central concept.

Rosanna Vitale*Presentiating Pain: Dancing the Leaps to Heal Self/Body in the Now*

This work endeavors to enlighten seekers of healing on the path to "a consciousness of the whole, an integral consciousness encompassing all time and embracing both man's distinct past and his approaching future as a living present." (Gebser 1984) Inspired by perspectives discussed in last year's conference, this presentation will offer further manifestations of the process of *a-waring* vital as an "insightful process of intensive awareness" that illuminates those parts of the dolent flesh (loci of pain in the Self/Body) as sources of vital energy that can be reclaimed to serve as impetus to the subduing of or peaceful co-existence with the pain itself. Through the presentiating of the Self/Body as an integral actor on the stage of past events, supported by the roles of present insights and desires of healing, the Self/Body is able to flow between pain and healing in an ever-continuous motion as it reclaims power from pain to alimnt healing.

Cindy Vincent*En Route to Integrality: Consciousness Milestones Through Online Communities*

Based on Jean Gebser's structures of consciousness, this paper investigates an area of sub-cultural interest that provides an example of how the process of integrality is still underway and how some sub-cultural communities are making steps towards its progression. A recent sub-cultural phenomenon, PostSecret.com, has arisen that encourages viewers around the world to mail in personal secrets for on-line posting and discussion. The website creates an open forum that allows users to share personal secrets anonymously without fear of retribution for controversial topics or socially taboo ideologies. This realm of virtual community building can be seen as making a step towards integrality as it attempts to reveal, explore and discuss the underlying secrets to the human soul. It is still however, only at the milestone of showing acknowledgment that societal cultures are only en route to becoming integral as the very existence of personal secrets and the concealment thereof are the antithesis of integrality.

Charlton McIlwain*Manufacturing Magic: The Strategic Rationality Pervading Barack Obama's Racial Rhetoric*

Many scholars, journalists, social critics and pundits claim that Barack Obama overcame the racial odds to become president because he persistently and successfully disassociated himself from the trappings of American racial politics. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Bringing some of Gebser's ideas to bear on the circumstances of the 2008 election illuminates the fact and degree to which Obama conjured the underlying magic pervading racial awareness to galvanize the American public in a way that few presidential candidates and few African Americans ever have.

John Dotson*Identity Check: Blogging With the Class of '68*

In the fall of 2008, I attended by 40th high school reunion, the Class of 1968, Dobyys-Bennett High School, Kingsport, Tennessee. Kingsport is a moderate-sized industrial city located on the Holston River. The locale is among the most historically significant in American history - sacred land to the Cherokee, Daniel Boone country, in the Southern Appalachians. Immediately after the reunion, many of us who knew each other, and who did not know each other then and/or now, convened in cyberspace, a blogspace, and began a new era of connecting. Based on our common origins, many persons who had not communicated in forty years - or who had never communicated - are now exchanging ideas and information daily and hourly. It is a self-organizing and self-sustaining communication environment.

A special chat room has been opened on this share-site where I am going to engage any and all classmates who wish to join in an "integrative" effort, applying the most basic elements of Jean Gebser's modeling of integral consciousness. My online experiment will explore how the group self-organizes a field of responses and emergence regarding the conference theme "Identity, Civilization and Consciousness." In other words, I am inviting all interested members of the Dobyys-Bennett High School Class of 1968 to travel with me, virtually, to join in the intentionality of the conference. I will expect real-time interaction during the days of October in New York as fellow classmates tune in to my reports of our discoveries. My presentation will be a prose-poetic celebration of this identity check.

Andrea Gallant*Identity, Civilization and Consciousness*

Education superficially assists scholars, teachers and learners to recognize civilizations through a comparison of similarities and differences, which are temporally and spatially bound by the disciplines of history, anthropology, and archeology. Identity is taught through disciplines such as sociology and literature. Consciousness we have come to know through Freud who advocated that this resided in the individual, while Jung was arguing it is universal. What is less transparent is the extent to which one's cultural consciousness via subject disciplines and guru's portrayal constricts even contrives notions of Identity, Civilization and consciousness. In the 21st Century people are knowledgeable about civilizations, ethnic differences and racial difference, but they remain reasonably unaware of their cultural consciousness and how this has nuanced their knowledge. There is an uneasy commingling, with the rise of 'globalization' and 'internationalization' in the sphere of education.

The unease stems from the concerns regarding colonizing pedagogies as Western culture travels via international schools, global education programs and cross cultural partnerships. Pedagogies help to shape identity, civilizations and cultural realities. The very nature of the mental rational characteristics of western consciousness provides the means for a colonizing pedagogy; thus creating 'idols in its image.' If this is to be avoided (and the other to be known) those from a western cultural consciousness require a-waring of their own rationalized reality. It is this awareness that allows the cultural consciousness embedded in western education to be transparent. The cultural artifacts associated with this are oppositional thinking, rationalization, technical reductionism, duality and abstraction. The emphasis lies with on goal setting; future oriented and is bound by individualism and ego. This consciousness is contingent on having "Might, rule" that promotes an ability to overpower. What are reversed is cerebral functioning and the use of dualistic and divisive - mental "hair splitting" (Gebser 1949/1985, p.300).

Cross collaboration also offers the opportunity for an unfolding of an integral a-waring through the meeting of diverse realities. This opportunity is one that cannot be driven nor planned for it is one that will unfold through and by the interaction of a-waring.

Aaron Cheak

The Will that Cannot Be Willed: Primordial Trust, Alchemical Salt

Jean Gebser, in his unfinished biographical writings, speaks of the life-threatening experiences that crystallized into a primordial sense of trust (*Urvertrauen*) in the power-sources of being and existence (*Kraftequellen des Daseins*). This primordial trust formed the essential *Haltung* which enabled him to achieve liberation by embracing circumstances of danger and uncertainty as crucial to the realization of the liberating integral consciousness - a liberation which enables the supersession of the egocentric ontology and its desperate clinging to empirical certitude. Through the formative power of certain "beneficial obstacles," Gebser realized that "what we (actually) do has nothing at all to do with what we want (*willen*)" (*Gesamtausgabe* 7, 363). By this remark, Gebser alludes to the perception that the will of the ego is merely the limited, visible and perspectival aspect of a deeper volition that is grounded in the *invisible* - the spiritual origin. This paper seeks to explore the relationship between this "deeper" will and its "surface" counterpart in order to flesh out the dynamics of an "integral volition." To do this we will firstly situate the concept of integral volition in the broader but homologous context of "integral teleology" - in Gebser's parlance: *Evolution als Nachvollzug* - which entails the perception of "evolution" as an *Auskristallisierung*, a "crystallization" of the visible "out of" the invisible (*Gesamtausgabe* 5/2, 71). We will then correlate Gebser's perceptions with two seemingly disparate but deeply related concepts: (i) the Taoist phenomenon of *Zhi Yin* ("esoteric" volition, the polar complement to *Zhi Yang*, "exoteric" volition); and (ii) the hermetic *sal philosophorum* (the salt of the philosophers), understood, following the alchemical writings of Rene Schwaller de Lubicz, as the axial nucleus or kernel which is simultaneously the invisible, determining "seed" as well as the visible, determined "fruit" of any phenomenon. Drawing these threads together, we hope to demonstrate that what we have called "integral volition" and "integral teleology" both express one single reality, and that a self-reflexive relationship exists between the invisible and visible aspects of this reality in a way that cannot be reduced to the perspectives of linear teleology or rational volition. Like the zen art of archery, when the "target" towards which any process is "directed" is found to exist integrally within, the linear unfoldment, the empirical execution, is merely the fulfillment of what has already been achieved invisibly (hence integrally). In exploring these motifs, we hope to address the theme of this conference by demonstrating how identity, according to an integral perception, is consistent with the process by which the spiritual (Gebser's *das Sich*) reveals itself to itself via the mutations of human consciousness, and that in the end, our identity is rooted not in the body, not in the soul, not in the mind, but like all these things in the invisible.

Elaine Hsieh & Eric M. Kramer

Consciousness and Interpretation: Interpreters at the Civilizational Frontlines

Interpreters are often the frontline where cultures and civilizations meet and attempt to communicate. This paper presents data about how they are perceived and used as mere tools in predominately perspectival environments. The utilitarian approach to the hiring and employment of interpreters in modern environments is typically instrumental rather than organic. However, this paper demonstrates that the typically utilitarian approach to interpreters is false. Rather, in the actual process of interpreting, other modes of awareness are functional especially when the messages are highly emotional as, for instance, when interpreting a rape victim's testimony in a court of law or when interpreting a dire medical diagnosis to the parents of a gravely ill child. This paper presents data from 26 medical interpreters from 17 different languages and cultures and 39 health care professionals who "use" them in the conduct of five different subfields of medicine.

Clark Callahan

Gebser and Advertising

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the structures of perception embedded within popular commercial advertisements. This can be very tricky. Williams (1997) stated that when critiquing the consciousness structures of advertisements. "No one structure is read first. Indeed, my choice in writing about one ad as mental-rational, before finally revealing the other layers of the onion, was itself a rhetorical device necessitated by the linear and logical form of the essay. In experience, magic, myth, and mental diaphanously - one through the other" (.75). Because the consciousness approach is fairly new in communication studies, this research proceeds in two stages. The first stage details how a study into manifestations of consciousness works - it has three parts: 1) understanding the psychology of advertising, 2) describing the theoretical underpinning - the dynamic approach, and 3) introducing Gebser's Magical, Mythical and Mental structures of consciousness as the analytical method. The second section is more standard in that it provides an analysis and discussion of how these stages are used by commercial advertising. The ultimate goal is to understand how consciousness structures affect advertising efforts.

Inna Semetsky*Steps to Integral Consciousness: Latent Memories/Transparent Images*

This paper will offer for discussion a particular method the implementation of which, I suggest, should take us a step closer to achieving Gebser's Integral Consciousness. This method, as the paper will demonstrate, is instrumental in making possible the *intensification* of consciousness towards the greater degrees of method as the art of interpreting Tarot images; or in common parlance, the practice of Tarot readings that surfaced in Europe during the Renaissance and is still considered as nothing else but a representation of a cultural *game*, according to the historical research of the eminent British philosopher of language Michael Dummett.

Adam Kennedy*The Gamma Hypothesis*

Human consciousness has gone through several distinct permutations throughout history. These structural changes have been documented and supported by a wealth of anthropological, mythological, linguistic, artistic, philosophical, and scientific data. The human brain has not changed; yet, we have developed in language, art, technology, and culture. These developments have stamped human beings with a unique identity, far superior to any other creature on the planet. Currently, there is a disagreement in theory as to how, or why, consciousness has shifted over time; however, there is overwhelming evidence that it is shifting again.

There is a direct link between the structures of consciousness and their correlative brain wave states. This suggests that, although consciousness does not evolve, the human brain adapts to the new structure by adding a corresponding brain wave to aid in interpreting the new world coming into view. Based on Jean Gebser's model, the archaic structure of consciousness is associated with delta brain waves. Furthermore, the magic structure is associated with theta, the mythic with alpha, and the mental with beta brain waves. This suggests that the new structure on the horizon, which we deem integral consciousness, will be accompanied by its very own set of brain wave patterns, those of the gamma wave band. Humans currently have access to all of the pre-existing brain wave frequencies. They will also have constant access to gamma oscillations, which allow for higher mental cognition, as well as, neuronal synchronization. This, in turn, will "integrate" the other brain wave states together, into what Sri Aurobindo has termed the Supermind.

Ian Mills*The Luminous Practice of Being No-W-Here*

The question I'm asking here is:- Since, as Gebser affirms, *our individualism and collectivism have now become deficient*, how do I-we achieve the *full identity between inner and outer, perfect identity of man [woman] and the universe*, which he suggests is the necessary alternative? My response is not to first look to the policies and legislation of governments, but to suggest that, primarily, such a mode of being-acting-understanding can emerge on a global scale only through each individual's luminous practice of being no-w-here. This is because *all beings are how they are because of your complete effort. The entire universe is ourselves, we ourselves are the entire universe. But - unless the self lives time now, not a single thing will be revealed*. So how does one, in practice, achieve this perfect identity of self and the universe – for one's self, for the civilisation (mutually beneficial relating) of all we beings together globally. There is a practice, now made necessary by this present danger we have always been coming into. There is a 'way' we can each embrace; it is, paradoxically, a 'no-way', leading to a being no-w-here – in perfect identity. *Imagine we are wandering in the Palace of No-Place...*

Sabrina Dalla Valle*The Alter-Modern: A 4th Dimensional Integrated Consciousness as Seen Through Hybrid Literature*

I would like to discuss parallel elements of Altermodern consciousness and Jean Gebser's Integral Structure of Consciousness as they appear in current hybrid literature written by four authors: Helene Cixous, Bhanu Kapil, Shirley Geok-lin Lim and Tsering Wangmo Dhompa to show the face of a new global 4th dimensional consciousness from the points of view of craft and concept.

Those working within Altermodern consciousness "cross-borders, cross-cultural negotiations, experience a new real and virtual mobility, surf different disciplines, use fiction as an expression of autonomy, have concern with sustainable development, and celebrate difference and singularity," (Tate Gallery manifesto)

Zayin Neumann*Atemporal Creativity: Evolution Beyond Lines and Spirals*

In the work of many contemporary authors evolution has been aligned with a linear developmental view of consciousness. The work of Jean Gebser suggests consciousness unfolds in leaps or mutations, and that the coming mutation will be atemporal rather than linear or cyclical. To fully understand this intuition we must look outside of Gebser. Within Alfred North Whitehead's consideration of propositional feeling we can find a coherent description of an originating impulse that he terms Creativity, and the process whereby leaps of novelty can occur. By combining the work of these two authors we can grow a deep and penetrating understanding of evolution and of consciousness.