

An Introduction to the Philosophy of Jean Gebser

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Preface: Algis Mickunas and Civilizational Consciousness.

Algis Mickunas is a “world philosopher,” whose approach draws upon the unique contributions of every culture. His work takes him into the religion, art, mythology, etc., of the various civilizations and hence the modes of consciousness that accompany them. He is a man who lives his “culture-free” philosophy, believing that experiencing ideas is equally as important as talking about them. Presently he is director of the Center for Jean Gebser Studies at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio. He is co-author of *Exploring Phenomenology*, and translator (with Noel Barstad) of *The Ever-Present Origin* by Jean Gebser (1905–1973) who is considered by many to be one of the three major thinkers of our century along with Teilhard de Chardin and Martin Heidegger. The following presentation by Mickunas is primarily based on the work of Jean Gebser and gives a synopsis of the various consciousness structures inherent in the experience of the different Civilizations. As Mickunas explains: “It is to be noted that Gebser is not intent on supplanting the theoretical work of others concerning civilization but on correlating various factors which were neglected by other researchers. One such area is the development of the structures of consciousness, awareness or perception in various civilizations across various historical periods. The term “consciousness” does not mean some inherent characteristic in human physiology, psychology or other such metaphysical notion or some universal mind developing itself through nature and history like Hegel; consciousness rather consists of concrete structures given in various modalities of expression, such as linguistic, religious, social, artistic, architectural etc.. If it is unexpressed, we have no basis to claim that it is present in some mysterious fashion. If it is expressed, then the expression must be taken for granted as a phenomenon and correlated to other expressions to note the structure to which they belong.

The Speech

Although there are explanatory theories of consciousness based on physiology, evolution, material causes and even extra-terrestrial interventions, Gebser points out that such explanations are speculative imputing to the expressions and civilizational phenomena factors which are not part of the phenomena. The only major theoretical conclusion that Gebser’s correlation of various civilizational phenomena has suggested is that consciousness structures do not develop linearly but undergo mutations. There are historical periods during which all civilizational components undergo structural transformations expressed through various symbolic means such as, basic shifts in linguistic metaphors, death and birth of divinities, aesthetic expressions, social organizations and even physiological emphases. At the same time, Gebser is against any speculative derivation of such transformations from one set of phenomena. Using modern theories of V. von Weizsaecker in psychosomatics, Gebser points out that neither of the two components are treated as causally prior or more fundamental. By analogy, no particular, expressed civilizational component ought to be treated as “the” cause of or prior to all other phenomena. We, by the statements of many scholars, live in an age of transition. We live in a period between two worlds, one dead and one trying to be born. To understand this transition we must understand where it is we’re coming from, and somehow where we are going. As background we need to consider the assumptions involved in the notion of consciousness. The first

assumption is that the world appears to us as it does not on the basis of “things as they are in themselves,” as Kant would say, but rather as they are given to our human experience, or consciousness. Once you begin to work in various civilizations you notice their modality of living, of doing art, of loving, of hating, of having gods and of parent-child relationships, and you discover that they have different patterns, but in such a way that those patterns are not localized in a particular time or in a particular area, but appear across entire humanity at different times and different places.

The Archaic Structure

Let me then introduce you to the first stage of discoverable human consciousness. Consciousness here, however, does not mean private consciousness but rather a structure in which a particular human being or a particular group of human beings, or in fact, a particular culture operates, understands itself and has a meaning. Going as far as we can go into the origins of human experience we discover the first pattern of consciousness called archaic. The pattern takes its name from the Greek word *arkhaios* (original structure, the first structure) with the implication that the structure is not the first in time. It may appear anywhere and indeed, it is still operative in our own lives.

The idea is that what we hold as consciousness structures are not developed through linear, historical or evolutionary process, but rather, are copresent in all our situations. That is, the very original structure from which consciousness evolved is still present although we didn't notice it. We have not thematized it, in fact, we have neglected it. The method that I going to work with, however, has yielded to many people fruits which were inaccessible before. For example Dr. Jores, a physiologist and psychiatrist has been working with the question of human growth in terms of age and what humans at a particular age do and what sort of functions they possess. Those functions he discovered are quite akin to what we call the archaic structure.

What constitutes archaic structure? First of all we have no direct evidence left from the archaic structure in any civilization. We can only infer, and the inferences came from later writings or sayings about earliest human beings. We find them specifically in Chinese culture such that for example, the Chinese sage Chuang Tzu states that the early men slept dreamlessly. That is, the early human beings slept without dreams. Note that they never said “primitive” people, they said early humans. What I'm pointing to is that none of the consciousness structures that I describe count as primitive. It is only in a particular civilization such as Western that we count others as primitive. Other civilizations do not consider the earliest stages as primitive.

Now what does “dreamless sleep” imply? According to Jean Gebser, whenever we find statements pointing to dreamless sleep we find also the lack of psyche, the lack of psychic consciousness. That is, what we call psyche, what we call the psychological human dimension is lacking there because dreams require psyche. So the first notion is that since there is no psyche, there are no specific differentiations and therefore the experience of the human being, that is consciousness, was totally identical with the whole. The second item suggestive of the archaic structure is the early Chinese chromatic symbolism where, for example, blue and green are non-differentiated. The common word *ch'ing* is used for the color of the sky and for the sprouting plant. This suggests the non-differentiation not only between chromatic aspects, but also between earth and sky. Such a non-differentiation is found in early Greek writings where it is said that “Not from me but from my mother comes the tale that earth and sky were once together.” Perhaps the archaic structure helps explain not only the above allusions to the non-differentiation of phenomena but also the controversial Platonic statement that “the soul came into being simultaneously with the sky.” The human being was totally immersed in the world unable to extricate himself or herself from

that world. They were identical with that world. That is to say, there is a world of identity to begin with in the archaic stage, and the science in various cultures points to this identity. If, for example, you talk about “preconscious life,” although that is a modern term, you can say that there is no differentiation in that preconscious life, between a human and his or her world. Although Gebser does not offer any further clues concerning the archaic structure, there are scholars who follow Gebser’s suggestions and attempt to show that without the archaic structure human life is impossible. Dr. Jores, a researcher in biology, mentioned earlier, suggests that the archaic structure is operative at the most fundamental level of human identity with the world:

Beyond consciousness of man there is in us a power of ordering. By this I understand the phenomena where sickness arises not only through external injury, infection or virus, but also through inner necessity. As an example I suggest some investigations reported by Puchta and myself, toward the end of the fifties, concerning the so called ‘retirement mortality.’ Statistically we could show the increased rate of mortality of people who retire. The investigations of the life conditions of these persons consistently revealed that death occurred when the person saw his life as no longer significant or fulfilled. The fact that when life has no content and death follows quite frequently within a year of retirement, indicates that there is a mechanism totally removed from our consciousness. These are signs for a deeply rooted knowledge, totally removed from our will and consciousness; a ‘knowledge’ which could very well be called archaic. This of course must not be identified with Freud’s unconscious.

The Magical Structure

Now the transition from the archaic, zero-dimensional structure to the magical structure is a mutation toward a one-dimensional unity whose symbol is the point. As such it is important for the understanding of the expressions and comportment of magical man and his civilization. The symbol of the point hints at the emergent centering in man leading toward the ego-logical consciousness, and it also expresses the spaceless and timeless one-dimensionality comprising the magical man’s world. This magical structure is a mode of consciousness that is more accessible to our own experience. It has nothing, however, to do with pulling rabbits out of hats. Magic here refers to man’s civilization, his web of relationships, and to the unity of experienced spatial and temporal events. This unity means that any event is unitary, is a space-time event, and that any event, entity, activity can be exchanged for any other. In this sense the soul is not yet inside but strewn among all events. This allows for an immediate effectivity of any action or event with any other and is the basis for the multitude of souls and the animistic direction of worship in magic structure, but in such a way that the relationship is not one of power but of making. This suggests the basic structure of magical man in the root word of magic. The word magic comes from the Indo-Germanic root *mag(h)*, and from it we get an entire syndrome of linguistic habits related to making power. In the German language *macht* is power, and coming from the same root are such words as “make,” “machine”, “mechanism”. Also “wanting”, *mochten* comes from the same root, so it’s a field of power-related words.

The interchangeability of points allows the magical man to perform magic and soothsaying, to implement totem and taboo. The making, the magic is related to the units which are vital for the continuation of life; this gives rise to the vital, vegetative consciousness with emergent instincts and drives. And at the same time if we see what the residue, the carry-over, from that magical dimension to the present is, we find it to be connected with the vital region, with the vital consciousness. As you know from reading history, philosophy and anthropology, the vital is the very nature of human life. In fact, we always find a peculiar tripartition, including the vital, the

psychological, and the mental. That tripartition was described by Plato, assumed by Aristotle, and throughout our entire tradition we have thought of man as having three dimensions. Hence, this division is not arbitrary, rather humanity contains the dimensions of experience which are vital, psychic and mental, and this vital dimension was once totally predominant.

Now what constitutes vitality? When we notice the kind of traces left by human beings of those periods, we find in carpet weavings for example, in Persia and so forth, that the human being is hardly visible. It is among reeds, among vegetation, the human being is totally immersed in the vital living process. It is throbbing with the vitality of vegetation. It is a vegetative life. At the same time this vegetative life confronts nature in a very peculiar way. Although it is immersed totally in the vegetation, the vegetative life, at the same time we find there is a movement or an attempt to extricate from that nature. And this is where that magical moment comes in, the *magh*, the power.

The vitality that one possesses has no spatial, temporal loci in magic consciousness but in its efforts it leads us to the first notion of space and time. In magical awareness where everything is vitally connected there is a peculiar kind of spatial-temporal structure, and that is known as puncti-formal structure whereby everything that is vitally important relates to everything else and is translatable in terms of everything else. This is exemplified in the hunt when an Aborigine early in the morning before sunrise, before the dawn, draws a sketch of an animal in the sand. When the first sun ray strikes that sketch it kills the animal, then the Aborigine shoots an arrow into the sketched animal. The attribution of “killing” to the sun shows the extent to which the vital consciousness is ascribed to external units and not to man alone. Later the Aborigine goes hunting, and in the evening performs the ritual of the hunt.

The temporal structure is such that the shooting of the arrow into that sketch, the sun striking that sketch, the shooting of the animal and the ritual are vitally identical, are translatable. In the ritual the hunter assumes the very form of the animal, the very vitality of the animal in order to conquer it. So vital events are so connected that they have no causal links but they have vital interchangeability. Some researchers show, for example, that the vital-animal sensibility is such that the animal does not have to be present to some event that is of vital interest to experience it. If any of you are farmers you know that if you take your cows into the barn and they are uneasy, you might discover that one was left out in the field and is giving birth to a calf. The ones inside do not see visually, they are not spatially present in the linear sense, yet they are vitally experiencing that event. There is a vital nexus which is not a causal nexus.

Another example is communication in the vital region. The modality of communicating in the vital region is not verbal. Whenever we find a head traced out on cave paintings, statuettes the head has no mouth. It's a peculiar thing. Scholars used to say, well they have no mouth because the artists of that day were deficient. But they had ears, they had eyes, they had noses, they had a whole body—didn't they notice it? They noticed it but it was irrelevant in that dimension of consciousness. What we paint is precisely the kind of consciousness we possess, so art is a good depiction. We find also, that those heads contained strange lines going up, and of course, the immediate scholarly statement was that these people didn't know how to paint hair. But the problem is they knew how to paint everything else.

Now if you take up the Jungian notion that there is a communication that is preconscious, this points to the possibility that the human range of sensibility may have been different for vital-magical man. They could have been able to perceive what we call auras. Nowadays Russians are photographing auras and saying “we discovered it first.” In the Russian photography we find that every living organism produces an aura, produces radiation. It is possible that communication was done

through simply the aura of radiation one possessed. In fact one did not have to say if something hurt—one could see it. I understand medicine is very interested in that because it is beginning to show that the kind of aura we have indicates areas of trouble in our physiology. So science, pointing to this magical communication (or telepathy), suggests it was not verbal and may have been preconscious as Jung suggests.

Let me digress to discuss some religious views as to how this telepathic preconsciousness functions in modern miracles. In miraculous events I understand that the sick person is taken to a community where the people get together and pray. A way of understanding miracles suggests this: that the vital energy, the vital consciousness is not private—it radiates and in that radiation it pervades all bodies and all organisms and when that radiation is centered on a particular organism that is deficient it heals to that vitality. And indeed you notice when people go to perform the miracles they go to a particular church or a particular temple and they pray and they are close together. This is one indication that the miraculous works are through the vital consciousness, the vital region, which is not private. In fact when we look at the depictions (of group healing) we find statuettes in which the figurines have the predominance of the vital region, I mean they are very expansive and like mother earth itself, that vital area is predominant.

The Mythical Structure

From this unique one-dimensional consciousness which already has a rudimentary striving to deal with nature, a striving to counter nature, there emerges a movement which creates polarity, a movement toward the mythical or psychic structure. But that polar movement from the vital center is not yet directed towards something else. It is a movement that goes back to the center itself. This movement whenever it appears in conscious experience is immediately depicted within the presence of myth, with the presence of mouth, with the presence of psyche. All sorts of imagery emerge. That is to say that the implicit attempts of magical man to extricate himself from the vegetative, vital sphere and to orient himself, lead toward polarity and a resultant mutation to the psychic consciousness and a mythical civilization. Indeed, whenever there occurs a step, for example, from archaic to magical consciousness, that step is not an evolutionary process. It is a mutational process because it appears very rapidly. It appears as if this new stage emerged without any kind of causal predetermination. It did not.

There was a foreshadowing; the appearance is not, for example, based on our human physiological make-up or human material make-up, but is based on a consciousness transformation or mutation. When we look at all the signs across civilizations we find that prior to the appearance, for example, of physiological science of bodily shape as depicted differently, we already find that that structure of consciousness has been shifted, has been mutated. >From this prior event of a structuration of consciousness flows the restructuring of the entire physiology of the entire human posture.

Now, myth, psyche, mouth, speaking—all are connected but they are connected in a very peculiar way. The first rudimentary notion of this sort of polarity emerging, this movement toward mythical-psychic consciousness is breath, breathing. That is the emergence of psyche is also the emergence of the experience of one's rhythmic breathing. This appears in languages as remote as African and Indian and Greek and Judaic. For example, Brahman, which is what all Eastern thought wants to achieve is the very root of breath. Breath is Brahman, or the individuated Brahman which is Atman, which is also breath. We still have in Germanic the word *atem* which means to breathe. Breath is still present. In the Greek the notion of breath is *animus* which means wind. Wind and breath are connected. In fact we have from Latin the very

notion of spirit, *spirae*, to breathe, to inspire, to expire. In Russian we find for example, their notion of soul which is the psychic dimension, the psychic consciousness *ducha* coming from the word *duchat* to breathe. So a first experience of the psychic dimension, that rhythmic process, that polar process is the experience of breath. There is a consciousness of breath but at the same time there is another development following that sort of rhythmic process and that is the development of language. The very word myth comes from *mythos*, *mythonami*, "to speak". But as the very root of myth is the Sanskrit *mu* from which you get also *mythos* and *mutus*, the speaker and the mute, the polarity is between speaking and being mute. That same polarity is required in any kind of psychic life. There is a depth maintained from which the speaking or the announcement emerges. So for example, in our language even today when we speak there is a silent background, a silent richness of speaking which we never announce.

This announcement in the psychic consciousness is audial or sound-like. It enters the audial dimension. The psychic consciousness then is always depicted by a sound aspect, and sound functions entirely differently than say, the vital region. What happens is that sound, the rhythmic process of sound, detaches itself from its origin and pervades everything. It catches up and homogenizes everything, moves all with its own rhythm. It is not yet a visual dimension. Nor is this audial, mythic consciousness private, belonging to a particular person. Like sound it pervades the whole context, not attaching itself to anything or any person. It is the audial which is the spoken, the mythical dimension, the psychic dimension. That is to say, for example, that sound instills fear. When you "look" for ghosts what do you do? You don't look at ghosts—you hear them, creeping, creaking, and your hair stands on end, you walk around with goose-pimples. Vision does not do that for you. So the sound dimension connects with the psychic, speaking dimension, or mythical consciousness, and it moves in all directions and has a certain rhythmic configuration.

We find in researches when we begin to correlate languages, artistic expressions, poetry, social organizations, that they possess fundamentally and express, or symbolize fundamentally, a rhythmic circularity. So for example, anytime you read about myths you are sure to find water as symbolism, the turbulence of it, the ocean, the turbulent soul, the turbulent psyche. You will find also in the psychic consciousness a polarity between gods and demons, between male and female, the latter known as androgyny. If you look at early statuettes of kings you will find that the kings possess feminine characteristics. But the polarity was not two opposing forces—that is facing one another—they were complimentary. Androgyny is always complimentary. In fact there is an entire work now on the notion of polar complementarity in mythical researches which says that in all respects the better tool to use is not duality but polarity in understanding the times when psychic consciousness predominated or was in vogue. This means that what we call myth coming from *mythos*, which in English comes to mean "mouth" is not at all mystical or mysterious but is rather a particular dimension of human experience which encompasses the entire world.

If you go East all the way to New Delhi you find that their understanding of the whole universe is oceanic, that the universe is like an ocean, a rhythmic process, but in such a way that the rhythmic process is going nowhere. It has no direction or orientation, no linearity. That is when you use the metaphor for psyche or soul, the oceanic metaphor, you must notice also that in the ocean waves do not travel, although we in our visual thinking assume that waves travel. But waves do not travel, they simply go up and down, they bob. If you throw a stick on top of the waves, you find that the stick bobs up and down, one suppresses, one upsurges. There is no linearity and so the metaphor of psyche has a rhythmic notion of time. Whenever you find a rhythmic, circular notion of time you will find that the psychic consciousness is

predominant. If you notice Eastern epistemological terms (theory of knowledge terms), they are sound terms, not visual terms. For example in a philosophy course some will say “I see” or “I perceive;” these are visual terms. But in the East, the terms for knowledge are connected with speaking, with the rhythmic breath process, with the Brahman. That is why the Yoga exercises are not exercises of vision but of breath, exercises of hearing attuned to a rhythmic world.

I had the chance to speak to some people in India when I was much younger and I found that the problem of progress in the East is not a problem of people being too dumb or uneducated to have progressed. The problem is that they do not have the understanding of succession in a linear fashion toward some aim. Indian workers arrive at work early in the morning and farm owners have to have someone there to pay them at eight o'clock the same morning because they have had enough for today. Today is all there is. That is, for example, in Hindi, there are only two words for time, one is *kal* and the other one is *aj*. *Kal* is today without any kind of succession, and *aj* is either yesterday or tomorrow. We have to make use of various prefixes in order to make yesterday or tomorrow comprehensible. Today is the upsurge of the wave, and if you have enough for today you do not have to worry about it anymore. You live for today, because there is no progress in time. Time is oceanic, rhythmic, having no direction, no orientation. The Indian lives, in short, a psychic life, an auidial life, a life of imagery. Therefore, if we strip all else aside and uncover the absolute philosophical stance of Indian civilization we will get a fable. To give you one of the fables: have you heard of Maya? We wonder if Maya is illusion or if Maya is covering up some reality: how do we understand Maya? A Hindu will tell you how to know if it is illusion or reality.

Once a young man wanted to know what Maya was, so he went to the god Vishnu and said, “Vishnu, tell me what is Maya?” And Vishnu said, “Don't ask me. I can't tell you what Maya is.” And the young man said, “If you don't tell me, I will cease believing in you.” In that tradition, if humans cease believing in their gods, the gods vanish. So Vishnu said “okay, I will have to tell you what Maya is.” He takes the young man for a walk and as they walk they come to the edge of a desert and Vishnu says; “You know, I am thirsty, I know that in the desert there is an oasis with a very beautiful house with a cool spring of water. Here is a cup. Go fetch me some water and I will tell you what Maya is.” And so the young man takes off, he is exuberant, he is going to find out what Maya is. He gets there and indeed there is an oasis, and a very nice house. He knocks on the door and who do you think opens the door? A beautiful, magnetic-eyed girl, who says, “oh, stranger, please come in, refresh yourself. It's hot out there.” Of course, he says, “I just want some water.” She says, “fine, I'll give you water to refresh yourself before you go back.”

But what happens, the parents show up. And what is the duty and task of parents? To make sure that the daughter finds a fine husband, who is a good worker, and that they live happily. Then the parents die, because their duty is to die after they find a husband. What else is there for them? There's nothing else in life. And so the parents say, “Welcome to our house. Won't you stay for a little refreshment, for some wine and figs and of course we have mutton.” The young man succumbs to the dark, magnetic eyes looking at him. He stays for lunch and falls asleep woozy from the wine. The next day he awakes, the birds are singing and the young lady says, “What would you like for breakfast?” A week later there's a big wedding celebration.

The parents died as promised, left him everything and he is now a great success with many goats and sheep in his flock, and his sons and daughters are growing up. But as all things must come to an end, there comes vast monsoon floods and storms. Rivers flood over his glorious estate. His children are washed away. He sees the girl he married floating by. He can not save her, in fact he just manages to save himself. He is

washed along and eventually finds himself on the shore by the tree where Vishnu sits and says, "Where have you been?" The young man says, "Well, let me tell you what happened to me." And he does, and Vishnu says, "That is Maya."

Now, decide, is that illusion? A Hindu will not tell you. They will give you a very fantastic story but will not tell you in terms of first principles or second principles or arguments what it is. It's a world of images, a world of pictoriality. At the same time we notice that this world of images is indeed polar. For example, in all cultures whenever you find psyche or soul, you have a polarity between life and death. Both are always present, but they are not two opposites. They are polarities. Whenever you are born you are going to die. That is the very sign "*Ti*" which you will find in Egypt, in India, in China, in Greece. "*Ti*" stands for both deed and death. Deed and action, life and death are polar relationships you find manifested in Egypt where the life soul flies up, flies away, and the death soul remains.

All polar descriptions and depictions reveal the same thing. They have gods that reveal the world and they are gods of night, of circularity. For example, Kronos is the god of the nocturnal sky. And you find on the Greek statuettes left to us Kronos is always with a veil which is nocturnal, psychic consciousness—the dark, the mysterious. That is why it is mythical. It is not yet clear, distinct, separated out into a spatiality. It is a circular time, and all of nature is seen as circular moving in rhythmic process. This process dominates ages and centuries and in fact this process is still present in us, in our very psychic life, although it has been reduced to, for example, our internal constitution.

Nevertheless, our great theoreticians in psychiatry have noticed the polar functioning of the psyche, the soul. For example, Freud talked about the life and death forces. He thought everything psychic was striving for life and that modern theories such as Darwinism indicated the struggles of life to survive. Freud, therefore depicted the psychic forces as striving for survival. Then he noticed a strange phenomenon, the polarity of this striving, that is the death wish. He noticed young men dressed up in uniforms, wearing pea-shooters, marching off to die, singing, with their glorious girlfriends kissing them goodbye, waving and smiling. What's going on? He's going to die but they are kissing goodbye and smiling. This psychic polarity is still functional although in our interpretation we have reduced it to human internal constitution.

The Mental Structure

Now, as in all transformations or mutations, we also find in the mutation of consciousness from the mythical to the mental, extreme trauma. If you read Greek mythology you will find bewildering things happening. You will find that in Greek mythology there is the birth of a goddess, Athena. She was born from the head of a chief god, Zeus, not from the womb, not from the nocturnal mystery of mother. Every mythical psychic society is maternal, that is, the mother principle is the mythical principle. In fact the root "ma" from which we get "matter," later in Western thought, is the psychic origin of all things.

At that time, there appeared, all of a sudden, plays and other writings about matricide, how the mother must die. There is also coming out of this period the Oedipus complex, which is the destruction of the mother oriented, psychic-mythical consciousness. Instead of polarity there is a mutation toward duality. Notice, when Athena was born, who was present at her birth? Who was Athena's mother? Metis. What is the root of Metis? *Me*, which is the very root of mind. Who else was present at the birth? Prometheus, the basic root *me* is the basic root of Prometheus. There was Hermes, *me*, the basic root is present. With regards to language, officiators at the birth of Athena are all mentally stressed, no longer psychically stressed. When the blow to Zeus' head occurred from which Athena sprang up, the circling of the entire sky, that

is, the circular time consciousness was stopped. Helios himself stopped in the sky amazed at the event of Athena's birth. What happened? Athena was born, the mythical circle was destroyed. The seas roared up and the mountains trembled. And who is Athena? What are her characteristics? She is no longer like the nocturnal kronos. She is the owl-eyed. She can see in the dark. She can see clearly. She is called Minerva, with the same root, *me* for mind. She directs the fury of Achilles. Who is Achilles? The great hero who is oriented in the fury. The very root *me* yields *metis*, *menes* which is fury, which is anger. There is angry orientation emerging in human experience. That orientation, that directedness is based on the Sanskrit root *ra* from which you get *regius*, the ruler, that paternal, masculine dimension. The mental dimension is appearing in consciousness. That is, consciousness is mutating toward mind, from psychic to mental.

Now mental is purely diurnal, that is daylight consciousness, not nocturnal. What happens is that once the mutation takes place, you will notice in statues the emergence of a frontal lobe, total frontal orientation. The earlier Greek statues show, for example, the hair over the forehead and now the hair is swept back, the forehead protrudes full force and there is a stress on right. Direction, fury orientation, is right orientation. In fact, rightness is stressed to such an extent that the gods announce that one must not write from left to right. Homeric writing was not from left to right. It was bostropodantic as the ox plows, rhythmic in capitals without breaks in the words, and the breaks in the words were only transmitted through the master and the student who knew how to break the word audially. If that tradition hadn't survived we wouldn't know what Homer said.

All right, so the mythical circle is broken, the full force of the human face emerges, the frontal orientation emerges, the left which was always connected with the myth and the psyche, loses its power, and right emerges as the basic orientation. Everything must be done right. In fact, human rights come from that emergence of mental consciousness.

That consciousness, being diurnal, is also spatializing. That is, spatial consciousness appears immediately with Plato in high-low separation, hierarchy from high to low, and also in the horizontal development of everything from which we later get the notion of progress and the linearity of time. Time becomes linear. The entire consciousness, or awareness of time is now from left to right. Our scientists of today still talk about time moving from left to right. Why from left to right? Until very recently we beat our children because we did not want them to write with the left hand, left-handedness was bad. Left is the entire psychic, entire mythical, entire feminine dimension. Now when women are looking for liberation and blaming men for suppression it is not the case that the men are guilty. It is rather that the consciousness structure itself demands that women are seen as psychic, as turbulent, as uncontrollable while men are seen as mental, rational, and know the right thing to do. There are entire cultural consciousness dimensions which are attributed to women and men. That is, women are irrational, because they are maternal, left, psychic, and men are paternal, right, mental. The psychic is the very root of mother. It is not the root of mind and that is why mind appears when the maternal principle becomes matter.

Matter, then, is the very principle which was once psyche. The origin of everything now becomes matter which has to be ruled by mind, directed by mind, arranged by mind, scientized by mind. You know, mind over matter. We use our mental categories, mental capacities or mental theories to deal with matter. Matter now becomes simply an extension in space which has to be arranged according to human labor, human theories, and human manipulation. Hence, the technological world is also imminent in

the transformation from psychic to mental consciousness. This consciousness finally emerged full-force in the Renaissance when space was totally perspectivized.

If you look at the shift from Medieval art to Renaissance art you will find a striving to paint perspectivity. Prior to that there was a background which was dark and mysterious. On it there was a polar principle, using the light, the Cross, the saint. But then there appears through various minor artists, I think from 1420 to about 1460, a tension of trying to depict three-dimensional perspectival space in art. This was stressed to such an extent that they called perspectivity the eighth art on which all science and all knowledge must be based. Look at what Leonardo daVinci was doing. He perfected perspectival painting. He was an engineer. He was a mechanic. He dealt with everything as purely spatial. The spatial-mental (mechanical, if you like) consciousness ruled the day. Now, please understand, no one in their clear mind or turbulent psyche has ever seen perspectival space. No one. It is not given that way to vision. It is a consciousness structure which allows us to talk about perspectival space. Once we mutated from psychic to spatial consciousness, perspectival space became possible, not because we had seen it, but because the consciousness structure demanded that we interpret space as perspectival.

Strangely enough if you were to re-read some of the main news media journals of a few years ago, such as *Time*, you would find that scientists said, "We have discovered that human vision is perspectival." That had already been dropped like a hot potato immediately after the Renaissance. But now we say we have discovered it scientifically. We are catching up to the seventeenth century. Sometimes that happens to the best of us. We discover something that has been known and dropped as invalid already.

Now, what I have been pointing to all through this talk is that all the structures of consciousness that I have mentioned are neither material nor mental nor psychic, but are structures which assume a particular name on the basis of a symbolic predominance of a particular field of experience. That is, when you have a psychic, rhythmic consciousness, the field of experience that best symbolizes it is hearing, turbulence, the watery element. So what I mean, then, is that in the psychic dimension, for example, the psychic consciousness is not psychological. It is in its pure structure what some would want to call spiritual. It is creative, but not psychological. We give it a particular name that best fits one of our human functions. So, for example, when there is a mutation toward the mental consciousness we can best symbolize it by spatiality because spatiality and visuality best fits its requirements for symbolization. So we use visual and spatial metaphors, but they are just that, metaphors, signs, symbols of that consciousness. We cannot then derive three-dimensional spatial awareness from our vision. We have to have a consciousness structure which allows vision to pre-dominate and symbolize the case of the spatial consciousness structure.

When one consciousness predominates, however, we make mistakes in that consciousness structure, such as reducing music to phenomenon. The very word "phenomenon" means "appearance in light." It's a visual metaphor. When we write music we write music in notation from left to right and say that sounds follow one after the other like the notes on a scale, but sounds do not. If you pay careful attention to the audial dimension one sound has not yet been finished, that is, it is still vibrating, it is still booming when another sound appears and pervades the first sound. They are not in succession. That is, they are rhythmic, they are pervasive and they interplay—they are not linear. And yet we interpret by the force of the mental consciousness that everything must be in succession and therefore the very psychic dimension as symbolized by sound is interpreted as linear and successive. We also say "I now feel good," "I now feel bad," "I now feel something else;" we interpret psychic sounds as

innumerable functions that we possess. But notice in the psychic consciousness when you scratch one you will find the other one, that is when you touch love, you touch hate. There is a polar movement. If you begin with one, you will end up in all of them. It is constant movement, constant movement to polarities. If you try to capture it spatially when actually it is a temporal, rhythmic process you miss the experience through your interpretation. And so our spatial metaphors do not fit our psychic consciousness either.

Integral Consciousness

The rule of the mental, and in fact it was the rule, ended quite recently, and as with all traditions it ended in the announcement of the destruction of its basic symbol. Remember what happened to psychic consciousness, matricide. Mother had to die. The mother earth, the mother of all gods and goddesses had to die. What happens in our nineteenth century, patricide. Have you heard of Hegel who said that "God is dead?" Have you heard of Nietzsche who said that "God is dead." The ultimate symbol and expression of the mental consciousness was God, and with its end, with its self-transformation there occurs, I mean culturally speaking, the death of that symbol. Nietzsche was not as arbitrary as some people think because he decided to say that God was dead. Nor was Tillich arbitrary when he decided to say that the old God is no longer valid, that it was merely an idol we worshipped. This reveals a transformation in our total awareness. The spatial metaphor dealt with the symbols of the highest and the lowest and God was the high principle. Notice the use of spatial metaphors to account for it. That metaphor is gone, that sort of symbolism is gone. This notion of mental consciousness is also sometimes known as three-dimensional consciousness. Magic is one dimensional, the psychic is two-dimensional-polar, whereby one has no spatial depth, mental is three-dimensional and now we are emerging with a consciousness dimension which some people want to call fourth dimensional.

In the twentieth century what emerges, of course, is time. The age of anxiety is an age of time. We are emerging with the awareness of time as we once were aware of space in our mental consciousness. Now we have time consciousness, but it is no longer the linear time consciousness and that fact is discoverable in every science, in every artistic production. For example, if you look at Picasso, what do you find? He developed through the magical African art, through the classical, through his own psychological problems and finally emerged with temporic art. Watch Picasso's works carefully and you will find that they present you with the fourth dimension, with time which is not linear. Examine his rooftop landscape, what do you find? You find that the shadows at first seem to be simply strokes and you say, my goodness, what's the matter with the guy, what kind of rooftops are they? But Picasso does the following: when the sun is cast in the morning, he paints the casting of that sun across the roof, when the sun moves up, he paints that movement, the entire day is no longer in succession but is experienced as a presence which is in the painting.

If you notice the difference between the Renaissance for example, and Picasso's paintings, you will find that in Renaissance art you could read the point in time of the painting even if the artist took three years. The shadow cast was precise. You could say that the painting was depicting 12:05 in 1719 on July the third. With Picasso the shadows are cast in such a way as to show that there is no succession of time, it is four dimensional, also known as integral. It does not deal with things as spatially segregated, atomized, or fragmented, but rather as integral. Everything is seen integrally and that, as Goethe says, requires transparent or diaphanous consciousness.

To give you a bit of background, whenever a particular consciousness structure comes to self-destruction and is moving toward mutation you will find one good sign,

quantification. For example, when mythical–psychic consciousness was exhausting itself it began to proliferate and fragment itself: gods, goddesses, myth after myth quantitatively. A good sign in our still–prevalent mental consciousness is a movement toward fragmentation, separation of everything from everything else. There has been specialization to such an extent that as Nietzsche says we have specialists on the left brain of a leech. That is, all they know, that is all they want to know and they are specialists; they have perspectively focused on one little thing and nothing else. This fragmentation is a sign that the predominant consciousness structure is coming to an end by fragmenting itself.

At the same time, and correlatively with that falling apart, there appears another consciousness structure which is different in its dimensions. The consciousness structure now is appearing as integral, aperspectival, atemporal. Why this alpha prefix? It is not *alpha negativum*, but *alpha primativum*., that is *privatio* from Latin meaning “to free.” We are freed from spatiality in our consciousness. We are also freed from linear temporality which means that we are neither rhythmic, psychic, nor mental–linear, but integral. We can observe this in the attempts to paint or present integrally an entire human being such as Picasso’s painting of a man. You know at times we think it strange the way Picasso painted. What he did was frontally present the back side of the person, the side of the person and the front of the person. What Picasso is doing is saying that in order to experience we must have a transparent consciousness whereby the integral “something” appears in full force aperspectively. You do not have to look at the person from perspective to perspective and then somehow in mysterious memory add the perspectives, gluing the person together from the various spatial perspectives. Picasso wanted to present the whole thing from front, from back, from side, at the same time without any requirement of perspectivity. So these paintings could be called aperspectival and hence be considered transparent or diaphanous.

As some of the theologians in the twentieth century say, we are perhaps witnessing an epiphany of spirituality and no longer the proofs of a spiritual being. We tried to prove the existence of a spiritual being because spirit is material or substantive. What we are witnessing in the twentieth century is a consciousness which is transparent, and that transparency spells the epiphany of spirituality. This is an entirely different dimension of consciousness. So when you look for example at the sciences, it is quite strange to find that basic sciences such as physics, and biology with scientists such as Fortman and Von Monakow have already dropped the causal–linear metaphor. The humanities in a strange way are trying to catch up to where science was—the humanities are trying to catch up to seventeenth century. They say, let’s explain human beings in behavioral, causal terms, then we will know what a human being is like. It is amazing that scientists are leery about talking about causality—that is, the basic, material scientist. And yet humanities are in a way trying to become material, causal, which does not fit the world understanding of contemporary time.

It is hardly necessary that in the philosophic thought of the Twentieth Century, from Whitehead through Husserl and Merleau–Ponty there is a preoccupation with the question of time as intense as the preoccupation with space was during the Renaissance. Every attempt to think fundamentally in the Twentieth Century encounters the question of time. Hence the consciousness of our epoch is no longer zero–dimensional, one–dimensional, two–dimensional or three–dimensional but four–dimensional. To understand diaphany and hence the fourth dimension, the spirituality of it if you like, requires an understanding of consciousness at a level where time is constituted. Now, metaphorically speaking, that which constitutes time cannot itself be temporal. For example, if we were to take ourselves strictly materially, as some seventeenth century scientists would have us do, we would be locked into the present. But the notion of transcendence of the present, the notion of openness to the

future and past, as going beyond the present requirements either of mental life or psychic life, is the dimension which constitutes openness of time itself in such a way that openness cannot be located in linear time. For example, in our consciousness now, we can talk about yesterday, a hundred years from yesterday, and about tomorrow in such a way that the ranging of our consciousness is not located in any linear process. We can start with ten years from now and trace it to us or a hundred years before now and trace it back to us or we can trace ourselves from tomorrow or ten years from tomorrow back to what we intend to do. All of that ranging requires a consciousness which is no longer temporally located, nor is it spatially located.

Another factor of temporal consciousness is that in the understanding of what we call the "characteristics of the world" in our direct experience we have to begin to respect the notion that what we call the characteristics of things are not just that, that they are also traces of time, traces of space, correlative to the traces of consciousness. That is when you say, for example, that this groove in something was left by a stone ten years ago, that groove is also a trace of time and your tracing it through ten years is the trace of consciousness. Consciousness is the very time tracing itself but in such a way that it is not located anywhere in time. It is free from time, free from current, momentary locations.

If you read twentieth century phenomenon in biology, you will read that we are emerging with a notion of time which curves back upon itself. This curving back upon itself requires a sense of time which is simply symbolic of the consciousness which can turn back upon itself. For example, when we in our still meager way talk about projection of our tomorrow, that is psychic talk. That is, psyche projects itself in its polarity but the four dimensional consciousness does not project anything. In fact, it comes from its own future. It is open to that future, and that future coming, so to speak, as open, is the very consciousness which is the never exhaustive coming of the future as well as the ranging across past. What we call time turning back upon itself as Chardin would say is the radial energy curving back upon itself and revealing that the entire evolution is simply a metaphor for consciousness which is open on our side and on the metaphorical side as time is open from the future. Hence, we have, as Goethe once suggested, a consciousness which is "world open," and we call that world without opposite, in which the world of dualism breaks down.

So to summarize, what I have simply said is that in a peculiar way there appear in particular historical periods, traumatic times which are suggestive that human consciousness develops non-linearly, develops mutationally in such a way that the previous conditions, causal or otherwise, cannot explain the mutation. That is where we begin to talk about the transitional periods wherein the origin of everything appears in its creative force. That is, the transformations of consciousness are not explicable in terms of what has gone before, and that what Goethe called the origin itself transfigures consciousness, and in those transitional periods we can see the functioning of the origin in its creative force. Thus, the entire archeological process shows that the presence of the ultimate origin is not extra-worldly, but functions in its creative process here and now.