

Complex thinking, perceiving, and meaning-making:
The evolution of integral consciousness and the paradigm of complexity

Brian Jackson

Submitted in partial fulfillment of an MA Degree
in East-West Psychology

The California Institute of Integral Studies
San Francisco, California
1999

Committee chair: Sean Kelly, Ph.D.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction	1
Contextualization	1
Background of the paradox	4
Making Sense: Thinking-Perceiving-Meaning-making	9
Section 1: Robert Kegan’s subject-object theory	13
Foundations	13
Order Zero (the incorporative balance)	23
The First Order (the impulsive balance)	23
The Second Order (the imperial balance)	24
The Third Order (the interpersonal balance)	26
A Fourth Order primer	29
The Fourth Order (the institutional balance)	31
The Fifth Order (the interindividual balance)	38
In Closing	45
Section 2: Jean Gebser’s Integral consciousness	46
Background	46
The Archaic structure of consciousness	51
The Magical structure of consciousness	52
The Mythical structure of consciousness	53
The Mental structure of consciousness	56
Time and measurement	68
Anxiety about the future	70
Some previous forms of thought	72
The Integral structure of consciousness	78
In Closing	91
Section 3: Edgar Morin’s paradigm of complexity	93
Thinking the complex	93
Enter the complex	98
The principles of complex thinking	102
The notion of system	111
In Closing	119
Conclusion	121
References	128
Appendix I	132
Appendix II	134

Acknowledgements:

There are many people that made this thesis and the completion of the related master's degree possible. First thanks goes to my family for all of their support and assistance, especially my mom Susan Jackson, my grandparents Blanche and Bob Greenwald, my dad Elliot Jackson, my brother Eric, and long time family friend Bob Bisgeier. I also want to acknowledge my grandmother Freda Jackson, who has left us, for instilling in me at a very young age the importance of knowledge. My fellow classmates and housemates David Arrell and Dave Zeitler not only engaged me in hours of discussion, but were also great proof readers, helping me to make this huge undertaking manageable. Thanks also goes to Carol Whitfield, my advisor while at CIIS and a member of my thesis committee. An extra special thank you goes to Sean Kelly, not only because he encouraged me in my work, chaired my committee, pushed me to do better, and gave me the most feedback on the paper itself, but namely because he introduced me to Edgar Morin's work in the first place. I would also like the rest of my friends and family, and anyone else that I did not name specifically, to know that I appreciate everything that they've done for me, both explicit and implicit, in my adventures through graduate school at the California Institute of Integral Studies. If it were not for everyone involved my name would not be two letters longer.

Abstract

Complex thinking, perceiving, and meaning making:
The evolution of integral consciousness and the paradigm of complexity

Brian Jackson
California Institute of Integral Studies San Francisco, CA
August 1999

The human world is undergoing a major transformation. Struggling to emerge is a needed liberation from the current dominant worldview of the West. Having become deficient and destructive, this dominant worldview is founded on principles of separation, atomism, reductionism, and simplification. Starting from this context, this thesis explores the evolution of consciousness, focusing on the individual/collective relationship. Pivotal here is developmental psychologist Robert Kegan's subject-object theory and his description of a "post-formal" mode of cognition, of making meaning according to a constructive "postmodern" sensibility. Jean Gebser's brilliant, erudite explication and review of the evolution of human consciousness, and his insight into an emerging "Integral" consciousness, is just as central. Edgar Morin's explication of the notion of a paradigm of simplification and the subsequent need for a paradigm of complexity rounds out the core of the thesis. This discourse, based on the works of Kegan, Gebser, and Morin elucidates that there is emerging a novel mode of making sense of the world in non-simplified terms, based on what I will be referring to as complex TPM -- thinking-perceiving-meaning-making. This process of making sense of the world, of coming to know what is Self and what is "other" in integral/complex terms, is becoming increasingly necessary as we continue our evolution towards a planetary culture. It is my belief that if we do not change, the hubris of the current dominant structure of consciousness will certainly overtake us, and the biosphere too, as it becomes increasingly deficient.

keywords: consciousness, evolution, complexity, integral, Robert Kegan, Jean Gebser, Edgar Morin, Ken Wilber, thinking, perceiving, meaning, epistemology, developmental psychology, postmodernism, modernism, paradigm, planetary culture.

Introduction

Contextualization

As the next millennium approaches one can't help but notice the pervasive excitement and anxiety. Never before has the planet been so populated, nor has there been so much wealth while, paradoxically, billions live in poverty. Our Promethean technology poises us on the verge of altering physical reality in ways that, until recently, only the most visionary could have conceived. The President of the United States has been impeached,¹ the Soviet Union is on the verge of another political collapse, Asia is in financial crisis, global weather patterns have become extreme and erratic, and the ecological crisis is worsening.

In the midst of this state of affairs, I find my relationship to our world to be very complex and am compelled to make sense of what is happening. I am compelled to find meaning in the complete madness and insanity that faces us as we become an increasingly planetary culture. Given this disposition, one might infer that I am on a search for a universal hypothesis or definitive theory, one that can explain everything. While there is a ring of truth in this notion, how I am coming to make meaning out of our situation is by no means a comforting "theory of everything." I am referring to a process of meaning-making that openly embraces chaos, complexity, relativity, and uncertainty -- including all the benefits and potential hubris that such a process might include. It is my current belief that if we are to survive intact -- as individuals, as a species, as a

¹ President William Jefferson Clinton was officially impeached on December 20th 1998, though he was not subsequently removed from office.

planet (physically, psychologically, and spiritually) -- then we need a complex epistemology, one that transcends our reliance on singular perspectives and that does not reify “the other”² as a fixed and static object or entity.

Since I am suggesting the need for a radical reorganization of how we come to understand anything at all, then it might seem like common sense to ask the following: “how does one solve a problem of this magnitude?”

Unfortunately, this question, though seemingly reasonable enough, is not of the appropriate type. The question itself is characteristic of an attitude that is stereotypically Western, and especially American. When confronted with a “problem” one need simply do the following to “fix” it: “get in there,” determine the nature of the problem, and then work hard to mobilize, appropriate, and utilize the necessary resources. Yet, physicist/philosopher David Bohm (1996) points out that “the attempt to treat our current difficulties as ‘problems’ may be one of the more important factors preventing these difficulties from being properly brought to an end” (p. 61). Bohm suggests that “it would be better to say that one was confronted by a *paradox*,” for “as long as a paradox is treated as a problem, it can never be dissolved” (p. 63). Our current situation is much more complicated than simply discerning a problem and then rationally solving it. Our present challenges are of a different variety than building the Panama Canal or the Hoover Dam (immense accomplishments in their own right to say the least). The most serious issues needing resolution are cultural in nature -- i.e., they are interpersonal, social-institutional, and political -- and as such, there is an inherent epistemological component to them.

² This notion will become clear in the next section. For present purposes, “the other” is simply that which we perceive as “not me.”

At the same time, epistemological issues are ultimately not deep enough to be foundational to the Modern predicament. More specifically, what we are truly confronted with is essentially a crisis of consciousness. But what do I mean by “consciousness?” Moreover, what do I mean by consciousness as it relates to “global problems,” if “problem” is even a fruitful way to think about this situation in the first place? Considerable discussion is required for an adequate explanation to this question. However, I am speaking of consciousness in its deepest, broadest sense and I am assuming that, whatever it is, it simultaneously evolves in qualitatively discernable stages and on multiple scales. To explicate this richly enfolded notion I will take an in-depth journey through Robert Kegan’s developmental psychological “subject-object theory,” Jean Gebser’s visionary insights into the evolution of consciousness and culture, and Edgar Morin’s brilliant explication of a “paradigm of complexity” and the principles complex thinking that emerges there from.

Kegan’s subject-object theory is the central theory that I will use for discussing how we come to understand “reality.” This thesis will be exploring what Kegan refers to as the fifth order of consciousness, an equivalent to an unposited Piagetian “post-formal” operational mode of cognition. Next there will be a parallel exposition of what Gebser refers to as “Integral consciousness,” an emerging mode of consciousness that integrates all the previous modes of relating to space and time, subjects and objects. Furthermore, I will address how Kegan’s notion of fifth order subject-object relations (post-formal operational cognition) corresponds to Gebser’s Integral consciousness, and how each of these

correspond to what is popularly referred to as postmodernism.³ Finally, I will contextualize this discussion within Morin's explication of a paradigm of complexity. Although all of the topics just mentioned should not be equated with each other, there are enough inherent commonalities as to suggest a new way of understanding the world. My concern here, then, regards how to make meaning of our world/selves in a qualitatively novel and helpful manner.

What I have set out to do is no small task, but, as mentioned, neither is it an attempt at a "theory of everything." Traditionally, when one's goal is to undertake and accomplish a formidable task, the best advice to follow is simple: start at the beginning. Yet, the subject matter at hand -- i.e., fifth order/complex/postmodern/integral consciousness -- has no beginning, no middle, and no end in a traditional sense, since each of these can be shown to imply the others (as I shall demonstrate). I chose Kegan's theory as the ground since it is the most readily understandable from a psychological "perspective," and moreover, because it is a useful meeting point for the diversity of ideas that I will be presenting.

Background of the paradox, or "why emphasize complexity?"

The significance of science's accomplishments in our lives, for better or worse, is hard to deny. The results of its solid marriage to technology surround us. Because science and technology surround us in such a ubiquitous manner, it is easy to take them for granted, and therefore, we may fail to recognize how we are shaped by their influences. Beyond the obvious manifestations -- e.g., the

³ As the paper unfolds it will become clear as to what I mean by the popular, and often vague, term "postmodern." For an explicit discussion of this topic see Appendix II.

automobile, electric light, modern medicine, jet planes, the atomic bomb, refrigeration, telecommunications, or computers, to name but a few -- we are influenced by the whole environment, or context, in which we are situated. In a *recursively*⁴ influential fashion, we shape science and science in turn shapes us. Since my present interest is in how it is that we come to understand our world, the question becomes: how are we inter-related to our world that allows us to make meaning from moment to moment, day to day, year to year? As such, the backdrop of a scientific, technologically saturated world serves as a point of departure. A rudimentary understanding of where we are, or where we are coming from, is necessary if my focused emphasis on complexity is to make sense.

As mentioned, we are all familiar, at least on a superficial level, with science. Yet, there is all too often a failure to realize that much of what passes as science is actually *scientism*. This distinction is of utmost importance if one is to avoid a spurious vilification of science while failing to notice that it is scientism that is more likely intertwined with many of our “problems.” In regards to this distinction, consider the following passage from Huston Smith:

With science there can be no quarrel. Scientism is another matter. Whereas science is positive, contenting itself with reporting what it discovers, scientism is negative. It goes beyond the actual findings of science to deny that other approaches to knowledge are valid and other truths true... the triumphs of modern science went to man's head in something of the way rum does, causing him to grow loose in his logic. He came to think that what science discovers somehow casts doubt on things that it does not discover; that the success it realizes in its own domain throws into question the reality of the domains its devices cannot touch. (quoted in Wilber, 1983/1996, p. 21)

⁴ The term “recursive” will be discussed at length in section 3 on the work of Edgar Morin. Generally speaking, for present purposes, “recursive” can be thought of as meaning something like: to feedback on oneself, to fold back, to repeat, or encircle in a self-referential fashion.

Based on what a number of respected authors have stated (Cook, 1977; Tarnas, 1991; Wilber, 1996), as well as a less than cursory examination of daily life, it is safe to say that scientific thought is endemic in the modern West. One interpretation of scientism is that, for something to be accepted as valid or “real,” it must be amenable to an emperico-rational methodology -- i.e., a methodology of quantities that essentially ignores qualities. Consequently, much of our experience is explained away in reductionistic terms lacking any meaningful depth. This has resulted in a situation that is “profoundly unintelligible” (Tarnas, p. 420). As Tarnas states:

The modern mind has demanded a specific type of interpretation of the world: its scientific method has required explanations of phenomena that are concretely predictive, and therefore impersonal, mechanistic, structural. To fulfill their purposes, these explanations of the universe have been systematically “cleansed” of all spiritual and human qualities. (p. 421)

Another way of approaching the current status of scientism’s relationship to the world is summed up by Kelly (1998) when he points out the following:

While the marriage of science and technology has proved itself to be a fruitful alliance, and though both partners are pledged to one another, for better or worse, to all eternity, there is now no doubt that the honeymoon is over. Humanity at large, and indeed the biosphere itself, finds itself in a state of unprecedented crisis. (p. 52)

Unfortunately, it may be the case that whether or not someone is actually a scientist only indicates the degree to which scientific assumptions may influence an individual -- i.e., one does not have to be a scientist in order to hold scientific assumptions. Thus, at least in the Modern West, even those individuals who are not explicitly embedded in a scientific worldview are so surrounded by its manifestations that some degree of scientific thinking is practically unavoidable. Therefore, it is often the case that what we understand

to be real is actually a reduction co-created with a scientific perception of the world. This reduced reality can, and often does, lead to pathology. For example, we might consider the nuclear proliferation of the 1980's, which is about as pathological as it gets, as scientific thinking taken to extremes. Metaphorically speaking, scientism might be thought of as a dis-ease, a mental anemia. This disease of the modern mind has infected most of us to some extent, manifesting in varying degrees as simplistic, reductionistic, rationalistic, "either/or" thinking.

This disease metaphor is appropriate to the subject at hand, as scientific thinking has led to the assumption that order defines health, while pathology results from chaos (e.g., noise and error). Yet, without a sufficient mixture of chaos, it is order that manifests as sickness or pathology (Combs, 1996; Gleick, 1987; Goodwin, 1994). This is clearly illustrated in biology, wherein the ultimate state of order, a steady state, is death (Goodwin). Hence, the chaos that manifests in tandem with complexity is as *necessary* for health, psychological and physical, as it is sufficient for difficulties and complications.

Not only are the so-held pathological attributes of noise and error necessary for health, but moreover, "it is the encounter between 'noise' and a principle of self-organization which leads to the constitution of a more complex higher order" (Morin, source unknown, p. 564). Scientism thus fails to recognize fundamental characteristics of the natural world while simultaneously holding that what it does recognize is all that is valid. Psychologically speaking, extreme cases of repression usually lead to pathology, so if any epistemology lends itself towards pathology, it is scientism. Therefore, somewhere along the line, the healthy and the pathological have been inverted; the dominant worldview of the modern West is essentially backwards.

When order, reduction, and objectification become the only recognized foci of perception, while the repressed remainder is ignored, we as a culture are left with a severely truncated version of reality. The consequences of this are horribly real, as the subsequent linearity, ubiquitous quantification, atomization, and isolation in thought/perception has led to rampant alienation, repression, projection, and isolation. In other words, Durkheim's notion of "anomie" is now a *prima facie* fact of modern life, and it is endemic to modern American culture (and elsewhere, to be sure). Gebser (1949/1985) directly addresses this situation when he states the following:

These consequences of the perspectivization of the world evident in the isolation and mass-phenomena of our day are patently characteristic of our time. Isolation is visible everywhere: isolation of individuals, of entire nations and continents; isolation in the physical realm in the form of tuberculosis, in the political in the form of ideological or monopolistic dictatorship, in every-day life in the form of immoderate, "busy" activity devoid of any sense-direction or relationship to the world as a whole; isolation in thinking in the form of the deceptive dazzle of the premature judgments or hypertrophied abstraction devoid of any connection with the world. And it is the same with mass-phenomena: overproduction, inflation, the proliferation of political parties, rampant technology, atomization of all forms. (p. 95)

In sum, if our thoughts are shaped by a scientific worldview, then by definition we are limited as to how we conceive/perceive of ourselves and the "other." This oppressive epistemology coaxes us into a way of making meaning that represses much of our natural complexity simply because it is perceived as noise, error, or anomaly. Reductionistic and rationalistic, this understanding of the world is one likely impetus for pathology across multiple scales -- i.e., individual neurosis, social "anomie," or global pollution.⁵ According to Wilber

⁵ I do not mean to imply a simple, linear, cause/effect relationship, as correlation does not necessarily imply causation.

(1995), this reductionism leads to pathology when a part is taken to be the whole and acted upon as such, as the true whole then becomes oppressed by the part. In the cultural/political sphere, this can manifest as fascism, whereas in the opposite situation, when the whole oppresses the parts it is, analogically speaking, totalitarianism. Given scientism's ability despotically to influence knowledge, Tarnas (1992) holds that "it is theoretically possible that the human mind has more cards than it has been playing. The pivot of the modern predicament is epistemological, and it is here that we should look for an opening" (p. 422). The "opening" that Tarnas refers to is what this thesis will be exploring.

Making Sense: Thinking-Perceiving-Meaning-making

How is it that we (co-)construct our understanding of the world? As we will see, an exploration of this question readily blurs the boundaries between psychology, philosophy, and science. Stating the question another way, I ask the following: how do we make sense of our world? By world I mean all that we are aware of *and* in relation to, whether we are conscious of it or not.⁶ I would like to put forward a notion that I will refer to as **TPM** for short. TPM stands for "Thinking-Perceiving-Meaning-making." I offer this notion of TPM as a complex whole, and not simply as a synthesis of three separate notions, because, obviously, we do not think in a vacuum -- i.e., our thoughts are not separate from our bodies, emotions, perceptions, language, and thus our whole way of being in the world (Abram, 1997). Our thoughts are not separate from our perceptions,

⁶ Here I am using the terms "aware" and "conscious" in the broadest sense.

since how we think shapes our perceptions, which in turn shape our thoughts, which shape our perceptions.... Moreover, our meaning-making process, how we make sense of who we are in relation to the *other*, is inextricably intertwined with our thoughts and perceptions. Thus, we do not simply think, and perceive, and then happen to also make meaning. We construct our mental world, the world that we are conscious of, through thinking-perceiving-meaning-making (TPM).

French thinker Edgar Morin has written extensively on the topic of complex epistemology. He posits “the necessity of elaborating a meta-system of understanding in which the system of observation/perception/conception is itself observed/perceived/ conceived within the observation/perception/conception system” (Morin, 1992, p. 379). He takes this idea even further when he states that “this, then, sets in motion a series of consequences which lead to the complexification of our very mode of perceiving/conceiving the phenomenal world” (p. 379). Morin here is explicating the complex nature of the relationship between perceiving and conceiving as it relates to any observer. If we equate what he refers to as “conception” with what I am referring to as “thinking,” and I believe it is sound to do so, then emerging from this notion is a fundamental insight into how we make sense of the world. Though getting a bit ahead of the discussion, Morin is speaking to *complex* TPM, the heart of this thesis.

Kegan’s (1982, 1994) work is strongly consonant with the concept of TPM, as he states that the “notion that we constitute reality, rather than somehow happen upon it, is most quickly and vividly brought home in the area of perception” (1982, p. 9). And perception, according to Merleau-Ponty (1962/1995), “is the background from which all acts stand out, and is

presupposed by them. The world is not an object such that I have in my possession the law of its making; it is the natural setting of, and field for, all my thoughts and all my explicit assumptions” (p. x). Hence, given Merleau-Ponty’s definition, Kegan’s notion serves to tie TPM into the crucial understanding that we have a co-creative relationship with our reality. If there is an autonomously existing world out there, waiting for an objective observer to perceive it as it is, we can never know it directly. At the same time, we are not simply isolated subjects living out our own solipsistic existences.

So, we think-perceive, but the point is that this is not separate from meaning-making, for “ it is not that a person makes meaning, as much as that the activity of being a person is the activity of meaning-making” (Kegan, p. 11). Since we cannot separate the three strands of TPM, as they constitute a mutually influential/recursive system, if we are to affect a change in ourselves, then a changing of any one facet should induce a transformation in the whole system. Arguably, “thinking” is what we are most consciously aware of within the process of TPM. Therefore, thinking as the most accessible point of entry into the loop is also the most conducive for initiating a transformation of the whole system -- a system that continually feeds back on itself, complexifying, growing in sophistication, and ideally leading to a healthier, more sustainable means of relating to ourselves, to each other, and to the world as a whole.

Explicitly stated, this thesis is about complex thinking, perceiving, and meaning-making (TPM), a novel, emergent mode of consciousness that is a radically new way of relating to the world. Each of the ideas introduced will blossom as the thesis unfolds. There will be an inherent circularity to much of this process, as I am attempting to work according to the ideas that I am

presenting. The hope is that this thesis will embody the intellectual material as it presents that material, thus itself being an illustration of complex TPM in action.

Section 1: Robert Kegan's subject-object theory

Foundations

Robert Kegan is a senior lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a senior faculty member at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology. His theoretical work is a constructive-developmental “subject-object” psychology, wherein he presents five qualitatively distinct “orders” of cognitive development based on more than a decade’s worth of research interviews.¹ He also refers to these orders as “balances” and “evolutionary truces,” indicating his process orientation. Drawing multiple parallels to the works of Erikson, Kohlberg, Gilligan, Maslow, and Loevinger and building directly from Piaget, Kegan breathes new life into developmental psychology. He not only expands upon Piaget’s four basic stages of intellectual growth, but most significantly, he includes a lengthy discussion about a “post-formal,” fifth order of consciousness. It is this “fifth order” that is of interest here. However, before an adequate understanding of a fifth order is possible there must be a grounding in the first four.

It is important to note that I will not be utilizing Kegan’s theory strictly in terms of human development, but rather in terms of more general principles of the evolution of subject-object relations. Unlike most traditional discussions of developmental psychology, I will not be focusing on ages, or specific periods of life, that correspond to the shifts in “orders” or “structures” of consciousness

¹ For detailed information on this research see [The guide to the subject-object interview](#), which is available from the Harvard school of education. (Also, see references under Lahey).

from one individual to the other. While I will not attempt to avoid this subject matter, and may mention an age or two, this otherwise fundamental facet of developmental psychology is not a central concern for an exploration into the evolution of consciousness as it occurs herein.

Before delving into the actual “balances,” “evolutionary truces,” or “orders” themselves, it is necessary to discuss some of Kegan’s central concepts, especially as they are relevant to the other sections of this thesis. It is also important to clear up the likely confusion surrounding the various terms Kegan utilizes to refer to the same concepts. In The evolving self (1982) he puts forward a model comprised of six “balances,” while in his subsequent book, In over our heads (1994), he refers to five “orders.” In the decade between these published works, Kegan revised and distilled much of the theory into a tighter, more coherent, and in spots more accurate, version. It is from this later work that the notion of a “fifth order” emerges in explicit fashion, and therefore is most directly relevant to this thesis.

Kegan believes that human beings are essentially makers of meaning. He holds that we constitute reality in our activity of meaning making, as “people actively design rather than ‘happen upon’ their realities” (1994, p. 201). After quoting Aldous Huxley as saying that, “experience is not what happens to you, it’s what you do with what happens to you” (in Kegan, 1982, p. 11), he continues to posit that what we do with this experience is to organize it. Within this context development occurs. At each successive stage a new balance is established in terms of the individual’s ever-developing relationship to what is subject and what is object. Thus, the fundamental question to ask in subject-object theory is: “from where in the evolution of subject-object relations are the

person's meanings generated" (Lahey, et al., p. 11)? The majority of this section addresses this question.

One of the more difficult characteristics of subject-object theory to grasp is also the most important to understand. This theory does not focus on specific personality traits, styles of relating, or any other content oriented details. It says nothing about how intelligent someone is, but instead about how that intelligence (or lack thereof) is employed. Subject-object theory, like most cognitive-developmental theories, is ultimately a theory of organization that is concerned with the transformation of one discernable pattern into another discernable pattern of organization. The specifics of an individual's life are, of course, necessary for determining an individual's "order" of subject-object relations (e.g., their level of cognitive maturity, morality, etc.).

Subject-object theory is not about stylistic approach, personality, or issues of motivation and personal preference (Lahey, et al.). Deeper explorations of this type of psychical content are left to other psychological theories. The subject-object approach implies that we can know virtually nothing significant about the specifics of what a person values, cherishes, dislikes, or idealizes simply by ascertaining their developmental stage of subject-object relations. We cannot know whether someone is a good, psychologically healthy person, or whether they need the services of a depth psychology professional, simply on the basis of knowing a person's attained ordering of subject-object relations. Moreover, one developmental stage must not be valued over another in-and-of-itself, as people of all dispositions and "worth" are found at any stage. Also, since this theory does not tell us about styles or preferences, then it is equally true that there is not a valuation of, for example, whether someone tends to be more autonomous or

more relational in their inter-personal lives. In short, subject-object theory is a cognitive developmental theory concerned with principles of organization, and the evolution of that organization from one “order” to the next. As Kegan (1994) states:

[what] ...the theory addresses: the forms of meaning-regulation, the transformation of consciousness, the internal experience of these processes, the role of the environment in this activity, are less confused with what it does not: personality types, the preoccupying concerns or central motivations of a given order of consciousness, personality “style” or “voice.” (p.7)

Yet, even though subject-object theory is not concerned with personality traits or stylistic preferences, there are nonetheless some delicate issues stemming from some of its implications. For, while no value judgement is made in discerning stylistic distinctions, as they are simply different orientations or preferences -- no one is necessarily superior to another -- there is a *hierarchical* quality to the distinctions made by subject-object theory. Regarding this point, in reference to other theories, Kegan (1994) states that “subject-object distinctions presume to tell a story of increase, of greater complexity. They are thus more provocative, discomforting, even dangerous, and appropriately evoke greater suspicion” (p. 229). It is crucial to realize that there are two main forms of hierarchy, one which is simply structural and another that deals with issues of power in the socio-cultural sphere -- e.g., subjugation, oppression, or domination. So, subject-object theory can be discomforting when the two types of hierarchy are conflated into one that (incorrectly) implies a necessary valuation of “higher” over “lower.” The fact is that there are numerous complexities (i.e., varieties of individuals in numerous contexts) that must be taken into account before any valuation of one order over another can be made.

Therefore, a “higher” stage is only valued over a lower stage when it is appropriate for a given person at a given point in their life development. I will be returning to this issue, as it is first necessary to explore other facets of Kegan’s theory.

Each order (truce, balance, etc.) ascertains the extent to which a person is differentiated from, or embedded in, their internal/external environment. Kegan (1982) states that, “it would be true to say that every evolutionary truce... is a temporary solution to the lifelong tension between yearnings for inclusion and distinctness” (p. 108).² Tension is resolved in a different fashion at each stage, but there is nonetheless a balance to be found. Stated another way, this dynamic follows a definite pattern of “continually moving back and forth between resolving the tension slightly in favor of autonomy, at one stage, in favor of inclusion at the next” (p. 108). Accordingly, there is a period of stability, an order, once the balance or truce is actualized. Yet, this equilibrium is ultimately temporary. Instability ensues as the limits of each order are reached and thus it becomes necessary for a new truce at a higher level of organization/complexity. According to this view, evolutionary activity is a series of differentiations and reintegrations, involving the very creating of the object and our relationship to it (Kegan). As he states, “one pattern is forever repeated in the evolution of our structures of knowing, whether we are looking at mental development in infancy or the highly elaborated order of consciousness that underlies postmodernism... differentiation always precedes integration” (1994, p. 326). In other words, at

² See Appendix I for a diagram of “Helix of evolutionary truces.”

any time we can ask ourselves the following questions: what are we subject to and what do we take as object? What are we embedded in and what are we differentiating from? Repeated answers to these questions will reveal the pattern Kegan speaks of.³

I am utilizing Kegan's theory as a framing template for this thesis, as it beautifully expresses many of the ideas that are fundamental to this presentation. In some sense, Kegan's model is the synthesizing factor between all of the other elements involved -- the glue, so to speak. Closely paralleling Kegan's model is Gebser's "developmental" model. In light of this, I would now like to draw out aspects of Kegan's theory that are harmonically consonant with what I will later discuss -- namely, relating to not only the actual model that Kegan presents, but also to how his theory shares primary features that point to a common discourse on consciousness. For example, I intend to demonstrate that the phylogenetic evolution of Gebser's structures of consciousness are recapitulated in the ontogenetic development of orders of consciousness according to Kegan's model, with a special focus on the fourth and fifth orders.

Gebser (1949/1985) employed the term "mutation" to characterize the shift from one structure of consciousness to another, though "in contrast to biological mutation, these consciousness mutations do not assume or require the disappearance of previous potentialities and properties, which are immediately integrated into the new structure and overdetermined" (pg. 39). For Gebser this process is "spiritual," not biological or historical, and in this way distinguishes his view from such misleading notions as "progress," "evolution," or

³ The subject-object interview (Lahey, et al.) is designed to accomplish this very goal.

“development” as they are commonly understood. Since the next section will consist of a detailed discussion of Gebser’s work, of immediate relevance is the understanding that, for Gebser, “mutation” explicitly implies a discontinuous process.⁴ He states that “origin itself comes to awareness in discontinuous mutations: consciousness mutations are completions of integration” (p. 39). Interestingly enough, he notes that, in German, the word for “origin” is associated with suddenness and discontinuity. Along similar lines, Kegan (1982) states that:

The process of adaption shaped by the tension between the assimilation of new experience to the old ... is not one of continuous augmentation, but is marked by periods of stability or balance followed by periods of instability and qualitatively new balance... which amount to a kind of evolutionary truce. (p. 43)

Leaving aside for now the obvious parallels with dynamical systems and chaos theories (especially, see Prigogine, 1984), Gebser’s thinking in the 1940’s accounts for the same pattern that Kegan speaks to. As he states:

A true process always occurs in quanta, that is, in leaps; or expressed in quasi-biological and not physical terms, in mutations. It occurs spontaneously, indeterminably and, consequently, discontinuously... the apparent continuity is no more than a sequence subsequently superimposed onto overlapping events to lend them the reassuring appearance of a logically determinate progression. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 37)

Getting back to Kegan, it is important to understand that for him a person is an activity. What is commonly referred to as “person” is not a just noun, but also a verb. He says that while “what is most fundamental about life is that it is

⁴ Gebser’s ideas regarding discontinuous mutation foreshadowed what is now referred to as “punctuated equilibrium,” which is demonstrated in fossil records (Combs, 1996).

motion (rather than merely something in motion), it remains that we are greatly tempered -- and seduced -- by our language into experiencing ourselves and the world as *things* [italics added] that move” (p. 8). Combs (1996) has similar thoughts. He states that, “to be human is to be a verb. We are not objects, but events. We are process beings...flux is our nature, but not random flux” (p. 262). At the same time, it is essential to remain aware of a counter-tendency to *totally* negate “things,” to insist that there is *only* process and nothing more. This tendency would be yet another instance of simplification and reductionism.

Following up on the idea that we are also verbs and not just nouns, it is crucial to realize that unlike many other languages -- e.g., Chinese (Chang, 1971; Cook, 1977) or Hopi (Whorf, 1956) -- English makes very sharp distinctions between entities and processes (a quality with strong correlations to Kegan’s fourth order and Gebser’s mental/rational structure of consciousness). This of course is also the most obvious, albeit superficial, difference between Western and Eastern thought. Keeping true to the best of both of these traditions, Kegan states the following:

There is never “just an individual”; the very word refers only to that side of a person that is individuated, the side of differentiation. There is always, as well, the side that is embedded; the person is more than an individual. “Individual” names a current state of evolution, a stage, a maintained balance or defended differentiations; “person” refers to the fundamental motion of evolution itself, and is as much about that side of the self embedded in the life-surround as that which is individuated from it. The person is an “individual” and an “embeddual.” (Kegan, 1982, p. 116)

In other words, we are objects *and* processes. Hence, a complex epistemology is necessary in order to hold these seemingly antagonistic conceptions together.

(This last point foreshadows section 3 on the work of Morin and the principles of complex thinking.)

So far I have yet to make explicit what is meant by “subject” and “object.” If we strip away the pejorative connotations of the word “object,” we find that it implies something unexpected. Etymologically, the word “object” is composed of the root “-ject,” which implies directional motion or throwing (such as in eject, projection, or trajectory), and the prefix “ob-,” which means “of,” “from,” or “to.” Therefore, instead of referring to some static, fixed “thing” that we can “objectify,” “object” actually suggests “throwing from” or “throwing away,” implying something like “to throw from” (Kegan, 1982; Webster’s, 1955/1983). Hence, subject-object theory is truly about the relationship of a person to what has been thrown, or projected/rejected, from them. Understanding “object” as referring to “that which some motion has made separate or distinct from, or to the motion itself” (Kegan, p. 76) is central to this thesis.

A few last words regarding some fundamentals of subject-object theory are called for before turning attention to the orders/balances themselves. First of all, every stage has a different organization relative to what is subject and what is object. Secondly, at each one of these orders there is a subject-object relationship (Lahey et al.). Kegan (1982) states that the guiding principle of each order or truce, the issue that must be renegotiated at each transition is: “what, from the point of view of the organism, is composed as ‘object’ and what as ‘subject’”. The question always is: to what extent does the organism differentiate itself from (and so relate itself to) the world” (p. 44)? In other words, what is someone epistemologically *capable* of taking responsibility for, taking control of, or taking perspective on (Lahey et al.)? For, by definition, we can only take a perspective

on what we perceive as “object.” This notion can be further understood given what one cannot take a “wider” perspective on -- i.e., what we are subject to is that for which, in our experience, we cannot create a broader context. We are in “object territory” when we are aware of what we do not know, but when in “subject territory” we are not aware of what we do not know. This foundational understanding is explicitly addressed in The Guide to the subject-object interview.

“Subject” refers to the basic principle of organization; “object” refers to that which gets organized. That which gets organized can be reflected upon; we can take it as an object of attention ...that which gets organized is “internalized”; it is an internal object. The principle of organization cannot be reflected upon. (Lahey, et al., p. 12)

Finally, as I discuss the five orders, the following should be kept in mind. What is subject at one order becomes object at the next order. This occurs without fail and is a crucial pattern underlying this schema. As such, there is normally a phase of *repudiation* around the transition from one order to another. That is, while experiencing characteristic transitory instability, we deny what we once were so as to allow ourselves to become acclimatized to, and thus maintain, a newly emerging equilibrium. For example, when moving from the fourth order to the fifth order, one might become “anti-individual” or an “anti-modernist” (e.g., a purely deconstructive post-modernist). Yet, eventually, as “a hallmark of every rebalancing,” the past is “not finally rejected but reappropriated” (Kegan, 1982, p. 104). Hence, assuming that development is not retarded or halted, eventually we integrate many of the repudiated aspects into the current conceptions of ourselves (while also letting go of our now outdated “inferior” modes). The process of complexification continues its course.

Order Zero (the incorporative balance)

Corresponding to Piaget's "sensorimotor" and to Gebser's "archaic" consciousness, this order is that of a child literally just born into the world, generally until the "terrible twos." Like being in the womb, nothing is yet taken as object, so in a sense this is a pre-personal, non-dual experience (see Wilber, 1980/1996, on "pre/trans"). The world organized at this order is based solely on the subjective experience of physical sensation and movement. Try to imagine that you are fully subject to your reflexes -- there is no "thinking," no imagining even, for everything is already imaginal, if even that! The intelligence at work here is the genius of the body... pure biology.⁵

The first order (the impulsive balance)

Regarding Piaget's studies of the first two years of life, Kegan (1982) states that "the gradual construction of the 'permanence of the object' amount to the labors which lead to the very first truce of all -- the constituting of any 'objective' world itself, a world independent of my experience of it" (p. 30). This is Piaget's "preoperational" stage, and has correlations to Gebser's "magical" consciousness. The child is now aware that it has reflexes, and as such movement and physical sensation are now "objects" of their reality constructing -- the child is no longer subject to primal physical impulses. The child is aware

⁵ I am not implying a reductionistic biology, i.e., that everything can be reduced to a quantitative biology, which is isolated from other natural sciences or disciplines of knowledge. For more details on "alternative" approaches to biology see Goodwin (1994) and Sheldrake (1988/1995).

that there are objects separate from itself, hence, there is now a rudimentary other.

This order has a point-like structure that now is subject to impulses and perceptions. Being subject to perceptions can be exemplified in Piaget's (1952) now famous experiments about "object constancy" and the "conservation of volume." In these experiments, a ball ceases to exist when a parent hides it under a table, or if a liquid is poured from one shaped container to another the child will think that there is more in the one that is taller than a slightly shorter, fatter one. As Kegan (1982) states, "if the child's perception of the object changes, the object itself has changed, precisely because she cannot separate herself from her perceptions" (p. 88). It is no wonder that this order of consciousness is thought of as magical.

The second order (the imperial balance)

Corresponding to Piaget's "concrete operational", and Gebser's "magical" (and early "mythical") consciousness, the stereotypically selfish second order "-jects" perceptions and impulses as object. Thus, these are no longer the central factors for making meaning of the world. "As with every rebalancing, what had been 'subject' is recast to the domain of 'other'. I am not perceptions, rather I have perceptions" (Kegan, 1982, p. 32). Hence, the child is now subject to personal needs, interests, and wishes. The second order's "ability to construct a concrete world, independent points of view, and a property-bearing self is expressive of a single form of consciousness. A common organizing principle or 'order of mind' is at work, the durable category" (Kegan, 1994, p. 23). The durable category (an analog to the concept of object permanence) -- the

underlying structure of this order -- allows for a true “point of view” to exist for the first time. Epistemologically speaking, a second order way of knowing can generally understand examples and concrete facts, but not abstract generalizations such as definitions, which are based on sets of durable categories and are thus more complex than a second order reality (Kegan, 1994).

The second order individual can understand cause and effect, and simultaneously is able to distinguish their point of view from that of another's. Moreover, unlike the first order, there are now enduring (as opposed to fleeting) dispositions, such as needs, preferences, and even a self-concept. It is also the beginning of “role concepts” and simple reciprocity, though often nothing beyond “tit-for-tat.” Historically speaking, this might very well correspond to the order of collective consciousness associated with the Talion law (“an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”). A person at the second order can feel “guilty,” but Kegan (1982) points out that “when we look into what they mean it turns out they are talking about an anxious anticipation of what the other will do” (p. 94). It is important to recognize that any of the aforementioned characteristics should also be recognized as achievements of the evolutionary process, and not simply frowned upon as primitive. For example, the notion of tit-for-tat reciprocity, or the Talion even, were major advances, novel emergences if you will, from the previous modes of organizing knowledge.

The third order (the interpersonal balance)

If all has gone well, approximately after adolescence, one’s personal needs, interests, and wishes are cast as object. The individual is no longer embedded, necessarily, in the predisposed “selfishness” of the second order.

Now one becomes embedded in, and is subject to, mutuality -- the interpersonal world. This order corresponds to Piaget's early formal operations and Gebser's "mythical" (and early "mental") consciousness. Inasmuch as particular results of socialization are visible, this stage corresponds to the internalizing of societal norms. Kegan (1994) points out that identification with, and adherence to, the role responsibilities that we are socialized into marks a third order achievement. An example of this is the "internalizing [of] society's general respect for authority" (Lahey, et al., p. 27). Another common, widespread example is illustrated by Kegan when he states that "the third order of consciousness amounts to that time in our lives when we move from 'being brought up in the faith' to becoming ourselves spiritual adherents to that faith" (p. 267). Stereotypically, the third order personality can be thought of as "nice but easily taken advantage of," as being motivated by a "need for affiliation," and would have as a theme that of "relationships" (Lahey, et al., p. 11).⁶

In individual terms, it is around adolescence (or puberty) that one makes the difficult transition from the second to the third order. This order's underlying structure is cross-categorical (or trans-categorical) knowing -- which is best understood when referenced against the second order's subjectedness to categories, namely the durable category -- and is thus inter-personal (Kegan, 1994). Since points of view, enduring needs and dispositions, as well as a primarily "concrete" cognitive makeup are cast as object, the subjective identification is with inner states, with subjectivity itself. This is similar to

⁶ "Stereotypical" examples are only illustrations. It is important to remember that subject-object theory is not concerned directly with content or stylistic preferences.

certain aspects of the first order because the “internal” is the focus, but unlike the first order there are also others who themselves have an “internal” (for at the first order their has yet to be a conscious differentiation of internal and external).

There is not only a role concept as in the second order, but now also a “role consciousness... a real understanding of mutual reciprocity” (Kegan, 1994).

Abstract thinking is possible and what is normatively understood as the ability to intellectualize can fully manifest -- e.g., the cognitive ability for inference, generalization, hypothesis, and proposition. Moreover, the individual now identifies with values and ideals, emergences that have enormous significance for adult life. Kegan (1994) further expounds basic third order characteristics in the following assertion:

“Definition” is minimally a cross-categorically way of knowing because it takes the concrete example as an instance or an element of a bigger principle of knowing that includes all concrete examples. Examples must therefore be an element or member, not the principle itself. “Inference” is a minimally cross-categorical way of knowing because it takes the category of datum or fact as an instance or element. Data must therefore be element, not principle. (Kegan, 1994, p.26)

However, even after all of the aforementioned accomplishments, a third order individual cannot yet truly “distinguish the other from his or her internalized points of view” (Lahey, et al., p. 62). This characteristically third order limitation stems from the fact that an individual with this organization of subject-object relations has yet to forge an autonomous self (fourth order) and thus does not have a reference point from which to distinguish, in a conscious fashion, what is one’s own point of view and what is that of another (e.g., a parent, society, etc.). This is not unlike Mead’s popular notion of the “internalized other” (Schellenberg, 1978). But it is nevertheless at the third order

when one can for the first time truly enter into a meaningful relationship with the “other.” It is not until the third order that one can “empathize” with another’s point of view and realize that others also have enduring needs, dispositions, and preferences. This ability to identify with an “other” can also make it difficult to discern one’s own inner states from that of the other. There is a lack of interpersonal independence, such that it is possible to develop a dependence on the other. This does not say anything about whether someone is a stylistically “independent” individual, preferring to do things their own way -- that is for another theory. This theory holds that a person will make meaning according to third order subject-object relations regardless of whether or not their actions appear to be autonomous. Moreover, this does not imply that one will *necessarily* be embedded in co-dependent relationships, but if they are it will unfold according to what they are subject to and what they are able to take as object in the relationship.

If we are composed of different parts, then a third order person is not able to “see” all of these parts systematically -- they are unable to coordinate them. Metaphorically speaking, we would know that we are a system and that others are other systems. While this opens the way for consciously interpersonal relationships, we would not have a handle on the parts of our own system, for at the third order one is truly subject to his or her subjectivity. There has yet to emerge a context allowing further differentiation from “others” beyond a recognition that everyone else also has their own needs, dispositions, or preferences. Of course, true to third order qualities, it is often impossible to know whose needs one is really responding to while involved in the interpersonal realm. Are these one’s own needs or the needs of an “internalized

other,” a lover, a friend, a parent, an organization, or the culture at large? At the third order there is often no difference, for this is what socialization is all about.

Kegan (1982) states that,

This balance is “interpersonal” but it is not “intimate,” because what might appear to be intimacy here is the self’s source rather than its aim. There is no self to share with another. Instead, the other is required to bring the self into being. Fusion is not intimacy. If one can feel manipulated by the imperial balance [second order], one can feel devoured by the interpersonal one. (p. 96)

A fourth order primer

Before continuing, it is important to note that following more than a decade of research, Kegan (1994) estimates that one-half to two thirds of the adults in the U.S. do not yet construct themselves at the fourth order of consciousness. This is therefore a “widespread phenomenon,” and includes most “relatively privileged, well-educated, middle-class adult[s]” (p. 188). The important point here is that these findings indicate that socio-economic factors, which are generally considered very determining, are insufficient to account for an individual’s evolution of consciousness. Hence, it might very well be the case that, while a person of “lower” socio-economic status (SES) might be hindered in making the transition from the third to the fourth order, someone of “higher” SES is not, inversely, bolstered in this transition. As we will see in section 2 (the work of Jean Gebser), something of much larger magnitude is at work than can be accounted for with SES statistics.

Kegan (1994) associates the third order’s cross-categorical knowing with traditionalism. He further correlates the fourth order with modernism, and the fifth order with post-modernism. As stated, most adults are still constructing

their world, making meaning, according to primarily third order subject-object principles. It is important to note, however, that Kegan's (1994) major theme is that throughout the culture there is a "hidden curriculum" that is placing fourth order demands on the majority of adults in the U.S. He has explored both the private and public spheres, and found fourth order mental demands across the board in "the literature" relevant to: parenting, partnering, work, dealing with difference, healing, and learning. These fourth order demands may ontogenetically "require a qualitative transformation in the complexity of mind every bit as fundamental as the transformation from magical thinking to concrete thinking... [first order to second order], or the transformation from concrete thinking to abstract thinking... [second order to third order]" (Kegan, 1994, p. 134).

Social scientist Paul Ray (1996), in his "Integral Culture Survey," has demonstrated that there exist three worldviews currently in the US: traditionalism, modernism, and what he refers to as "transmodernism." As mentioned, Kegan (1994) notes parallels between his third order, fourth order, and fifth orders of consciousness with traditionalism, modernism, and post-modernism, respectively. Kegan is not cited anywhere in Ray's work, and two years prior made the following comments related to his own work: "I would forgive anyone for now asking, about the move beyond the fourth order, 'Is this next trip really necessary? Isn't it enough to accomplish the fourth order'" (Kegan, 1994, p. 301)? His answer to this question is "no," for he points out that three "mentalities," traditionalism, modernism, and postmodernism, exist simultaneously in the adult population of the modern Western world. As I move into the discussion of the fourth order, and subsequent fifth order, it is vital to

keep in mind Kegan's correlation of the third, fourth, and fifth orders with traditionalism, modernism, and post-modernism. The central implication of these correlations is a "soft" version of the theory that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny as consciousness evolves. Kegan is also interested in this very rich idea, one that has tremendous potential for allowing us a deeper understanding of the individual's relationship to the whole, and the whole to the individual.

The fourth order (the institutional balance)

Humanity on the whole has, up to this point in history, *collectively* evolved to the level of formop thinking. (Wilber, 1983/1996, p. 268)

Phylogenetically, I would put it this way: the mental burden of modern life may be nothing less than the extraordinary cultural demand that each person, in adulthood, create internally an order of consciousness comparable to that which ordinarily would only be found at the level of a community's collective intelligence. (Kegan, 1994, p. 134)

With each transition, a more complex ordering of consciousness subsumes what was subject, casting it into the realm of object (stated another way, what was once context becomes content). Corresponding to Piaget's full formal operational stage (formop) and to Gebser's "mental/perspectival" structure of consciousness, the fourth order recognizes mutual role consciousness (perspectives), that there are relationships regulating what are perceived as forms (objects). Now there are not only ideals, but there is also ideology,⁷ an understanding that there are relations between abstractions (Kegan, 1994). The formulation and authoring of one's own "fill in the blank" is central to the fourth

⁷ In this context, the term "ideology" should not be confused with its Marxist/socio-political meanings.

order, such that self-regulation, self-formation, psychic administration, identity, individuation, and autonomy comprise the subject territory. Kegan (1982) has referred to this order as the “institutional balance,” wherein one is essentially an “administrator” that keeps all of their multitudinous parts together as a whole -- an autonomous, self-authoring, history-making individual that is not susceptible to the potential problems that can arise from the hyper-empathic third order. Hence, fourth order individuals perceive themselves as autonomous wholes that enter into relationship with other wholes to form systems. If the first order’s underlying structure is a single point, the second’s the durable category, and the third’s being cross-categorical, then the fourth’s is a system (Kegan, 1994). A fourth order individual might be pictured as the CEO of their own bureaucracy, a complex organization of various departments that require leadership and administration. This complex organization is none other than their Self.

Generally speaking, a fourth order person would seem to be motivated by a need for achievement (e.g., a constant focus on career), resulting in an inability to have close intimate relationships. Hence, we have a basic impression of how a fourth order person may outwardly appear in our modern, success-driven culture. Of course, these stereotypes serve as useful examples and illustrations, but are essentially about content. If we consider that a third order construction has us subject to mutuality, then the fourth order’s means of repudiating this can often manifest in hyper-individuality as individuals strive to “author” themselves, to create their own set of theories about themselves and their relations to “the other.” There are individualistic *and* relational people at all orders, yet there is significance to the hyper-individualistic nature of the fourth

order that should remain in the foreground, especially when considering this order's correspondence with modernism at the collective level.

[The fourth order's] ...delicate balance is that in self-governance it has rescued the "self" from its captivity by the shared realities, but in having "no self" before which it can bring the demands of that government, it risks the excess control that may obtain to any government, not subject to a wider context in which to root and justify its laws. (Kegan 1982, p. 102)

In the previous passage, Kegan is simultaneously pointing out the limits of the fourth order while tangentially illuminating the very achievements of fourth order consciousness. For it is at the fourth order that one gains the ability to evaluate different perspectives, that of others and of ourselves. This aptitude emerges because fourth order individuals have forged for themselves (the illusion of) an autonomous self capable of generating their own set of values. This last point is so significant for Kegan (1994) that he has gone so far as to speak of fourth order individuals as having a "value generator," that which allows an individual to author their own "fill in the blank." Moreover, "the strength of the institutional self lies in its ability to generate and exercise values and standards, its limitation lies in its *identification with* [italics added] the generator" (Lahey, et al., p. 137). It is this generator that makes it possible to have an internal standard from which to be self-evaluating, self-correcting, and thus self-authoring. In turn, the institutional self is not comfortable, or even open to having this generator questioned. For when open to question, one's way of thinking, perceiving, and making meaning stands challenged, resulting in a loss of hard won stability.

Evolution between stage 3 and stage 4 is the story of gradually separating internalized points of view from their original sources in others and making the self itself a coherent system for their generation and correlation... we stop making others responsible for our own feelings, and

experience it as a kind of violation when other make us responsible for theirs. (Lahey et al., p. 51)

What the previous quotation ultimately refers to is the dynamic of repudiation, as the fourth order individual now comes to realize that each one should be responsible for their own emotions, feelings, hang-ups, etc. If and when someone expects us to take responsibility for their personal issues, it is perceived as an affront, much in the same way that a “modernist” might become annoyed and aggravated by a traditional familial expectation to stay “in” the faith. The modernist “knows better,” so to speak, than to be blindly accepting. A more intimate illustration of this dynamic is given in the Guide to the subject-object interview: a married couple is lying in bed at night talking. The (third order) husband is having problems and wants to know what his (fourth order) wife thinks about the situation. She does not want to impose her “theory” on him, so she doesn’t offer anything potentially useful. When pressed by the husband to tell him what she thinks, it comes up that she doesn’t want to push her point of view, but he presses. This upsets her, for he is questioning her self-authored way of dealing with interpersonal situations. She has essentially come to the formulation that, since each person has his or her own point of view, then she might unduly influence his decision. It is her “self-authored” conclusion that it is better to abstain from expressing her take on it. The guide states that, “she wishes not to impose her standards on his experience, and she is disturbed when his question interrupts her exercising her standards... she is identified with this theory, she is the author of it” (p. 136). Kegan (1982) informs us that, because the fourth order ego is like an administrator, the person’s egoic sense of self is derived from the organization that they attend to. Hence, what the fourth order

person is subject to -- e.g., self-authoring, identity, etc. -- is the individual's self, source, or truth (Kegan).

Thus, the fourth order is really about coming into one's own. This may imply becoming successful in the business world or becoming the best mother one can be, but either of these will be done according to how each individual "authors" it for themselves based on their own internal standards. The fourth order confers a certain kind of freedom and autonomy, the ability to act because one chooses to do so, not because that is simply how one was raised. Not discounting the innumerable influences of one's upbringing and broader environmental context, the fourth order is in many ways about freedom. But this freedom does not come without costs. This very freedom from being subject to mutuality presses fourth order individuals to dampen external noise that challenges their theory, their hard won accomplishment of a forged autonomous self.

The fourth order, as associated with Modernism, can be further understood when contextualized by Gebser's (1949/1985) notion of "perspectival" consciousness. The fourth order notion of individual wholeness, an autonomous self, can be situated in a larger metaphysical framework. While the fourth order is a significant accomplishment that is seemingly necessary for the larger evolution of consciousness, it has also led to an extreme reification of dualism. It is this false sense of wholeness, concluding that a single perspective is a totality, that manifests in problematic fashion. As Gebser states, "the whole cannot be approached from a perspectival attitude to the world, we merely superimpose the character of wholeness onto the sector" (p. 18). The similarities between Kegan's fourth order and Gebser's "perspectival" consciousness are

rather striking. For instance, Gebser mentions the strengthening of the ego and of self-importance, an exact correspondence and parallel to the fourth order's autonomy, self-regulation, and self-authorship. On the positive side, says Gebser, this leads to the concretion of the human and of space, yet, it also leads to fixity, sectorization, amassment, and ultimately to isolation. (On this last point refer back to the lengthy Gebser block citation on p.8 of the Introduction.) Focusing on the hubris, while necessary given the current state of humanity, should not lead one to a negation of the positive accomplishments. Not only would this negation be illustrative of dualistic, reductionistic thinking, and a demonstration of repudiation in the intellectual sphere, but it would also categorically lack complexity.

Kegan (1994) has noted that most adult individuals are not yet at the fourth order, while modernism is essentially the collective at a fourth order organization. So, in essence, the collective is "ahead" of the individual. We could even say that the culture is like an "attractor" for the individual, which is a bit paradoxical, to say the least. From a constructive-developmental perspective, one can begin to get a sense of Gebser's controversial assertion that there really is no "unconscious."⁸ For Gebser, consciousness can be manifest or latent, the latter of which refers to what *has yet to become* conscious according to our (limited) linear conception of time. Hence, as more individuals make the transition to fourth-order consciousness, we should see that our problems and paradoxes are not simply the result of "unconscious" cultural motivations, but instead arise

⁸ This was major point of contention between he and his colleague/friend Carl Jung (See Feuerstein, 1994).

from the lack of a manifestation of more evolved and complex consciousness. Thus, it is latent consciousness, not just unconsciousness, which must be understood.⁹

Kegan (1994) understands this “aheadness” of the culture as the demands of the curriculum of modern life, and uses this analogy to refer to the individual/culture relationship. This leads us into a very interesting situation, for if the culture itself is “pulling” individuals towards “its” collective level of complexity, then it is not possible for individuals really to be fully “autonomous.” Yet, there does appear to be a collective demand for us to become more autonomous -- i.e., fourth order. In other words, a *seemingly* paradoxical situation is revealed at the edge of the fourth order. I say seemingly for a good reason. In his work on hyperspace and higher dimensions, Kaku (1994) states that “the laws of nature become simpler and more elegant when expressed in higher dimensions” (p. viii). Likewise, paradox can be transcended when a “lower/narrower” order of reality is perceived from a “higher/broader” order; the convoluted becomes simple, the confusing now clear, subject transforms into object. It is at the fifth order of consciousness where these ideas find a comfortable home.

The fifth order (the interindividual balance)

Piaget did not posit a fifth order, but if he had it would most likely be “post-formal” (Kegan, 1982). As we will see, the fifth order also corresponds to

⁹ I am by no means suggesting we should ignore all of our knowledge about “unconscious” processes, but instead that they may not be as uniquely significant as often assumed.

the transcending of “mental/rational” consciousness with the realization of the immanence (Origin) of all “previous” modes of consciousness in what Gebser refers to as “integral/aperspectival consciousness.” It must be noted, however, that the integral structure of consciousness is actually a more inclusive context, and thus allows for orders “beyond” the fifth (a notion that will be explored later).

The fifth order of consciousness is cognitively dialectical, trans/post-ideological, and thus can “hold onto” paradox and contradiction. The fourth order accomplishments of authorship, identity, and ideology have been cast as object. There is no system, ideology, theory, or anything, for that matter, which is not understood as existing only in terms of its contextual situatedness. While the fourth order has an underlying structure of a system, the fifth order’s is trans-systemic. As Kegan (1994) tells of it, fourth order systemic knowing is subordinated by a more complex order that perceives it as object. During the transition from the fourth order to the fifth order, individuals may come to reflect on their system/structure, but would still lack the means to situate this newly broadened self-perspective. Questioning one’s self-authored theory demonstrates that one is not fully embedded in that theory. The possibility of reflecting on “the way I even come to decide” indicates that “the self is now bigger than its ‘way’; the possibility of one’s own ‘way’, ‘theory’, or ‘form’ becoming object, capable of being reflected upon, is raised” (Lahey et al., p. 150). We come to realize, whether explicitly or not, that, while *the self has form, it is not that form* (Lahey, et al.).

At the fifth order one is subject to inter-individuality, an interpenetrability of self-systems. As such, a mature fifth order borders on being transpersonal.

¹⁰As the fourth order was the “institutional balance” this order is inter-institutional, there is a penetration of the self and other such that the relationship between forms is prior to any autonomous forms themselves (which would then enter into relationship as pre-existing wholes). Intra-personally this order is identified with self-transformation and inter-individuation (Kegan 1994). Hence, the individual can only be whole when they are engaged with “others” -- it is not possible to be a complete person based solely on one’s (fourth order) autonomy. Consequently, the fifth order person engages others to “evaluate and possibly transform the workings of its system” (Lahey, et al., p. 153). From fifth order subject-object relations, one’s self-system is not complete, and cannot be complete, without the “other.” This is due to a level of epistemological complexity that allows one to take perspective on their self as a whole with parts; no longer bound to the limitations of a falsely perceived concrete whole (a fourth order self), one is capable of having free interaction between the various facets of themselves without concern for keeping a forged autonomous self together. There is an identification not only with the fourth order’s disposition for form creation, but also with the processes of interaction between these forms. This means that “the ways one forms oneself is not exhaustive of who one is, and the sense of oppositeness or difference between persons is highly suspect seen [*sic*] as most likely fictive” (Lahey, et al., p. 162).

¹⁰ The term “transpersonal” generally refers to states, experiences, or structures of consciousness that are beyond, or “trans,” the ego of an individual. For a good introduction to the field of transpersonal psychology see Walsh and Vaughan (1993), Paths Beyond Ego.

To some, the fifth order may sound a lot like the third order, and there is a definite relationship between them. Kegan illustrates his theory as being spiral in shape (see Appendix I), so that there is not only an “upward” motion, but also an equally back and forth motion. Again, regarding the dynamic of his theory, he states that it is “continually moving back and forth between resolving the tension slightly in favor of autonomy, at one stage, in favor of inclusion at the next” (p. 108). While both the third order and the fifth order are concerned with inclusion, and construct themselves accordingly, the third order individual is embedded in the interpersonal and has yet to develop a distinct sense of self. On the other hand, fifth order individuals have differentiated themselves from the other, embedded themselves in an autonomous, identity driven, self-authored reality, only to eventually differentiate themselves from the fourth order so as to ease the tension on the inclusion side of the fence at the fifth order. While the fifth order individual is most definitely embedded in this “balance,” instead of being involved in a “fused commingling” (third order), they can engage in a “commingling which guarantees distinct identities” (Kegan, 1982, p. 105). We are returned to the very significant dynamic of repudiation, wherein what is cast off and negated during the shift from the third to the fourth order is “not finally rejected but reappropriated” (Kegan, p. 104) at the fifth order; the flip side of repudiation is re-integration.

We can further understand the difference between the fourth order and the fifth order by answering the following question: “do we take as subject the self-as-form (fourth order) or do we take the self-as-form as object (the fifth order)” (Kegan, 1994, p. 316)? At the fifth order we can relativize the conceptions of ourselves as individuals that are autonomously self-regulating and self-

authoring from a “fixed” perspective; the floor has fallen out from beneath our feet, for there is no longer anything stable to sustain an ideology which doesn’t seem totally arbitrary. When situated in a conflict situation, unlike a fourth order person that understands conflict as a result of two prior viewpoints butting heads, a fifth order person is inclined towards an awareness of their own incompleteness. From the fifth order, conflict is comprehended as an opportunity to “recover our truer complexity” (p. 319), which stands in stark contrast to the fourth order assumption that a conflict is an “after-the-fact inconvenience with which they must contend” (p. 319). At the fifth order, otherwise antagonistic, conflictual, or paradoxical relationships become complementary, each being seen as parts in a larger whole instead of complete wholes vying to maintain their position.

This last point lends itself well to an explanation of why the complexity of one order might be “prized” over another. Kegan (1994) maintains that complexity is not in-and-of-itself a virtue, nor is any order necessarily “better” than another. One order may be valued more than another because each successive ordering in the evolution of consciousness provides “protection from the captivation and dominance of other reality constructions” (p. 333). The one issue I have with Kegan here relates to Gebser’s (1949/1985) insight about each structure having both an efficient and deficient mode, and as such what should be prized is not simply a more complex order’s ability for “protection,” but also the efficient modes at each successive stage. (Note: the next section includes a discussion of efficient and deficient modes). In accordance with a fifth order process of thinking-perceiving-meaning-making (complex TPM), it must be noted that contextual characteristics are what allow for anything to be prized

above anything else. The fifth order, therefore, may be prized above the fourth order because it is necessary to repudiate the now deficient mode that instigated the needed transformation towards a more complex organization, one able to continue existing.

According to Wilber (1983/1996, 1995), at the stage of “vision logic” -- his rough equivalent of a fifth order -- one would say that the system is sliding, or that the context is slippery. These sliding contexts do not stay put, but vary from observer to observer, situation to situation, and so on. Yet, since the initial emergence into a new order of consciousness also means a differentiation from what one was, there is a tendency for what we can call an “early” fifth order to be “against” the fourth order. Thus there is the type of postmodernism that is essentially anti-modern (Kegan, 1994). Combs (1996), while discussing how children can get carried away with newly acquired learning, states that “the rule, or schema, has been over-generalized, meaning that the child now uses it in all instances when not appropriate” (p. 64). Considering this analogously, it makes sense that a repudiation of the fourth order can result in a purely deconstructive postmodern/fifth order epistemology that is carried away with relativizing. In other words, literally everything has become both/and to the point that everything is seen as completely relative or arbitrary, and thus nothing has any real value or meaning. Wilber (1995) speaks to this understanding by asserting the following: “that the system is sliding does not mean that meaning can’t be established, that truth doesn’t exist, or that context won’t hold still long enough to make a simple point” (p. 40). Not coincidentally, Kegan posits that “what postmodernism is ‘post’ to is the fourth order of consciousness” (p. 317).

It is vital to understand that there is an “integrated” fifth order/postmodern consciousness that is constructive in nature and allows for an unprecedented amount of creativity. This amounts to a freedom light-years beyond the accomplishments of the fourth order, for the fifth order is not limited by such, now seemingly quaint, self-constructions. In a fifth-order/postmodern reality, “persons exist in a state of continuous construction and reconstruction; it is a world where anything goes that can be negotiated. Each reality of self gives way to reflexive questioning, irony, and ultimately playful probing of yet another reality” (Gergen in Masterpasqua and Perna, 1994, p. 7). Under these conditions there are no “real” (i.e., absolute or fixed) boundaries, laws, or rules, as these are all constructions founded on an epistemology that was once the subjective experience of the individual that has now become differentiated object. Every organization, school, field, discipline, or genre is seen as having fluid and/or permeable boundaries with all other organizations, schools, fields, disciplines, or genres. This state of affairs is apparent in today’s multi-media world, where it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain any distinct sense of boundaries between genres of music or film, between styles of architecture across temporal or geographic lines, between local and international business, between mainstream and underground culture -- the list goes on and on. In terms of what this means for us as bio-psycho-socio-spiritual beings, many of us can now re-create ourselves as we see fit. We mix and match the private and public spheres in our lives, we appropriate spiritual-religious teachings from the wellsprings of the world’s diverse traditions, we can even shift who we are and what we do at the drop of a hat. And, though this epistemology too comes with

its own sets of challenges and issues, nonetheless, for better or worse, it appears to be the next phase in the evolution of Western consciousness.

Since the main intention of this section was to present Kegan's theory as the grounding for this thesis, focusing on the fifth order as central, I have only a few more points before moving on -- the framework now established. It is crucial to understand that the fifth order, in contrast to the fourth order as a structure of formation, is a structure of trans-formation (Kegan, 1982). From a fifth order disposition, the fifth order's organization is qualitatively different from the previous orders, for this particular structure includes and subsequently relativizes all of them. Even though it has been portrayed as a structure that is concerned with the primacy of the relations between forms, it is accurate to say that the fifth order's structure is post-structural. A fifth order individual is able to take a meta-position, to reflect on their organizing principles, and hence is often concerned with the illusion that there are fixed, isolated, reified structures. While Kegan's theory is, as a whole, a theory of increasing complexity, it is not until the fifth order that things actually become complex in an explicit fashion.

In Closing

In Kegan's theory, each order of consciousness indicates an individual's organization of subject-object relations. It is about what they are embedded in and differentiated from. It is about a person's reality construction, not the specific content, but how that content is organized, understood, and acted upon. It is of course also about the evolution of consciousness in terms of the individual/culture dynamic. This sense of "reality" will continue to exist in this thesis, but it has been subsumed by a broader context. For the rest of this work, each order also can now be thought of as an adjective -- e.g., a fifth order way of thinking, or a third order way of relating -- meaning that the qualities of each order are descriptive of other phenomena. Hence, someone can apply what might be referred to as fifth order thinking without necessarily constructing themselves at the fifth order according to Kegan's theory proper.

In returning to the notion of complex thinking-perceiving-meaning-making, I am suggesting something that is qualitatively similar to Kegan's fifth order of consciousness. Within a context grounded by Kegan's theory, I now turn my attention towards a brief treatment of Gebser's work, sufficient only to flesh out his "integral consciousness" as the older sibling of Kegan's fifth order and, of course, as an integral foundation for complex TPM.

Section 2: Jean Gebser's Integral consciousness

Every person represents and lives the entire mutational series of mankind through his structures. (Gebser, 1949/1985 p. 123)

Chance and destiny are merely the agencies which release the intensities in ourselves which are ready for manifestation. It is these intensities that cause the decisive events to “happen by chance” or “destine” these events for us. The intensities manage the chance and destiny so that the possibilities for their own manifestation occur. In a word, *we are our chances and destiny*. (Gebser, p. 250)

Background

Gebser's work is sophisticated, involved, idiosyncratic, and complex. Not only can his work be read in “hyper-text” fashion (e.g., like with hyperlinks on the world wide web), meaning that you can start at any chapter and follow it in numerous directions, but moreover, his work crosses the boundaries of philosophy, religion, psychology, history, cultural studies, science, poetry, visual art, linguistics, politics, mythology, and music. Furthermore, he developed a new vocabulary for the express purpose of facilitating discussion of a “new” consciousness, enabling a discourse not trapped within the confines of the current structure of consciousness' language-thinking. There are many ways to approach the work of Jean Gebser, and this thesis ultimately is focused on the idea of an emerging consciousness. Thus, it is Gebser's perception of an “integral consciousness” that most interests me. As with Kegan, where I fleshed out his theory as a whole so that his fifth order now sits in a meaningful context, I am going to take a similar route with Gebser's work. There will be a brief discussion of the structures that are integrated in an “integral consciousness,” as well as a rather substantial examination of the current, dominant structure.

We already have a sense of what consciousness is for Kegan, even though no explicit definition was offered; so, what about Gebser? He states: “consciousness is neither knowledge nor conscience but must be understood... in the broadest sense as wakeful presence” (1949/1985, pg. 42). It is crucial to understand that consciousness is not to be equated with intelligence or rational facility (the reasons for this will become clear in what follows). Gebser scholar Georg Feuerstein (1987/1995) tells us that, for Gebser, “consciousness is not merely ‘wakeful presence’, but wakeful presence that is structured in a certain way and which structures its experienced universe” (p. 38). This is more than reminiscent of Kegan’s assertion that we organize our experience according to orderings of subject-object relations. Also in accord with Kegan’s theory is the notion that we develop through successively more complex stages. Following on the previous notion is Gebser’s understanding that the unfolding of consciousness should not be understood as an expansion of consciousness, but as an “intensification of consciousness... a growth of wakefulness.... [Gebser] understands this intensification or ‘strengthening’ as an increasing ‘dimensioning’ of consciousness” (Feuerstein, 1987/1995, p. 37).

Further underlying Gebser’s work is the notion of “latency.” The intent of this idea is to characterize how there is a continuous and simultaneous effectuality of “earlier,” “present,” and “future,” such that all structures are ever-present. As a mutation occurs, the once dominant structure recedes into the background -- i.e., a momentous shift of figure and ground transpires. As Gebser states, latency is “what is concealed -- is the demonstrable presence of the future. It includes everything that is not yet manifest, as well as everything which has again returned to latency” (1949/1985, pg. 6). For example, if I look

closely at major events in my life, in hindsight I can see that there were things “waiting” to happen, that were in essence already there, but that were not perceived until “afterwards.” Those events, objects, experiences were latent until they manifested themselves as part of the experience, and then resolved back into latency -- the implication being that everything that ever has been, is, or will be, is always present, but that we are only conscious of the manifest. This last point will make more sense after the discussion of integral structure of consciousness.

Another fundamental “guiding principle” for Gebser (1949/1985) is “transparency,” which he also refers to as “diaphaneity.” Transparency, or diaphaneity, is “the form of the manifestation (epiphany) of the spiritual” (Gebser, p. 6). Transparency is the rendering transparent of the latent -- our past, present, and future. As Gebser states, “we are shaped and determined not only by today and yesterday, but by tomorrow as well. The author [Gebser] is not interested in outlining discrete segments, steps, or levels of man, but in disclosing the transparency of man as a whole and the interplay of the various consciousness structures which constitute him” (p. 7).¹ If, as Gebser posits, periods of major transition make evident this transparency, then this diaphany is not simply a matter of philosophy or yet another intellectual exercising of the Modernist mind -- it is a reality that is becoming a part of everyday experience,

¹ It is useful to keep in mind that gender specific terminology is indicative of the over-arching patriarchal thrust of the last 5000 years (e.g., see Riane Eisler, 1987, The chalice and the blade). I am consciously leaving the term “man” in the text not only because it was the terminology employed by Gebser while writing in the pre-PC 1940’s, but also because it is archetypally accurate language for the eras being described.

that is, the way that the world is perceived. Yet, as the skeptic says, “we’ll just have to wait and see.”

According to Combs (1996) there are three hierarchically fashioned “levels” to our experiential lives: states of mind, states of consciousness, and structures of consciousness. Within this thesis it is the latter that is under discussion (Kegan’s orders and Gebser’s structures). However, it is questionable whether these three “levels” are actually so different except as the intensity of time varies greatly in each, e.g., similar patterns seem to exist across different time frames -- states of mind pass with moments, states of consciousness change within hours and days, while structures evolve over longer intervals. Of course, we perceive and experience them very differently. Hence, since structures of consciousness “evolve” or “mutate,” and since structures “exist” both for the collective and the individual, it is not only reasonable, but also appropriate to speak of collective and individual structures in the same manner as pertaining to this thesis. This paralleling is based on a recognition of pattern that cuts across scales -- i.e., size, length, weight, etc., are not an issue. This kind of pattern recognition directly parallels Mandelbrot’s discovery of fractal geometry, wherein there are highly similar patterns found at scales that are infinitely far apart (at least mathematically) (Briggs, and Peat, 1989). This phenomenon is known as *self-similarity* and, while not the focus of the current work, it underlies many of the ideas herein.

Foundational to this thesis is Gebser’s (1949/1985) insight that there is a “qualitative reduction of wholeness, that corresponds to the quantitative augmentation of consciousness which, by dimensioning creates its own system of interrelationships” (p. 119). This system of interrelationships can be analogized

to Kegan's subject-object relations, wherein at each differentiation/embedding there is a loss and a gain -- "a decrease in the relationship to the whole... an increase of the powers of consciousness" (Gebser, p. 140). Gebser stresses the interdependence of consciousness to a space/time world, such that at each order/stage/structure of the unfolding of consciousness there is also a corresponding unfolding of dimensioning. Each successive order's/structure's organization includes more dimensions than previous orders/structures and therefore is more complex than its predecessors. Moreover, this unfolding-dimensioning manifests in tandem with an increased reification and materialization of the world (Gebser). In support of Gebser's assertion, I refer to Kegan's theory, as at each successive balance/order there is simultaneously a casting of what was subject into the objective realm and an increasing dimensioning of complexity.

It is also critical to accentuate Gebser's position on the common notions of progress and development, as "progress is not a positive concept, even when mindlessly construed to be one; progress is also a progression away, a distancing and withdrawal from something, namely, from origin" (p. 41). Gebser held that what is actually occurring is a *restructuration* within a unity, that the seeming decrease of "our relationship to the whole... is compensated... by the increase of conscious relationship partaking in wholeness; there is a transposition from the so-called objective sphere into the so-called subjective" (p. 140). Again, it is vital to realize that all of the structures are present, latent or manifest, in varying ways -- some creative, others destructive. Regarding Gebser's structures, Combs (1996) states that they "are not simply archeological relics that have no relevance to modern life. They continue to exist beneath, or behind, the newer dominant

structures and exert a lively influence even today” (p. 101). We are thus constituted by all that has been, is, and will be. The issue then becomes: “what are we *conscious* of?” Or, even more importantly, “what does what we are conscious of mean to us?”

The Archaic structure of consciousness

Using a spatial metaphor is not totally appropriate for describing this structure, yet the Archaic structure can be thought of as being “closest” to Origin. Kegan’s order zero corresponds to this structure, and thus consciousness has yet differentiated subject and object -- there is only subject. This is the age of our early ancestors. Although we now know that these close cousins of ours were not simply barbarian cavemen, nonetheless, we still have much to learn about this age.² Yet, there are historical allusions to androgynous figures and the like that indicate an un-differentiated subject-object consciousness (Gebser, 1949/1985). Gebser posits that this structure has zero dimensions, yet it is spatial and temporal (though not in the way we perceive space-time). Likewise, Kegan (1982) assigns no dimensions to his corresponding “incorporative balance,” as it is not until the subsequent order that there is a one-dimensional point-like structure. Since we were completely non-differentiated from the whole of the universe, in a state of “non-consciousness,” Gebser likens this structure to a state of deep sleep. This is not to say that there was no ability to perceive and act upon perceptions, as mammals much simpler than humans are “conscious” in

² Even given recent archeological findings, any discussion of this era is highly speculative, as the significance of the evidence is highly disputed even among the “experts” in the field.

the sense that there is an awareness of a world, hence there was most likely a minimal proto-differentiation that allowed for basic survival (e.g., finding food and shelter, etc.). In short, this structure is primordial consciousness, the initial step towards consciousness as we understand (or misunderstand) it.

The Magical structure of consciousness

As humanity begins to emerge from complete identification with the whole, the Magic consciousness structure manifests. Both Kegan (1994) and Gebser, respective to their own scale of research, credit a one-dimensional point-like unity to magical consciousness. This structure can be likened to a sleep-like state, such that there is not yet an experience of an individualized ego. Consequently, magical experience is both spaceless and timeless. At this juncture, humanity, no longer fused in the archaic unity, is merging with nature -- struggling against this merger and gaining power, humans become “makers.” We know this power, this “making,” as magic, and it manifests when consciousness has been sacrificed to (or abides in) a point-like unity, a trance-like state, where it is in “the natural vital egoless, spaceless, and timeless sphere” (Gebser, p. 48). The powers of telepathy, clairvoyance, and divination are a natural extension of this merger with nature.³ For example, it is common knowledge that animals become agitated hours, or even days, before a storm or earthquake. Likewise, these experiences are aspects of everyday life in magic consciousness. Now, as we no longer consider ourselves to be animals, and have

³ So-called psychic abilities are actually expected/normal given a close connection to nature.

essentially separated ourselves (physically and linguistically) from nature, we now think of these aptitudes as “extra” sensory.

According to Gebser (1949/1985), “every word is, after all, not only a concept or fixed equivalent in writing; it is also an image and thus mythical, a sound and thus magic, a root and thus archaic, and thus, by virtue of this root meaning, still present from origin” (p. 123). Kramer and Mickunas (1992) point out that the word “magic” shares a common root with the English words “make” and “machine,” and with the German words for “power” (macht) and “to want” (moegen). The world of the magical structure may seem distant, but it is more than latently present, for Gebser convincingly traces our modern day manipulations back to this epoch. From our “merging” with nature arises the struggle to survive nature -- “our machines and technology, even our present day power politics, arise from these magic roots: Nature, the surrounding world, other human beings must be ruled so that man is not ruled by them” (Gebser, p. 51). Some might equate this latent magical consciousness with “primitive” emotions, the reptilian brainstem, or just “instinct.” Regardless of the chosen description, what remains the same is that this something is part of us all. Hence, “all ‘making’, whether in the form of spell-casting or the reasoned technical construction of a machine, is an externalization of inner powers or conditions and as such their visible, outward form” (Gebser, p. 132). What we were once subject to becomes object, that which is thrown from us. But, eventually, each structure must be re-integrated.

The Mythical structure of consciousness

As the mutation from the Magical to the Mythical occurs, humanity enters a dream-like reality. Although this structure is still distant from spatialized consciousness, time is on the horizon. While the magic structure identifies everything in terms of point-for-point identification, the mythical structure does so polarly. Corresponding to Kegan's second order, this polarity, in tandem with an ability to perceive durable categories, is the first fully matured understanding of self *and* other. Of course, this polarity is not duality, as the poles are of the whole. Only mental consciousness transforms polarity into duality -- the whole fragmenting in consciousness.

Based upon an examination of visual art from the magical and mythical eras, Gebser (1949/1985) points out that magic man emanated an aura around the head, often with no mouth even depicted. Later, these auric representations are replaced by mythical man's mouth, for myths must be spoken. In an intriguing passage, Gebser states that as "a silent, inward-directed contemplation it renders the soul visible so that it may be visualized, represented, heard, and made audible... myth is this representing and making audible" (p.67). Myths are the dreams of the collective put into words (Gebser). It is shared consciousness dispersed throughout the collective, and obviously, still very active in contemporary popular culture (most notably, with Hollywood).

As stated, the early mythical structure corresponds to Kegan's second order. Yet, as the mythical structure manifests in increasingly deficient form, it begins to share characteristics with Kegan's third order. Gebser holds that it is not until the deficient mode of mythical consciousness that we find Myth in the

rigid hierarchical fashion as exemplified in later Greek mythology. This mode of the Mythic is what most modern people think of as myth, for not only is it historically nearest, but mainly because this form of myth teeters on the verge of our current structure, the mental structure of consciousness.

Before moving on to the mental structure, a few words are in order to clarify some necessary distinctions. First, I am not equating Kegan's third order with anything "deficient," even though there are corresponding characteristics between aspects of the deficient mode of the Mythical structure and late second/early third order consciousness. "Deficient" should not be understood as "bad" or "negative," an easy value judgement to make when placed alongside "efficient." For example, while discussing the deficient form of thought from the mental structure, Gebser states that, "we are in no way against this form of thinking, although we do regard its more extreme forms and manifestations as damaging. At the same time we see them as the involuntary predecessors of the leap toward a new and not merely possible, but necessary mutation" (p. 259). The deficient mode may be thus thought of as the necessary breakdown of a structure so that it can transform itself. In this sense, the efficient mode can be likened to the non-fragmenting aspects of any structure, whereas the deficient mode seems to occur during decline, or decay. We might consider this in terms of anabolic and catabolic forces, building up and breaking down; each is as necessary as the other. Finally, efficient and deficient modes need not follow each other according to some linearly unfolding developmental pattern, for they can and do manifest side by side and at the same time.

The Mental -- perspectival/rational -- structure of consciousness

We act like someone attempting to fly a supersonic aircraft in a room, that is we attempt to employ a four-dimensional creation (the supersonic aircraft) within a three-dimensional world (the room). (Gebser, p. 291)

The mental structure of consciousness corresponds to Kegan's third order and, in its current perspectival/rational mode, the fourth order. In the same way that I sketched out Kegan's whole theory so that the fourth and fifth orders abide in a meaningful context, the discussion of the previous structures serve to facilitate a similar contextualization of the mental and integral structures in relation to the whole evolutionary sequence as described by Gebser.

The mental structure corresponds to both third order and fourth order subject-object relations. While I have tended to focus on the interpersonal aspects of third order consciousness, I would now like to highlight some other characteristics. Third order consciousness takes the concrete (e.g., cause and effect, data) and "points of view" as object, and is subject to abstractions, e.g., inference, hypothesis, ideals, values (Kegan, 1994). Kegan refers to the ability to "abstract" information about the "other" based on one's own subjectivity, concurrent with the recognition that there are other subjectivities, as cross-categorical knowing. Gebser (1949/1985) notes that mental abstractions replaced mythical images, essentially transmuting gods into the idols of "anthropocentrism, dualism, rationalism, finalism, utilitarianism, materialism -- in other words the rational components of the perspectival consciousness" (p. 77). Yet, in third order terms, this transmutation is but a proto-dualism, whereas the "idols" Gebser speaks of are much more fourth order. There is a recognition of others separate from ourselves, or in more general terms, a recognition of

others' points of view. The third order, corresponding to traditionalism, though subject to abstraction, has not yet become completely split or fragmented (i.e., it is not yet fourth order).

Since the third order *is subject to* the interpersonal it exhibits characteristics of both polarity (mythical) and duality (mental). Third order consciousness is differentiated from mythical consciousness as Gebser describes it, but has yet to become fully embedded in perspectival/mental consciousness (which I will be discussing momentarily). Likewise, Gebser holds that “duality differs in one essential respect from polarity: in polarity, correspondences are valid. Every correspondence is a complement, a completion of the whole” (p. 85). For mythical consciousness, self and other are poles, as are life and death, whereas, in fully mental terms, self is not other as life is opposite to death. As Gebser states, “duality is the mental splitting and tearing apart of polarity, and from the correspondences of polarity, duality abstracts and quantifies the oppositions or antithesis” (p. 86). This seemingly subtle difference manifests in radically different perceptions of reality, for the whole process of TPM drastically, and fundamentally, shifts from an understanding based on complementarity to one of antagonism.

Before moving on to fourth order/perspectival/mental consciousness, I must note the following: though I have been discussing correspondences between Kegan's orders and Gebser's structures of consciousness, it is imperative to realize that this whole discussion, and the entire context surrounding me, is embedded in the mental structure of consciousness. Even though we apparently evolve through “stages” corresponding to magical and mythical consciousness, we do this situated in a culture dominated by mental

abstraction, perspectival thinking, and thus these correspondences are only approximations prejudiced by the colorations of a mental/perspectival lens.

Psychologically speaking, repudiation of mythical consciousness is endemic -- e.g., numinosity has been rationalized out of myth. Furthermore, myth is widely understood according to rational psychologisms (e.g., similar to Freud's reduction of the religious urge to psychological mechanisms), while much of magical consciousness has been reintegrated. This reintegration is exemplified in our "makings" and profound "harnessing of nature," -- e.g., nuclear, solar, or hydroelectric power, etc. Finally, while I have been practically equating personal ontogeny with collective phylogeny, like Kegan I am emphasizing pattern and structure, and thus the content may vary greatly without compromising the integrity of a structure. So, while it may seem that I am occasionally forcing a fit between the two theories, and I very well may be, the disparity is more on the content side of the fence than on the structure side. This is not to say that content and structure are separate, or that content is not as significant as structure, but that (the content of) this paper is simply more concerned with structure than with content.

The previous paragraph -- better yet, this whole study -- is predicated on a consciousness that is "wakeful." This work could not emerge from a consciousness that is like deep sleep (archaic), sleep-like (magic), or dream like (mythical). Right now I am demonstrating directed thought, mental abstraction focused towards a specific goal. I am doing this from my perceived center of consciousness -- my head -- where my mind is, the home of the ego. I have been showing how things are the same or different, analyzing them, demonstrating a discriminating capacity founded on abstraction. I can use these *abilities* to then

direct my actions towards a world that I want to effect. These capacities are all accomplishments of mental consciousness.

Both Kegan and Gebser address the oscillating nature of the dynamics of the evolution of consciousness, e.g., inward directed, outward directed, inward directed, etc. As such, fourth order/mental consciousness is most definitely outward directed. With this outward directedness comes the discovery of, and preoccupation with, space. As Gebser (1949/1985) states:

When compared to the mythical structure, with its temporal-psychic emphasis, the transition to the mental structure suggests a *fall from time into space*. Man steps out of the sheltering, two-dimensional circle and its confines into three-dimensional space. Here he no longer exists within polar complementarity: here he is in confrontation with an alien world -- a dualism that must be abridged by a synthesis in thought, a mental form of trinity. Here we can no longer speak of unity, correspondence, or complementarity, not to mention integrality. (Gebser, p. 77)

“Duality,” “man,” “ratio,” “perspective,” “measurement,” and “thinking” are the key words of the mental consciousness structure. Gebser (1949/1987) gives the following examples, illustrations *par excellence*, as central to the fundamentally tacit assumptions of our epoch: Descartes’ “*cogito ergo sum*,” Parmenides’ “thinking and being is one and the same,” as well as Protagoras’ “man is the measure of all things.” Thus the mental structure is a world where man “thinks and directs this thought... the world which he measures, to which he aspires, is a material world -- a world of objects outside himself with which he is confronted (Gebser, p. 77).” Herein is an example of the *philosopheme*, as distinct from the *mythologeme* of mythical consciousness, which, essentially, has resulted in a ghettoizing of mythical elements into the realm of fantasy, folklore, and legend (Gebser). If magic operates on an emotional tie with nature, the

mythical on the imagination of the psyche, then the mental functions on the abstraction of space and the world.

Third order mental consciousness is subject to abstraction, but fourth order mental consciousness is able systematically to reflect on this abstraction. While both are mentally oriented -- a similarity between traditionalism and modernism -- the fourth order capacity to take as object, and thus reflect upon, abstraction translates into an enormous amount of power. The single-pointed unity experienced in magical consciousness is now manipulated, albeit in deficient and diluted form, within a fragmentary mental world of abstract reasoning. Our modern world is a direct result of this abstraction taken to a logical extreme. This connection between the mental and the magical (the fourth/third order to the second/first order) is demonstrated by the close kinship of the words “magic,” “making,” “might,” “mechanism,” and “machine” (Gebser, p. 46).⁴ Subsequently, the inherently polar and imagistic symbolic consciousness of the mythical has been reduced to allegory and formula by mental consciousness. Generally speaking, symbols now have a solely pragmatic meaning -- whether mathematical formulas, letters, formal logic, or even street signs and restaurant menus -- *symbol has become sign*, the numinous has become functional. This reduction of symbol to sign is symptomatic of how “explanations of the universe have been systematically ‘cleansed’ of all spiritual and human qualities” (Tarnas, 1991, p. 421).

⁴ All of these words stem from same the Indo-European root: *mag(h)* (Gebser, 1949/1985).

Before moving on to a discussion of integral/fifth order/post-modern consciousness, three major facets of the mental structure must be made explicit -- they are: 1) perspective/over-emphasis on space, 2) ratio and measurement, and 3) fragmentation of the whole. While I have already touched on each of these, the necessity of a complex orientation will become clear only when these are understood.

The quintessential hallmark of Mental consciousness is its over-emphasis on space, which Gebser holds is both its greatness and major weakness. While there is not sufficient "space" in this paper to go into depth on Gebser's research and argument for this assertion, for illustration I will "point out" a few characteristic examples from modern life. Given John Glenn's recent return to "space" aboard the "space" shuttle (October 29, 1998), it is no surprise that I mention the "space race" of the Cold War. We have "space" for rent everywhere, e.g., billboards, apartments, or store fronts. A brief look into any American history textbook will without fail mention "Manifest Destiny," the belief that it was our nation's destiny to explore, traverse, and ultimately possess all of the land between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.⁵ What is often not mentioned is that this "space" was already "filled" by other cultures.

This discussion could not be complete without a further interlude into language. As Kramer et al. (1992) assert, "our modern mental consciousness is constituted fundamentally on a spatial metaphor" (p. xxi). Lakoff and Johnson (1980), in their now classic Metaphors we live by, demonstrate how almost

⁵ On CNN, at the time of the John Glenn mission, I witnessed a NASA official state that our continued space exploration was like a "manifest destiny" for the next millennium.

everything we say is actually metaphorical. If we are embedded in mental/perspectival consciousness then our language should reflect this. Here are but a few of the numerous examples, of *orientational metaphors*, that they present: “my spirits *rose*; I *fell* into a depression; get *up*; he’s *under* hypnosis; he came *down* with the flu; I have control *over* her; he is *under* my control; she has *high* standards; or he is *high minded*” (p. 15). Interestingly enough, they point out that rational is *up*, while emotional is *down*, e.g., “he *fell* to the emotional level, ...we put our feelings aside and had a *high-level* intellectual discussion” (p. 17). It should also come as no surprise that Gebser has explored the etymological roots of words commonly used in modern language. Risking tedium, I present the following passage as support for this claim about our preoccupation with space:

Perspectival thinking spatializes and then employs what it has spatialized. All inferences or deductions are expressed in language by spatial concepts. Language speaks of “transcending” or “overriding” or “exceeding,” and philosophic thought of this kind “represents, conceives of” (*vorstellen*, literally “places before”); it “proves” (*nachweisen*, literally “points to”); it “grasps” and “com-prehends”; it “grasps conceptually” (*auffassen*, literally “catches”); it “considers” (*überlegen*, literally “turns over”); it imputes (*unterstellen*, literally “places under”); it “debates” and “argues” (*auseinandersetzen*, literally “takes apart”). (Gebser, p. 258)

Notice the similarity to Kegan’s fourth order, as inference and deduction (forms of abstraction) have been cast in the realm of object and thus are employed in a directed fashion (whereas at the third order one is subject to abstraction). Getting back to the point, Kramer et al. (1992) tell us that this prejudice in modern thinking leads to “the reification of time as an indifferent measure of the linear motion of spatially located objects... all events and

phenomena, in order to be real, must be reduced to spacio-temporal positionality and thus to perspectival fragmentation” (p. xxi). Mental consciousness, then, is preoccupied with space. But what does this mean? What are the implications?

It is difficult to imagine a world that is not founded on perspective. Gebser gives us the exact moment in history that the seemingly simple idea of perspective became the defining phenomenon of our epoch. It was the ascent of Mount Ventoux in France, in 1336, by Petrarch, and was none other than the discovery of “the landscape.” It is here that space irrupts into consciousness and perspective is born. Later, in the fifteenth century CE, Leonardo Da Vinci established *laws* of perspective, paving the way for technical drafting, and thus making possible our technological age-- a logical extreme of perspectivity. According to Feuerstein (1987/95), Gebser has traced the roots of the pathological elements from our present civilization back to the introduction of perspectivity. In this respect, perspective “executed the alignments of aspects to a predetermined point and thereby effected a distortion of reality. For the part is to a certain degree always a betrayal of the whole, for which reason the sum of the parts also only yields a fictitious but not efficacious whole” (Feuerstein, p. 128). This last point should be kept in mind as it foreshadows the next section.

This emphasis on space, in tandem with a mental-perspectival orientation, has no doubt “expanded the horizons” of humankind. Perspectival/mental consciousness has allowed us to do truly amazing things, and at the same time we are tearing ourselves apart from the resulting hubris. As we have expanded our horizons at the expense of the whole, blinded by the narrowing quality of perspective, that which has been ignored, repressed, or projected is now closing

back in on us. It is precisely this mental/perspectival consciousness that corresponds to modernism and to Kegan's fourth order. Gebser speaks to this;

[This] over-emphasis on the "objectively" external, a consequence of an excessively visual orientation, leads not only to rationalization and haptification but to an unavoidable hypertrophy of the "I"... [which] amounts to what we may call an ego-hypertrophy: the "I" must be increasingly emphasized, indeed over-emphasized in order for it to be adequate to the ever-expanding discovery of space. (Gebser, p. 22)

Herein is a succinct macro-view of the fourth order, that which underlies Kegan's (1994) "demands of the curriculum of modern day life." Kramer et al. (1992) distill four essential characteristics of this structure: 1) it is dualistic, 2) mind is a function of directedness, orientation, and linearity, 3) orientation is centered in the ego "with a propensity to lend the ego a spatial position from which perspectives become constituted towards the 'object out there'" (p. xxi), and 4) this orientational ego-subject constitutes linear time with the "material" (object) representing space. Thus, even deeper and more fundamental to fourth order consciousness than modernism is the mental/perspectival structure of consciousness.

Taking this last notion even further is Gebser's comment that "as to the perspectival attitude, it is possible to maintain that the domination of space which results from an extreme perspectivization upsets and unbalances the 'I'" (p. 22). This, he believes, results in a neglect of time, as "the one-sided emphasis on space, which has its extreme expression in materialism and naturalism, gives rise to an ever-greater unconscious feeling of guilt about time" (p. 22). I will be returning to this last point. In the meantime, recall that the underlying the fourth order is a system structure, which takes mutuality, the complementarity of mythical polarity, as object. Polarity ripped in half is dualism. This plays itself

out very differently, in the details, depending on which “level” is the focus. Dualism at the cultural level has led to our environmental crisis, while dualism at the personal level is a characteristic underlying the individual ambition and career orientated obsession that is strongly related to the widespread alienation, depression, and interpersonal confusion that surrounds us.

It is vital, at the same time, to keep in mind the key role that repudiation has in this process. While acknowledging the damaging manifestations of this deficient form of mental consciousness, we must also realize that this need be accepted inasmuch as it is a necessary phase of the evolutionary process. Yet, Feuerstein (1987/1995) stresses that we must not repeat Hegel’s mistake of concluding that the history of consciousness is *the* self-actualization of world reason (Weltvernunft). Moreover, while the present is part of a larger process, it should not necessarily be construed as a fated, deterministic, unavoidable reality, and especially not as the culmination of progress. Nonetheless, we are where we are.

Closely tied to perspectival consciousness is the pre-eminent position of *ratio*. The word “rationale” of course stems directly from this root word. Feuerstein (1987/1995, p. 119) points out that “Gebser never tires of emphasizing the divisive, atomizing force of ratio which, as he sees it, is inherently antagonistic towards wholeness.” In Gebser’s own words:

Ratio or rationality... must not be interpreted in a perspectivistic sense as “understanding” or “common sense”; ratio implies calculation and, in particular, division, an aspect expressed by the concept of “rational numbers” which is used to designate fractions and decimals, i.e., divided whole numbers or parts of a whole. This dividing aspect inherent in ratio and Rationalism -- an aspect which has come to be the only valid one -- is consistently overlooked although it is of decisive importance to an assessment of our epoch. (Gebser, p. 95)

Thus, not only is our current mode of mental consciousness perspectively oriented with an emphasis on space, but it is also fixated on “ratio.” Rationalism generally has been understood as the pinnacle of Western thought for the last few centuries, essentially dating from the Enlightenment (Tarnas, 1991). This era, the Enlightenment, is a quintessential example of a misnomer. Feuerstein (1987/1995) points out that, “far from constituting the pinnacle of human evolution, or the ultimate flowering of ‘progress’, the attitude of rationalism is an evolutionary dead end” (p. 119). The most tragic aspect of the deficient mental structure is that “reason, reversing itself metabolistically to an exaggerated rationalism, becomes a kind of plaything of the psyche, neither noticing nor even suspecting the connection” (Gebser, p. 97). Fortunately, in recent decades many people have come to similar conclusions, recognizing the inherent limitations of this completely abstracted, overly-masculine, form of thinking and perception.

As a structure fragments and becomes deficient, it reverts to a “previous” mode, and not necessarily that mode’s efficient form. On this point Kramer et al. (1992) state that the “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” (p. xxi). Following on this is Gebser’s belief that extreme rationalization is a violation of the psyche, a violation perpetrated by a negatively magic element -- i.e., ratio. Thus, the danger that there is a doubly deficient mode in operation arises. Gebser understands “ratio” to be the most deficient form of mental consciousness, having been “perverted into its opposite, to the disadvantage of the ego that has become blind through isolation” (p. 97). To bring out an implied

point, I would like to stress that the mental structure of consciousness is now generally experienced in its deficient mode not solely because of its perspectival, spatial orientation, but because of the extremes to which these have gone in accord with “ratio.” Gebser holds us that we can suspect the presence of this deficient, rationalistic mental mode “wherever we are caught up in the labyrinthine network of mere concepts, or meet up with a one-sided emphasis on willful or voluntaristic manifestations or attempts at spasmodic synthesis (trinitary, tripartite, dialectical), isolation, or mass-phenomena” (p. 154).

This emphasis on ratio, in tandem with an outwardly directed perspectival orientation, also manifests as excessive measurement. This is directly related to scientific thought, or better yet, scientific thought is best understood in the context of deficient mental consciousness. There is no room for qualities in ratio, only for the quantitative. There is no room for complexity and uncertainty, only for ideal types representing simple, and thus controllable, reductions. Hopefully reminiscent of discussion in the Introduction is Gebser’s understanding of this extremely perspectival, rational, and ultimately dualistic form of thinking. This thinking only recognizes “two antithetical and irreconcilable constituents of the world: measurable, demonstrable things, the rational components of science... and the non-measurable phenomena, the irrational non-components” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 285). In short, rational components are valid, while irrational, non-measurable phenomena are invalid (Gebser) -- recall, rational is *up* while emotional is *down* (Lakoff et al., 1980). Therefore, we should not take for granted the degree to which our daily normalities are saturated with an emphasis on ratio, and the rational, *over* the irrational (e.g., emotions, intuition, dreams, etc.).

Time and measurement

What is peculiar about a supersonic jet in a room? It is that we are faced with a four dimensional creation in a three dimensional space -- supersonic jets move in time as well as in the other three dimensions (Gebser). A supersonic jet is a four dimensional creation. Time is the fourth dimension of our experience, but given our preoccupation with space it has essentially been forced into the other three dimensions. This issue is central to Gebser's work. Feuerstein states that Gebser has demonstrated how "the regnant mental-rational structure of consciousness has been challenged by a new mood or style of consciousness which is associated with what he calls the 'irruption of time' -- time as an intensity or quality" (p. 130).

Given the underlying perspectival, ration-alistic structuring of our reality, it is no wonder that time is thought of in machine-like terms. *Time is measured in partitions: nanoseconds, seconds, minutes, hours, days, years, millennia.* Just like everything else, time has been fully spatialized, another intensity erroneously converted into a spatial extensity (Gebser). What, then, is time for Gebser? Simply stated, it is an "intensity." Integrally speaking, time cannot be reduced to (perspectival) clock time, but it is more than a (mental) concept. Moreover, time *is not* divisive, nor should it be equated with the timelessness or "temporicity" of the magical or mythical structures. Time, is integral time, the *achronon* (time freedom). Achronicity does not imply freedom from time, but instead freedom in time (Feuerstein). It is freedom for all time forms -- in other words, time is not limited to magical timelessness, mythical temporicity, or

mental clock time. Achronicity is integral time, which means that all time forms exist in a mutually co-arising fashion; there is freedom for all time forms.

One has only to reflect a moment on our culturally ever-present anxiety about time. Not only is time money, but we can also spend our time wisely. We are not only running out of time, but we also wish that there was more time at the end of the day. The manufacturing and sale of daily planners is a lucrative industry, as it allows busy, industrious, fourth order individuals to partition their days down to the minute, ensuring that time is budgeted correctly. Also, time is for sale, as it is commonly reported that a 30-second slot during the Super Bowl is worth millions of dollars to large corporations for advertising their products.

I've yet to point out the most obvious current source of anxiety about time, or more accurately, the lack of it -- the Millennium. Here we have a specific measurement of time that has half of the planet worried about impending doom and destruction; this is also referred to as the apocalypse. While the rationalist in each of us can attempt to explain away any prophecy of apocalypse, we still have to face "Y2K." This acronym stands for "the Year 2000 problem," which refers to the very real fact that most of the computers that run our modern, post-industrial, information society are not able to distinguish between the year 2000 and the year 1900 (<http://www.y2k.com>). There is major concern that a few of the following industries' computer systems will cause direly serious errors as the clock strikes midnight on the eve of the year 2000: defense, transportation, power (including nuclear), manufacturing, global and local financial systems, telecommunications, government, education, and health care, not to mention the millions of (non-Macintosh) personal computers sitting

on our desktops at work and at home (Peterson, Wheatley, Kellner-Rogers, 1998). Whether something apocalyptic actually occurs or not is not what is at issue here. Regardless of future outcomes, it is safe to say that, at least in the West, there is currently a lot of anxiety about time.

Anxiety about the future

Anxiety is a future oriented bio-psycho-emotional response. We are never anxious about the past, or the present, but about the future. We are of course anxious in the present, often as a result of past experience, but anxiety is what we feel when we are unsure of what is to come. Anxiety arises when things are unstable or uncertain, when our reality may shift all of a sudden, resulting in consequences that may be outside of our ability to cope. Anxiety is an important message from the future, though not necessarily a predetermined future, and its rampant expression is justified in our present-day world. Consider the following statement:

Anxiety is always the sign that a mutation is coming to the end of its expressive and effective possibilities, causing new powers to accumulate which, because they are thwarted, create a “narrows” or constriction. At the culmination point of anxiety these powers liberate themselves, and this liberation is always synonymous with a new mutation. In this sense, anxiety is the great birth-giver. (Gebser p. 134)

To follow up on this last point I would like to take a brief detour. There are currently a number of significant thinkers that believe that our current crisis can be interpreted as a global scale death-rebirth, a “dark night of the soul” for the species (e.g., Bache, 1997; Elgin, 1993; Grof 1997; Tarnas 1997). Thus, these dark times can be understood as part of a meaningful evolutionary process. So, instead of apocalyptic gloom and doom, our current situation might also be

understood as an impetus for “rebirth” or awakening -- though, as with any birth, there is the very real possibility of complications or even death.

Transpersonal psychology pioneer Stan Grof (1985, 1993) presents a cartography of consciousness that elucidates this death-rebirth analogy. This cartography is comprised of four basic perinatal matrices (BPMs) that correspond to the major phases of the birth process. The second matrix in this four-fold framework, BPM II, correlates to the stage in the birth process when contractions are forcing the fetus out of the womb but the cervix has yet to dilate. This results in an anxiety-ridden “no escape” situation, for the walls are closing in but there is no where to go. Grof’s “matrices” are archetypal, holographic “realms” of experience, so they cannot be reduced to the biological birth experience, though actual birth is our first exposure to them. These archetypal matrices are experienced in countless situations and numerous states of consciousness -- i.e., the principle characteristics are relevant to all levels, individual and collective alike -- and they demonstrate self-similarity. The following passage from Duane Elgin (1993), which is also cited by Bache (1997), exquisitely illustrates global scale BPM II themes.

We are moving into a time of steel-gripped necessity -- a time of intense, planetary compression. Within a generation, the world will become a superheated pressure cooker in which the human family is crushed by the combined and unrelenting forces of an expanding world population, a dramatically destabilized global climate, dwindling supplies of non-renewable energy, and mounting environmental pollution. The circle has closed, and there is nowhere to escape. These forces are so unyielding, and the stresses they will place on our world are so extreme, that human civilization will either descend into chaos or ascend into a spiraling process of profound transformation. (Elgin, p. 120)

Though it is Feuerstein speaking of Gebser, Kegan might have made the assertion that “consciousness is not merely ‘wakeful presence’, but wakeful

presence that is structured in a certain way and which structures its experienced universe” (p. 38). Thus, consciousness is more than a witness, it is also active and directive. We must then consider “the possibility of consciousness being the co-initiator of the different ‘mutations’ or structural changes” (Feuerstein, 1987/1995, p. 38). This idea sheds further light on the significance of the mutually complementary, integral nature of the efficient and the deficient modes of each structure (Feuerstein). Our anxiety about time and the closing in of the hubris of perspectival/rational consciousness is indicative of an ending. As Gebser states:

Like the arrow on a string, our epoch must find the point where the target is already latently present: the equilibrium between anxiety and delight, isolation and collectivization. Only then can it liberate itself from deficient unperspectivity and perspectivity, and achieve what we shall call, all because of its liberating character, the aperspectival world. (Gebser, p. 23)

Some previous forms of thought

Before an excursion into integral/aperspectival consciousness itself, it will be useful to “spend a few minutes” summing up some of the more significant manifestations of thought to the present. This subsection will also serve as a bridge to the work of Morin and a discussion of his principles of complex thinking. It will be also be helpful to situate our current modes of thought and what I have been referring to as TPM -- especially as it will help reveal the importance of complex (i.e., fifth order) TPM.

Only mental consciousness “thinks” in a way with which we are familiar. This notion is especially relevant when discussing magical consciousness, as there is no formal, rational thinking in magical consciousness, so, in this sense, its form of realization is vital experience -- a visceral, omni-present, experiencing of

vital forces, (e.g., nature). According to Gebser, an individual embedded in magical consciousness interprets things as follows:

From within in his own merging with events he immediately places any occurrence, event, or object that for him has the nature of a vital experience into a unifying context. Such a mode of establishing a context of relationships by experiencing, a vital nexus as we have called it, is not only pre-rational and pre-causal as befits the spaceless-timeless magic world; it elicits above and beyond this a still sleep-like consciousness of being interwoven with event and is recognized by its associative, analogizing, and symptomatic treatment of things that cannot be considered “thinking”. (Gebser, p. 251)

Since the part can represent the whole in magical consciousness, the individual is able literally to *experience* the world, and as such, “every vital experience is the unbeknown realization of unity, and the emphasis on unity suggests that such experiencing is a form of realization of the magic structure” (Gebser, p. 251).

Mythical consciousness’ psychic emphasis is on polarity and is irrational/pre-rational (Gebser, 1949/1985). When discussing mythical consciousness, Gebser speaks of “undergone” experience as opposed to the point-like vitalism of the magical. He states that, “each experience is a partially known realization of polar complementarity. And inasmuch as the polar moment is accentuated, every undergone experience is a mythical form of realization, and as such a prefiguration of mental understanding” (p. 251). Moreover, undergone experience, as the interplay between the soul’s poles, is ambivalent in nature and thus two-dimensional (Gebser). It is not until a three dimensional world is experienced (consciously recognized) that a “conceptual form of realization, appropriate to the mental structure” (Gebser, p. 252) manifests as thinking as we know it. Here, within the framework of the mental

structure, there are three primary forms of thinking: oceanic/circular, perspectival, and paradoxical. What follows is a brief examination of each thought form.

Oceanic thinking retains a strong mythical element, and its name is chosen to reflect this imagistically. According to Gebser, “the mythical image of Oceanus as the flowing river that encircles the earth and returns unto itself is a vivid image of the active circle as well as being a symbol expressive of the tendency of all terrestrial striving toward consciousness” (p. 252). Although it is in close proximity to the mythic, as formal thought, it belongs more to mental consciousness. For example, Gebser notes the numerous examples of oceanic thinking in the writings of Heraclitus. While indeed circular and somewhat polar, these writings are also directed, and thus mental. The example given is as follows; “for souls it is death to become water; for water it is death to become earth. But from the earth comes water and from water, soul” (Heraclitus as translated by Diels-Kranz in Gebser, p. 252). Foreshadowing the next section’s discussion of complex thinking is Morin’s (1992) statement that, “one must invoke a way of thinking that flows in a circle... between two mutually-exclusive explanatory principles” (p. 373). Morin demonstrates a trans-rational understanding of the need for circularity, so Oceanic thinking shares essential features with the forthcoming discussion -- though the two are not to be directly equated. Most importantly, it should be clear that oceanic thinking is very different from truly directed mental-rational thinking, which is fully premised on an “either/or” dichotomy, as the oceanic form allows “not-only-but-also” to be true (Gebser).

“Either/or” thinking was alluded to as early as 500 CE by Dionysus Areopagita, whom Gebser quotes as saying: “to the soul circular movement means its entry from the outside to the inner self... the linear movement ultimately belongs to the soul when it does not enter into itself and moves in single-minded intellectuality” (p. 254). In other words, herein is drawn the distinction between polar oceanic thinking and singular, directed perspectival thinking (Gebser). In sum:

This unperspectival flux of thoughts and images is still the strength as well as the weakness of this form of thought. It is strong because it is still intact, weak because it is inadequate to the demands of the mental structure. It is irrational where the other is rational; unperspectival where the other is perspectival; it circumscribes where the other describes; it is (am)bivalent where the other is trivalent... the mental-rational-perspectival thought form is directed, whereas oceanic thinking is a self-contained and enclosing self-complementation which was reduced to rubble by perspectivity. (Gebser, p. 254)

It is useful to keep in mind that the “shape” of mental consciousness is the triangle, whereas that of the mythical is a circle, and that of the magical a point. The inception of mental consciousness was necessary because of the psychic fragmentation that ensued from the deficient mythical tendency towards quantification. Gebser points out that Platonic ideas essentially stabilized “the increasing masses of psychic manifestations and projections” (Gebser, p. 256). As a result, to “save” ourselves from deficient, fragmenting mythical consciousness, polarity becomes mentally “united” as the third component in a synthesis that sits atop the polar tension (Gebser). The efficient form of mental consciousness is pyramidal thinking, while the deficient form is perspectival thinking. In order to get a feel for the difference between these two thought forms, picture the following: imagine a triangle standing vertically, the base

representing the poles to be synthesized into a “third” that sits at the top. Next, imagine the pyramid in terms of depth, wherein what was the top, the synthesis, is now a point disappearing at the horizon -- for example, the way a painting of a road disappearing into the horizon looks like a triangle. While both forms are characteristic of “either/or” thinking, stemming from Plato’s method of diarsis (“taking apart”) and subject to the rules of Aristotelian logic, perspectival thinking leads to a whole new world of accomplishments and repercussions -- for, what was a “synthesis,” taking part in a process of becoming, became a fixed point, a static, reified object in space that could be quantitatively measured.

The essential difference between pyramidal thinking and perspectival thinking is the degree to which abstraction can be put into manifest action. This distinction can be understood according to Kegan’s schema, wherein the third order is embedded in, and subject to, abstraction (e.g., inference and deduction), while at the fourth order abstraction has been cast as object -- it can be formally reflected upon. Accordingly, perspectival thinking “coincides to a great extent with the directed, sectorial vision; it fixes the object to be grasped; and two identical lines of vision take in the objects as a third item in the same manner that two equations result in a third” (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 258). Perspectival thinking is tightly knit to the discovery of space, and subsequent over-emphasis there-upon. In this sense, since abstraction is now an object of consciousness, perspectival thinking allows for a spatialization of anything, and enabling a capacity to act on what has been spatialized -- i.e., to control, manipulate, or harness that very same object of thought-perception. It is this form of thinking taken to a logical extreme -- the deficient mode of mental consciousness -- that seems to be most widespread in our culture (e.g., scientism, dualism, and

nationalism, to name a few “isms”). As already discussed, our language is so thoroughly saturated with spatial metaphor that it is difficult for many to imagine the world otherwise. This perspectival thinking has in many ways “made thinking itself spatial and static, permitting the materialization of ‘spirit’ and even the spatializing of time” (Gebser, p. 259). If we are to cease many of our culture’s destructive behaviors, we must become conscious of perspectival/mental thinking, that is, actively reflect upon it as object.

While oceanic thinking is irrational, and perspectival thinking rational, paradoxical thinking is both. Paradoxical thinking is highly consonant with complex TPM, as it “establishes the bond or *religio* to the irrationality and pre-rationality of the mythical and the magic structures... [it] mediates between oceanic and perspectival thinking and contains both rational and irrational elements” (Gebser, p. 259). Gebser points out that while it is primarily found in the writings of religious thinkers from the mental structure, he also specifically notes Aristotle’s “unmoved mover,” the writings of Oscar Wilde, and the “silent music” of Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross. Moreover, he notes the paradoxical quality of the findings in quantum physics, such as the apparent polarity in the principle of complementarity. Gebser holds Kierkegaard to be the modern paradoxical thinker par excellence even though his “Either-Or” corresponds to the rational/mental structure, as its synthesis is “a third form of thought in which there is a (consistently unsatisfactory) effort to unify opposites” (p. 260). Thus, even though paradoxical thinking is wrapped up in the conceptualization of the mental structure, its expression ultimately cannot be thought, but must be “warded” through “verition” (Gebser). As Gebser states,

The actual effectuality does not take place in the conceptual and representational spatio-temporal world, nor in the two-dimensional, nor in the one-dimensional world. Only where the world is space-free and time-free, where “waring” gains validity, where the world and we ourselves -- the whole -- become transparent, and where the diaphanous and what is rendered diaphanous become the verition of the world, does the world become concrete and integral. (p. 263)

The Integral -- aperspectival -- structure of consciousness

Today too many people are uncomfortable whenever they are reminded of transitoriness and change. But it is undoubtedly necessary to point out that this firm-walled three-dimensional world is subject to the possibility of change. (Gebser, p. 249)

As I move into a discussion of Integral consciousness, I would like to point out some valuable relations to Kegan’s notion of a fifth order of subject-object relations. Recall that the fourth order has as its underlying structure that of a system, able fully to recognize that individuals are interacting systems, each with their own needs and disposition, each with their own subjectivity, inner states, and sense of self-consciousness. In resonance with perspectival consciousness, fourth order individuals are fully cognitive of *their* self-authored perspective. Each individual can be understood as being a whole with their parts under control -- the CEO and administrator of their institutional self-system. Culturally, this corresponds to Modernism, wherein the culture itself operates according to fourth order subject-object principles that are highly consonant with the perspectival/rational mental structure of consciousness. But for fifth order consciousness all of these fourth order characteristics are relativized, and the whole notion of individual perspective is no longer a meaningful way of making sense of one’s self or the world. Moreover, since each perspective is recognized as being, by definition, necessarily incomplete, then by

implication the notion of a whole emerges that surpasses any individual in complexity and intensity. As Feuerstein (1987/1995) states:

Each structure coincides with a particular reading of reality... [Gebser] understands these different readings as projections. Since the arational-integral consciousness renders all structures of consciousness transparent, we must assume that it also retracts all kinds of projections or single-choice interpretations of, and exclusive modes of participation in, reality. (p. 47n9)

This last point leads us to Gebser's (1949/1985) intuition and perception of an emerging "integral consciousness." This structure of consciousness, as it is currently emerging, correlates to Kegan's fifth order and to post-modernism. Yet, in fully realized form, integral consciousness is a broader, more intense, context, and therefore also corresponds to a sixth order.⁶ I will return to the notion of a sixth order at the end of this section. For now I would like to discuss the following characteristics of integral consciousness, as they are crucial elements of complex TPM: the aperspectival, the acategorical, the atemporal (the "achronon"), the arational, systasis and synairesis, and verition.⁷

Some background on what Gebser (1949/1985) explicitly considers as fundamental to integral/aperspectival consciousness is called for: 1) all structures constitute us, 2) to live an integral life all structures must be lived according to their constitutive values, 3) no structure can be negated, as negation indicates an over-accentuation, and thus deficient, emphasis, and 4) "certain designations, ascriptions, and characteristic concepts attributed to the individual

⁶ Kegan does not posit a sixth order in his own theory, though he (1994) does refer readers to Wilber who does posit the equivalent of a sixth order (and a seventh and eighth, too).

⁷ Gebser employs the prefix "a-" to denote "free from" and not as "negation of."

structures render their effectuality evident” (p. 155). Gebser (1949/1985) also lists the following as themes or motifs of the aperspectival world:

The whole, transparency (diaphaneity), the supercession of the ego, the realization of timelessness, the realization of temporicity, the realization of the concept of time, the realization of time-freedom (the achronon), the disruption of the merely systematic, the incursion of dynamics, the recognition of energy, the mastery of movement, the fourth dimension, the supercession of patriarchy, the renunciation of dominance and power, the acquisition of intensity, clarity (instead of mere wakefulness), and the transformation of the creative inceptual basis. (p. 361)

Moreover, Gebser (1949/1985) stresses that we should not mistake the arational for the irrational or pre-rational. Just because both are not rational does not mean that they are the same. Gebser’s point here, I believe, is the direct precursor to Wilber’s (1983/1996) *pre/trans fallacy*, which, essentially, in more explicit and detailed form, spells out this necessary distinction. The *pre/trans fallacy* must be kept in mind throughout the rest of this discussion, as any acategorical, atemporal, aperspectival, or other “trans” notion must not be confused with their “pre-,” “ir-,” or “un-“ counterparts. As Gebser states, “we can show the arational nature of the aperspectival world only if we take particular precautions to prevent aperspectivity from being understood as a mere regression to irrationality (or to an unperspectival world), or as a further progression toward rationality (toward a perspectival world)” (p. 29).

Integral consciousness is symbolized by a sphere. This follows from the awareness of “increased dimensioning,” as the magical point is one-dimensional, mythical polarity two-dimensional, the mental triangle three-dimensional, and thus the integral sphere is four-dimensional. (The sphere is four-dimensional

because it is in motion, and thus explicitly involves time). As Kramer et al. (1992) state, “integral consciousness is a concretization of time in such a way that space is dynamized” (p. xxvi). This speaks to what Gebser, 1949/1985) means by *time as an intensity*, that time is perceived aperspectively as a quality, not as a quantity as in mental/perspectival consciousness. Time as a quantity is a mental abstraction, i.e., clock time is an abstraction. The abstract cannot be integrated, only the concrete can, and thus time concretization is a necessary “precondition” for integral consciousness (Gebser). This means that it is necessary to integrate the past and the future in order to realize the ever-present -- the integral.

Gebser holds that, “by integration we mean a fully completed and realized wholeness --the bringing about of an integrum, i.e., the re-establishment of the inviolate and pristine state of origin by incorporating the wealth of all subsequent achievement” (p. 99). In other words, it is, at least in part, the fifth order ability to integrate all that has been cast as object, made concrete, through the evolutionary process thus far -- e.g., movement, perceptions, points of view, abstractions, abstract system ideology, or self-authorship. As Gebser states, “the whole can be perceived only aperspectively; when we view things in a perspectival way we can only see segments” (p. 289). We can perceive the world aperspectively only through integral consciousness, and this is predicated by an intensified consciousness of time-freedom.

Emphasis on qualities, or intensities, has enormous significance in integral consciousness. An integral/aperspectival perception of time is only possible when time is understood qualitatively. Yet this, in and of itself, is sufficient only for a proto-aperspectival perception, not truly integral “waring” (Wahren). Waring, acategorical perception, is possible when the ego is no longer

perspectively blinded, and thus is not bound by time or locale (Combs, 1996). Yet, atemporality is necessary for aperspectivity, as the world is now perceived according to four dimensions, not three spatial and one spatialized temporal. In other words, aperspectivity and atemporality are only separate in mental consciousness. According to an integral consciousness, that is just how things are. I must also stress the rather literal naming of the “integral” structure, as all other forms of experiencing time are integrated. So, when Gebser speaks of *achronicity*, or time-freedom, he is not referring to a transcending of time. Instead, he tells us that only by recognizing all of the forms which co-constitute us can we detach ourselves enough from mental/rational/perspectival time perception and integrate them. This implies that we must not only accept the perspectival time-concept of the mental structure, but also the efficacy of the pre-rational, the timelessness and irrationality of the magical, and mythical temporicity if we are to make the necessary leap to arational achronicity -- freedom for all time forms (Gebser, 1949/1985). This integration cannot be accomplished by *expanding* consciousness -- a spatialized, quantified, and thus illusory notion -- but instead through an intensification of consciousness, an increased dimensioning (Gebser).

Categories are fixed concepts, they separate the whole into parts, and while useful, they cloud a perception of the whole. Metaphorically speaking, acategorical understanding is in the same chord as atemporality and aperspectivity. Feuerstein (1987/1992) states that, “the categories of a conceptual system are necessarily fixed. But... [when] we can understand or relate to reality also in acategorical terms... time becomes transparent” (p. 133). Acategorical perception is another way of talking about what Gebser refers to as “waring” or

“verition,” which becomes only truly possible when “the fixed point of the ego, as the center of all perspectival perception and thought, is transcended” (Feuerstein, p. 133).

I would like to clarify the last statement, as it might be misleading. Feuerstein and Gebser are not implying the necessity of a fully realized mystical notion of transcending the ego -- on the contrary, Gebser stresses that he is not referring to mystical ability as such. Yet, fully matured integral consciousness might be likened to certain states, e.g., Zen Satori, or to certain “realized” individuals, e.g., Meister Eckhart, Gebser’s prime examples. What is also being suggested is something along the lines of Kegan’s fifth order (as well as a yet to be discussed sixth order), as it is not that the ego itself is transcended, dissolved into a unitary samadhi-like state, but that the ego as the center of perception has been relativized by a more complex, and thus more inclusive, ordering of consciousness.

Along with aperspectival-atemporal-acategorical consciousness comes arationality. Jung’s notions of “synchronicity” and “archetype” are fine examples of the arational, and Gebser cites each of these. I also believe that Gebser’s notion of the arational helps to make a connection between certain phenomena that have been explained in “fringe” scientific terms -- i.e., the current trend in the last few decades to explain Psi-phenomena, synchronicity, and quantum physics in terms of each other.⁸ An understanding of the notion of

⁸ For example, see Koestler (1972) or Peat (1988), and especially Wilber (1982), the latter of whom provides a superb critique regarding this very issue. Each of these explore parapsychology in terms of quantum physics, mysticism, divination, and/or synchronicity. They are all very worthwhile reads, having in common, implicitly, Gebser’s notion of arationality.

“arational” serves to avoid conflating the pre-rational with the trans-rational, or in other words, to commit the pre/trans fallacy (Wilber, 1983/1996)

Let us again recall that the fourth order’s underlying structure is that of a system and that the fifth order’s is trans-system. This reveals a significant difference between perspectival consciousness and aperspectival consciousness, as systems are actually concepts frozen in spatialized time. In the case of an individual at the fourth order, they *are* their system, and it is the major task of fourth order individuals to maintain their self-authored, value-generating selves -- to keep their system “frozen.” This notion of the self is relativized at the fifth order, by being “opened” to the environmental context. So, in some ways, it might be more accurate diarectically to state that the difference is not necessarily between system or non-system, but rather between closed system or open system. Open systems are dynamic and fluctuating, ultimately inseparable from the environment, whereas the notion of a closed system implies something that is separate, fixed, and static. According to Gebser (1949/1985), “because systems are static abstractions of only passing or momentary validity, every system is lifted out of its isolation and concretized when we become aware that the principle of transformation renders illusionary all so-called ‘ideal quantities’ and destroys all fixities” (p. 310).

Kramer et al. (1992) state that, “atemporality integrates spatial perception of perspectives, allowing an awareness of something from all sides without a succession of mental functions” (p. xxvi). Ultimately, integral awareness is not visualizable, e.g., it is not possible to visualize the actual paradoxes in quantum physics. Since the mental structure is so explicitly spatial-visual in orientation, it is easy to assume that because we cannot picture it in our minds, that we cannot

under-stand it. Yet we are able to perceive it as we directly participate in it, integrally. Feuerstein (1987/1995) posits that “such *participation* [italics added] renders self and world diaphanous so that their spiritual foundation becomes obvious” (p. 150). Participation, as such, is central to integral consciousness

Kegan (1994) holds that “if one position is actually less complex than the other, it should not even be able to understand the other on terms that allow the other to feel that it is being adequately understood” (p. 334). A key point here, one which can help reveal the extent to which one is still embedded in perspectival/mental/fourth consciousness, is that, even though we may not be able to visualize it, or wrap a concept around it, or describe it logocentrically, we can and do *participate* in it. How much does “participation” or “verition” resonate with someone? While it is important to keep Kegan’s insightful statement in mind, I also hold that any despair that might be felt at this point is due only to a lack of epistemological resources. In other words, as mental/perspectival/fourth order (or even third order) adults, we have most likely yet to develop what we need so that the above situation is not troublesome.

Returning to the notion of system for a moment, Gebser (1949/1985) holds that “by recognizing the effectuality of... acategorical systasis within every system, we are able to replace mere mental synthesis by integral synairesis” (p. 310). Gebser coined these terms, *systasis* and *synairesis*, given the necessity for new words not trapped within the confines of rational/perspectival consciousness. In correlation to the magical, mythical, and mental structures, *systasis* and *synairesis* “retain the efficient co-validity of symbiosis, symbol, and system [respectively]” (p. 312). *Systasis* comes from the Greek for “put together”

or “connection,” and also connotes “origin” and “forming” (Gebser). Gebser uses the term *systasis* “to circumscribe the efficacy of all acategorical elements... all types of manifestation and aspects of ‘time’ which, because of their non-spatial character, cannot be the object of categorical systematization, as they are not ‘givens’ or data but in a certain sense ‘givings’ or impartations” (p. 310). In this way, *systasis* is to the integral what systematization is to the mental. Thus, depending on the structure under discussion, one could speak of *systatic* elements or of systematic elements.

Synairesis, rooted in the Greek “*synaireo*,” means “to synthesize, collect,” and implies “everything being seized or grasped on all sides, particularly by mind or spirit” (Menge-Güthling, in Gebser, p. 312). It is to integral consciousness what synthesis is to mental consciousness (Gebser). Synthesis deals with threes -- two opposites whose tension must be resolved in a “third” that is placed in opposition to another, subsequently requiring further synthesis into even another “third,” ad infinitum. Paradoxical thinking’s attempts to synthesize the rational and the irrational, often resulting in amazing written, visual, and sonic expressions, is an example of an efficient form. Yet, integral consciousness is defined by the integration of all of the structures which co-constitute us -- archaic, magical, mythical, mental/perspectival, and aperspectival -- and as such, synthesis is, by definition, not up to the task.

To facilitate a further understanding of what Gebser means by *synairesis*, consider the following passage:

Synairesis fulfills the aperspectival, integrative perception of *systasis* and system. This *synairetic* perception is a precondition for diaphany, which is able to be realized when, in addition to *systasis* and system, the symbol -- with its mythical effectivity -- and magic symbiosis are included, that is to say, present. The task which the new mutation poses for us can be

resolved only if we supercede the purely mental, spatial world of systematic thought. We achieve this by recognizing the validity of systasis in moving the efficacy of the non-categorical elements into the sphere of perception. Systasis is the means whereby we are able to open up our consolidated spatial consciousness to the integrating consciousness of the whole. This integrating consciousness enables us to perceive and presentiate the integrity or integrality of the whole. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p. 310)

In a very fifth order fashion, via synaeresis, the systatic quality of the relationship of “whole” to “parts” is that neither is complete without the other, there is a mutual interpenetrability for all involved. A key to understanding what is meant by *systatic quality* is being aware of this interdependence (Kramer et al., 1992). According to Kegan (1994), this quality would relate to the fifth order recognition that relationships are prior to the parts themselves, e.g., wholeness is prior to “partness” -- it is the case that there are no parts, but that the parts’ identities are preconditioned by the relationships within the context that they are embedded within.⁹ Kramer thus points out that to understand this interdependence, or systatic integrality, it is necessary “to become integrally aware of the vital role difference plays in identity” (p. xxv). Thus, I am only me because of you, you are only you because of the ocean. This is not to say that the aforementioned examples are only an illusion, though that may well be the case, but that systatically speaking each is dependent on the “wholeness” of reality for existence. Accordingly, “meaning points to other meanings that are different from and yet related to one another as different. Meanings integrate in their

⁹ Gebser’s explication of “synaeresis” and “systasis” foreshadows many of the ideas to be covered in the next section, particularly those ideas relating to the whole/part relationship and the notion of emergent properties -- i.e., systems thinking, complexity science, etc.

mutual call for each other and in their mutual differentiation” (Kramer et al., 1992, p. xxv).

While synthesis and synaeresis seem to fulfill the same roles for their respective structure of consciousness, it would be a mistake to equate them. This is especially so as, since we are predominantly embedded in the mental structure of consciousness, our frame of reference is synthesis -- a spatialized temporal thinking wherein we can actually visualize, abstractly, the coming together of an antagonistic polarity into a synthesized “third.” Synaeresis is an act of aperspectival perception, an “integral act of completion encompassing all sides” (Gebser, p. 312). The intensities, or qualities, previously mentioned can only be held together by synaeresis, as this form of perception is presupposed by the acategorical, the aperspectival, the arational, and the atemporal. In this way, synaeretic perception leads to what Gebser refers to as transparency, or diaphany. No longer limited by a fixed, spatialized, quantified, reduced, fragmented, systematized perception of the whole, it is an integral way of thinking, perceiving, and making meaning of our worlds. As Gebser states, “the parts must be heard or experienced, intuited or endured, seen or thought in accord with their very essence” (p. 286). In other words, the part/whole relationship can only be understood via “waring,” or through “verition” (from the root “ver,” implying truth, e.g., verity, verify) -- thus it is too complex for a dialectical synthesis.

Before continuing, the following needs to be understood: integral consciousness can neither be reduced nor limited to Kegan’s fifth order of consciousness. It is crucial that I do not imply a direct one to one equation here, regardless of the numerous similarities. Most important is that “verition,” the

active TPM process of integral consciousness, is able to take the whole subject-object duality as “object.” However, even this does not seem completely accurate, as subject-object taken as object forms a feedback loop, essentially translating into a “transcending” of subject-object duality all together. In other words, as Gebser states, “to be free of ego... [which] means not just free of subject, but free of object” (p. 309). This is in many ways the primary characteristic of sixth order consciousness, which Wilber (1980/1996, 1983/1996) refers to as the “psychic” stage. For the most part, Wilber’s model runs a very close parallel to Kegan’s, as he draws on many of the same theorists, especially Piaget. Moreover, Wilber also draws on Gebser for his model, so while Kegan does not posit a sixth order, Wilber’s “psychic” stage is highly consonant with all that has been discussed herein.

Keeping in mind the intermeshed associations of “fourth order/mental/modernism” and “fifth order/early integral/post-modern,” I would like to spend a minute on Wilber’s version of these as to facilitate a good grounding in what a sixth order is like, i.e., what integral consciousness is according to a developmental perspective. Wilber’s correlate to Kegan’s fifth order is the *centauric* (vision-logic) stage. Very briefly, Wilber’s “fifth order” can be understood as follows: “while this level is trans-verbal, it is *not* trans-personal. That is, while it transcends language, gross concepts, and the gross ego, it does not transcend existence, personal orientation, or waking psychophysiological awareness. It is the last stage dominated by normal forms of space and time” (Wilber, 1980/1996, p. 70). He also refers to this stage as the Body-mind stage, as it involves the integration of the formal-verbal mind with the emotional body. It is thus “centauric” (Wilber, 1983/1996). This “centauric” integration is

reminiscent of how Kegan's fifth order re-integrates the third orders inter-subjectivity and empathy, and thus emotional predisposition.

Whereas full-blown integral consciousness transcends subject-object duality, in strictly fifth order manifestation it is not yet trans-personal. The fifth order/centaur is subject to inter-individuality, and thus, while fully aware that individuals can only be complete in relation to others, there is still an explicit perception of an other. While a sixth order/psychic mode not only is no longer subject to inter-individuality, the relationship of subject-object relations has undergone a radical shift. Thus, the "psychic" is the first stage that can be considered trans-personal (Wilber, 1983/1996). As "transcend" is a spatialized/perspectival term, in Gebserian non-perspectival language, we might instead say that the "psychic" is the first stage wherein consciousness is *intense* enough to "ware" the subject-object duality and render it transparent. Wilber correlates the psychic with an entry into the trans-rational (or arational) and with early awareness of the archetypal. Of course, Gebser also mentions both of these as key characteristic of integral consciousness. In some works Wilber actually presents the psychic stage as including both the centauric and the low-subtle, and thus can be thought of as Wilber's direct equivalent of an integral consciousness, paralleling Kegan's fifth and unposited sixth orders. In regard to this more inclusive form of the psychic, Wilber (1983/1996) states that this stage "refers to 'psyche' as a higher level of development than the rational mind per se (e.g., Aurobindo, Free John) (p. 247)."

In Closing

The spirit of this section is eloquently captured in the opening words to the Preface of Gebser's (1949/1985) magnum opus The ever-present origin:

Origin is ever-present. It is not a beginning, since all beginning is linked with time. And the present is not just the "now," today, the moment or a unit of time. It is ever-originating, an achievement of full integration and continuous renewal. Anyone able to "concretize," i.e., to realize and effect the reality of origin and the present in their entirety, supercedes "beginning" and "end" and the mere here and now. (p. xxvii)

Gebser's work allows us an unprecedented insight into the nature of our evolution of consciousness. Not only does his explication of the historically previous structures of consciousness reveal a spectacular view, but most importantly it lays the foundation upon which our current structure rests -- i.e., the context in which the mental/rational/perspectival structure of consciousness is situated. Given the discussion of Kegan's subject-object theory and the subsequent parallels that have been drawn to Gebser's work it should be apparent that fourth order-mental/rational consciousness is the order of the day. But most importantly, for the purposes of this thesis, is the notion that there is an emerging structure -- the integral structure -- and that this structure transcends our reliance on singular, fixed, reified views of who we are and what we assume our world to be.

At this point, it is appropriate to take what Kegan refers to as the fifth order of consciousness, and what Gebser calls Integral consciousness, and to situate them in tandem with the work of Edgar Morin and his revolutionary notion of a paradigm of complexity. As we will see, whereas Kegan's framework sets the stage for the general developmental schema for the individual (and to some extent society at large), and whereas Gebser's discourse encompasses the

evolution of the Western mind from inception to present, what we find in Morin, as I shall present in the following section, is a middle ground -- a grounded middle that allows for the widespread emergence of a complex TPM process to seem not only possible, but likely. For Morin can teach us how to think in a whole new way.

Section 3: Edgar Morin's paradigm of complexity

Up to this point, I have discussed how we develop through successively more complex orders of subject-object relations. I have also discussed how the fourth order corresponds to modernism and perspectival thinking -- that is, to a necessary, though necessarily limited, understanding of ourselves and our world. I then carried out an in-depth exploration of the current dominant structure of consciousness, the mental-perspectival, and introduced the emergent mode, the integral structure of consciousness. The picture thus far presented is rich, full, involved, and complex, but it is still lacking a crucial element -- the work of French thinker Edgar Morin.

Thinking the complex

In the beginning was complexity: genesis is the other side of disintegration. (Morin, 1977/1992, p. 148)

Never before in the history of humanity have the responsibilities of thinking weighed so crushingly on us. (Morin, 1998, p. 131)

Edgar Morin, like many Europeans, was incalculably influenced by the horror and chaos of WWII. Born in France in 1921, he joined the Communist Party in 1942, leaving it in 1951. Morin is a true transdisciplinary, having written over forty books and dozens of articles. In addition to numerous autobiographical accounts, his writing has addressed film, politics, history, science, "the twentieth century," systems thinking, complexity, and complex thinking. Standing out from this impressive body of work is his multi-volume masterwork, *La Méthode*, which explicitly seeks to articulate principles of organization and complexity.

Like Gebser, Morin is widely known in Europe and is even famous in intellectual circles, but remains essentially unknown in the English speaking world. Gebser lived from 1905 until 1973, thus passing away before many of his ideas came into vogue, so it seems somewhat more understandable that his work has not received sufficient attention. Morin, on the other hand, is alive and well -- still writing, traveling, and actively engaged in the intellectual world (as of Aug. 1999). It is very likely that his early ties with Communism are in part responsible for this tragic anonymity, as we are all too well aware of the English speaking world's relationship to communism. At the same time, regardless of any decades-old communist affiliations, his ideas radically challenge the intellectual status quo in such a way that he has, to put it mildly, not won any popularity contests in the mainstream currents of modernist thought. Fortunately, this is changing, as complexity is currently one of the hottest topics in contemporary intellectual (scientific, artistic, philosophical) discourses.

As with Gebser, I will explore Morin's work for its relevance to the core notion of complex thinking, perceiving, and meaning-making (TPM) -- fifth order/integral consciousness. As such, the central theme drawn from Morin is that of a "paradigm of complexity." Since it will take the better part of this section for an adequate unpacking of the notion of a *paradigm* of complexity, for present purposes, "paradigm" can be thought of as a master context that informs and shapes epistemological activity according to widespread cultural assumptions.¹

¹ In recent years the significance of the word "paradigm" has been diluted by its rampant use. For the purposes of this paper it should be understood closer to Kuhns' (1970) original meaning.

Morin's paradigm of complexity is in full accord with Kegan's fifth order and Gebser's Integral consciousness. As such, it is no accident that, while I have mentioned complexity throughout this thesis, I have not definitively stated what complexity is. The reason for this procrastination is that complexity is complex. Accordingly, I have dedicated this whole section to a direct engagement with the notion of complexity. But before doing so, however, I will first discuss what has instigated Morin to call for a paradigm of complexity in the first place.

Nowhere have I seen Kegan, Gebser, or Morin reference each other in any way, shape, or form. Given this fact, I believe that the coherence between each theory lends further credibility to each of these theorists individually. It should thus come as no surprise that Morin (1977/1992) has thoroughly critiqued what he refers to as the "paradigm of simplification," which corresponds directly to deficient fourth order/mental-perspectival-rational/modernist consciousness. The need for a complex disposition in today's world arises out of the context in which we find ourselves situated. Mental/perspectival consciousness, in its deficient rationalistic mode, is manifesting itself in scientistic, fragmenting, simplifying, reductionistic thinking. Given that our current structure of consciousness has so aptly been described as the "mental" structure, then it is of the utmost significance that we learn to think in a complex fashion. In one of his more recent books, Morin (1998) states the following:

The Planetary Era demands that we situate everything in the planetary context. Knowledge of the world as world has become an intellectual as well as vital necessity. It is the universal problem of every citizen; how to gain access to global information, and how to acquire the possibility of linking together and organizing it. To do so, and thereby recognize, acknowledge, and know the problems of the world, we need a reform in thinking. (p. 123)

This “reform in thinking” is another way of stating the central, essential challenge that we are confronted with epistemologically as the dominant structure of consciousness becomes increasingly deficient.

To facilitate a clear explication of this increasing deficiency, from a Morinian pre-disposition, there must be an acknowledgment of our culture’s foundational assumptions. Associated with the overtly perspectival, mechanical, and linear conceptions of space and time is the fundamental belief in “development.” Morin (1998, p. 59) states that “at the base of this master idea of development stands the great Western paradigm of progress. Development is supposed to insure progress, which in turn is supposed to insure development.” Recall that Gebser stresses how we must not construe “progress” and “development” as necessarily positive terms, that quite the contrary, our “progress myth” is dangerously like a runaway train. Morin also understands the destructive nature of “progress” and “development” taken to the extremes that we find them today. Morin (1998) asks, “is not our civilization, the very model of development, itself sick because of development” (p. 63)? Morin, like Gebser, points out that our modern civilization is founded on “mental” notions that are insufficient to meet the needs of our current challenges. Of course, central to these foundations is our cherished, and stereotypically Western, belief in progress and development. More than reminiscent of the Gebser discussion is Morin’s (1998) following statement:

Development has permitted individual unfolding, intimacy in love and friendship, communication between “you” and “me,” and telecommunication between all and sundry. Yet this same development also brings the atomization of individuals, who lose their solidarities without acquiring new ones, except for those of an anonymous and administrative nature. (p. 63)

Not only is the previous quotation completely resonant with the discussion of mental/perspectival consciousness, but also with characteristics of Kegan's fourth order -- Morin even uses the term "administrative." We have increased our standard of living immeasurably, yet this has occurred at great cost to our quality of life (Morin, 1998). We have vastly increased our means of communication and are in the midst of a so-called "communications revolution," yet we suffer from an "impoverishment of personal communication" (Morin, 1998, p. 65). Again, I am discussing our quandary -- the paradoxical, complex reality that simultaneously is manifesting through a mode of consciousness that has brought forth so much positive "progress," but is also leading us to the brink of destruction. In some ways, at this point, I am rehashing what I have already discussed -- i.e., the damaging effects of a linear, reductionistic, rationalistic epistemology -- yet, I do this as it is key to understanding a paradigm of complexity. In other words, to put it succinctly, "we must recognize that our consciousness has been shaped by the paradigm of simplification and the concepts we have at our disposal are atomistic rather than molar, chemical rather than organismic, isolated and static rather than coproductive, recursive, and interdependent" (Morin, 1992, p. 376).

Gebser stresses the significance of "ratio," and unfolding out of this seed notion are parallel key words for the paradigm of simplification: fragmentation, mechanism, and disjunction. Speaking directly, albeit unknowingly, to deficient fourth order/mental-perspectival-rational consciousness, Morin (1998) holds that, "intelligence that is fragmented, compartmentalized, mechanistic, disjunctive, and reductionistic breaks the complexity of the world into disjointed pieces, splits up problems, separates that which is linked together, and renders

unidimensional the multidimensional” (p. 128). I am concentrating so much time and effort to write about what I have been referring to as deficient mental/perspectival, simplistic thinking, because, as Morin states, “mutilated thinking that considers itself expert and blind intelligence that considers itself rational are still the order of the day” (p. 128).

Enter the complex

If there was only one thing to say about complexity it would be that it is complex. At first glance, to say that complexity is complex is nothing but a meaningless tautology, yet, this is only the case within the framework of the paradigm of simplification. Complexity is not a homogenous concept such that there is a complexity, as complexity, by definition, cannot be simplified. Although it is often considered to be a noun, “complexity” might be best thought of as a verb. Complexity is dynamic and changing; it is confusing and obscuring; it is challenging and instigating, and most of all, complexity is literally everywhere, always.

If there were only two things I could say about complexity, the second would be that *complexity is not complication* (Morin 1977/1992). As Morin (source unknown) states, “it would be too simple to reduce complexity to complication” (p. 558).

What is recognized as complex is most often the complicated, the entangled, and the confused, and thus something that cannot be described, given the astronomical number of measurements, operations, computations, and so forth such a description would require. (Morin, 1992, p. 380)

An occurrence of many steps, stages, calculations, or measurements, no matter how convoluted, does not necessarily imply complexity -- i.e., complexity can be

convoluted, but the convoluted is not necessarily complex. To disentangle the many common misconceptions about complexity one must take the previous point to heart.

I have said a lot about what complexity is not. Morin (in Kelly, 1996; source unknown) refers to this as the “negative mode” of speaking about something, for he states that, “complexity is a concept of which the first definition can only be negative” (source unknown, p. 556). I employ this negative mode to reveal common misconceptions, thereby enabling a discussion of complexity to be more lucid and meaningful. So, what is complexity? Morin (1977/1992) posits the following:

Complexity asserts itself first of all as an impossibility to simplify; it arises when complex unity produces its emergences, where distinction and clarities in identities are lost, where disorder and uncertainty disturb phenomena, where the subject/object surprises his own face in the object of his observation, where antinomies make the course of reasoning go astray. (p. 386)

Herein arises perhaps the most crucial element of the paradigm of complexity, a characteristic that in-and-of itself is almost solely capable of making the distinction from the paradigm of simplification. This element is the inclusion of the subject in *all* observation. Hence, there is no decisive separation between subject and object, between the observer and the observed -- neither is there between cause and effect, or order and chaos -- a point that could not be more subtle and, simultaneously, revolutionary.

Complexity is very much a fifth order concept. Central to fifth order subject-object relations is the understanding that an individual is not complete without the “other.” Everything is what it is in relation to a context, which itself is contingent on the subject’s participating in that very same context. Complexity

is fifth order in the sense that what is complex is subject to sliding contexts. For example, in the interpersonal realm, I am defined by my cultural/interpersonal surroundings, but simultaneously I am an active agent within this context, and thus have the capacity to influence the very same people that I am in relationship with and who influence me. The point is that complexity simply cannot be conflated with a fourth order/perspectival, system-like, interaction of objective things, whether physical or conceptual. According to the paradigm of complexity, whatever is isolated, disjoined, or fragmented cannot be, as Morin would say, the real. As a quintessential illustration of a fifth order thinker, Morin has demonstrated how that which has been “transcended” and ultimately recognized as incomplete and partial cannot, and should not, be understood as an accurate reading of the world -- hence, the need for a paradigm of complexity.

If the nature of complexity is not completely lucid at this point, there should be no concern. Complexity is not immediately clear. This is not to say that sense cannot be made from complexity -- i.e., that there cannot be enough precision for it to have instrumental value -- but instead, that we must not expect the intellect fully to comprehend the complex. Moreover, given the nature of this material, it is necessary to circle around the same ideas from different angles, from within different contexts, at different times, in varying intensities. This approach is in many ways necessary in order to avoid falling into yet another perspectival trap, to avoid the inherently problematic linear presentation of non-linear ideas, especially within the context of an already linear form of communication. Most importantly, “complexity does not lend itself readily to conceptualization” (Morin, source unknown, p. 566). Stated in Gebserian terms, Morinian complexity is aperspectival, achronic, acategorical, and ultimately,

arational. Complexity is systatic, and can truly only be understood with an integral disposition.

As I am correlating Morinian complexity with Kegan's fifth order, it is crucial to remember that the fifth order, unlike all previous orders, has the capacity to take a meta-position, to fold back on itself -- e.g., to reflect on the very process of theory construction or to critique one's own "value generator." While the shift from one order of subject-object relations to another is always monumental and significant, the shift from fourth order to fifth order cognition is no less than a transition of epochal proportions. As such, the fifth order is itself indicative of complexity as complexity is minimally fifth order.

Fourth order/perspectival thinking is based on "ratio" and quantitative measurement, which enables us to predict the consequences of our actions, and further allows us to manipulate and control our environment. This has more than served its purpose as we now have the technical capacity to solve many of our remaining physical challenges (e.g., hunger and many common diseases),² but somehow we are in many ways in worse shape than we were prior to our technological-scientific successes -- e.g., our methods of food and energy production are the most advanced they have ever been, yet more people are starving than ever before. Morin points out that, for decades, "supposedly rational solutions, put forward by experts convinced that they were working for reason and progress... have impoverished as much as they have enriched and have destroyed as much as they have created" (Morin, 1998, p. 127). This

² That we are not resolving these challenges is another issue, at the same time, that we have the technology *and* the resources and are not better addressing these "problems" is relevant here.

situation can be understood in the context of fourth order/perspectival consciousness. The “supposedly rational solutions” Morin speaks of arise from the paradigm of simplification, they are fruit from the poisonous tree. Simplification, the hubris of reductionistic rationalism, believes in its own completeness, its own autonomous and objective self-sufficiency. In contrast, a fifth order process of TPM recognizes incompleteness at the core. With respect to complexity and complex thinking, Morin makes the characteristically fifth order assertion that “we need a thinking that recognizes its incompleteness and can deal with uncertainty, the unforeseen, interdependencies, and inter-retro-actions” (1998, p. 131).

To facilitate the transition to a new mode of thinking, Morin presents what he refers to as principles of complex thinking. There are three such principles, and they all are inextricably intertwined in complex, fifth order, and synairetic fashion. The principles themselves are the principle of the *dialogic*, the principle of *recursivity*, and the *hologrammatic* principle. These principles are fundamental to a whole way of thinking about *everything*. They are not intended as simply intellectually stimulating food for thought, though they do indeed satiate that need. Finally, these principles must neither be considered as separate, isolated principles, nor as some sort of laws.

The Principles of Complex Thinking

Kofman (1996) describes Morin’s paradigm of complexity and principles of complex thinking as “a method which is not methodology, but a traveler’s guide. Its rules are not prescriptive but an aid or way of thinking about complexity” (p. 59). This very same attitude informs what Morin (1977/1992)

means by “en-cyclo-pedic” knowledge, the form of knowledge that these principles exemplify -- that is, not an exhaustive depository of data, definitions, and facts, but instead a means by which literally to “circle around” knowledge as a whole. Morin’s method, which is more an approach and an attitude than a specific, limited, perspectival methodology, is informed by these principles.

Kelly (1988) holds that Morin is Hegel’s legitimate heir, and as such it is no coincidence that Morin’s notion of the dialogic immediately brings to mind Hegel’s dialectic. In order to draw the major distinction between the dialogic and the dialectic, I mention Gebser’s notion of synaeresis. Recall that synaeresis is necessary to integrate multiple modes, as synthesis is only up to task when dealing with two antagonistic poles that are inevitably “synthesized” into a tension-releasing “third principle.” In this way, the dialogic is similar to synaeresis in that it includes, and transcends, the dialectic.

The most significant quality of the dialogic is its ability to maintain an association between two or more principles that are simultaneously complementary, concurrent, and antagonistic. As Morin states, “the quality of antagonism stresses the fact that the principles associated retain their relative autonomy... and therefore resist being reduced to the other, or being resolved in some final ‘synthesis’” (Morin in Kelly, 1991, p. 33). For example, when considering the relationship of a culture or society to the individuals that composes it, there is always tension between the individual and the collective -- e.g., freedom and autonomy versus order and the collective good. Yet, each of these principles retains an autonomy in varying degrees while simultaneously complementing each other. The relationship between the individual and collective is irreducible, and therefore complex.

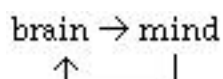
The dialogic is predicated by an acategorical effectuality. The dialogic, given its aptitude for holding the tension of apparent paradox, is “ill at ease in the rigid frameworks and principles of our logic” (Morin, source unknown, p. 573). A good example of the dialogic at work, albeit now somewhat cliché, is the principle of complementarity from quantum physics. The most common way to understand the principle of complementarity is with regard to the “wave-particle” duality. It was once believed (not that long ago) that light must be composed of either waves or particles. Eventually it was confirmed that light was both wave and particle, yet these qualities could not be perceived at the same time. Depending on how one chooses to set up an experiment, light demonstrates either a wave-like reality or a particle-like reality (Wolf, 1989). In this sense, we can think of each of these possible outcomes as “logics,” and as such, the only way to understand light is dialogically, that is, the wave-like nature and the particle-like nature of light are at once complementary, concurrent, and antagonistic.

Another way to understand the dialogic is illustrated by something that all of us have some experience with in varying degrees. The emotions of love and hate are commonly considered to be opposites, but one does not preclude the other in our experience. If not directly from our personal experience, everyone has at least vicariously experienced, through a friend or loved one, how someone can simultaneously love and hate another. How is this possible? The fact of the matter is that life, reality -- everything that surrounds us and that we are embedded in -- is complex. Another way to consider this love/hate example is not in terms of how they are different, but how they are the same. The dialogic allows us to realize that oppositions and paradoxes may in fact stem from the

same underlying principle, a principle that unifies them (this unification should not be equated with synthesis). Love and hate are only opposite when categorized as emotions, but when the context is shifted we can see that the opposite of either of these is apathy, that love and hate are in fact more like each other than like something not involving emotion at all. As Morin states, “we may wonder whether what we conceive as complementarity/competition/antagonism -- and which does not represent either/or alternatives but ambiguous aspects of one and the same reality -- does not constitute the oscillatory, uncertain and varied facets of a single self-organizational principle” (Morin, source unknown, p. 575-6). To take this illustration one step further, love/hate and apathy can also be understood as being similar in the sense that they are all in human experience, such that, even what is complementary or antagonistic is not fixed, but instead oscillates through uncertainty, ambiguity, and stability.

It should be immediately apparent that complex thinking is dynamic in nature. As already discussed, love and hate are the same, and then they are different, but no negation has occurred. This dynamic nature of complex thinking is most eloquently illustrated by the second principle, the principle of recursivity, which arose after Morin’s exposure to cybernetics. The principle of recursivity can be thought of as the ever-present dance of the relationship between two antagonistic principles, such that anything that is approached dialogically involves a circular, recursive dynamic. For example, let us consider the so-called “mind/brain problem.” There is no doubt that our minds depend on our brains, but does this mean that we can reduce the mind to the brain? At the same time, the “brain” would not exist without minds that map out territory

and give names, but does that mean that there are no brains without minds? The problem with approaching the mind/brain paradox in this fashion is that, in the paradigm of simplification, the terms involved are disjoined, they have become isolated fragments somehow existing autonomously as if they needed nothing but themselves to be real. The recursive nature of this relationship is clearly demonstrated in the following diagram:



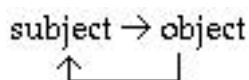
In terms of complex thinking, then, we must notice that the mind and the brain have a complex relationship -- we cannot truly separate them, but yet we must not, on the other had, assume that they are the same and can thus be reduced to a singularity. As Morin (1992) states,

one must invoke a way of thinking that flows in a circle... between two mutually-exclusive explanatory principles: on the one hand, the unifying way of thinking becomes increasingly homogenizing and loses diversity; on the other hand, the differentiating way of thinking becomes mere catalogue and loses unity. (p. 373).

It is only by a disjoining injunction, by breaking the circle, that we can arrive at the illusion of absolute knowledge (Morin, 1977/1992). By absolute knowledge I am referring to characteristically fourth order/perspectival notions of total autonomy or objectivity. As with the principle of the dialogic, the principle of recursivity points to the natural world, to a world that is predominantly comprised of open systems -- a world that is itself, metaphorically speaking, to say the least, minimally fifth order. As such, everything that we know, or might know, is significantly predicated by the principle of recursivity in one way or another.

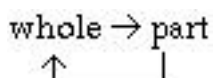
Recursivity can also be considered as a process wherein each element is the cause of the other, and therefore also the effect, leading to a situation which makes the final state and the initial state almost indistinguishable (Morin, source unknown). A prime example of this is known as *autopoiesis*, which means “self-making” (Capra, 1996). Natural systems (e.g., eco-systems, the nervous system) are, for the most part, autopoietic systems. Autopoietic means that the whole network produces and maintains itself through complex reactions and interactions, revealing that no one part has absolute priority over the others. The Gaia Hypothesis (Lovelock, 1979), one of the most popular natural systems theories in recent decades, essentially claims that the biosphere as a whole is a complexly interacting autopoietic system. At the core of the principle of recursivity is the fundamental notion of interdependence.

Preserving circularity, by maintaining the association of the two propositions both independently recognized as true but which no sooner in contact negate each other, is open to the possibility of conceiving these truths as the two faces of one complex truth; it is to unveil the principal reality, which is the relation of interdependence, between notions which disjunction isolates or opposes; it is, therefore to open the door to searching for this relation. (Morin, 1977, p. 13)



By considering the diagram that shows the recursive nature of the relationship between subject and object, and realizing that the subject is “in” the object as the object is “in” the subject (recall that “object” implies thrown from), we are thus lead to the third principle. The hologrammatic principle emerges from the rich analogical description of the universe as being like a hologram, wherein the whole is encoded in each part. In other words, the whole is in the

part as the part is in the whole -- e.g., a culture is composed of individuals, but each individual also has the culture (i.e., values, mores, or norms) in them as well. The hologrammatic principle returns us to the fractal-like understanding that similar patterns exist at multiple scales, and therefore, to the recognition of self-similarity. In fact, both fractal geometry and holograms are demonstrative of self-similarity -- e.g., take a branch off a bundle of broccoli and it will resemble in pattern/structure the whole broccoli plant, just as if you smash a holographic plate into many pieces the whole picture will appear in each piece. Not only must we take into account the dialogical and recursive characteristic of our world, but also how any of the principles, elements, or parts that we are engaged with in our process of TPM are also hologrammatic in nature. The hologrammatic principle, therefore, ties the previous two principles together, and in turn implies that there is a recursive relationship between whole and part.



Since the whole/part relationship is not only complementary and concurrent, but antagonistic as well, determining what is a “whole” and what is a “part,” when hologrammatically contextualized, becomes a very slippery issue.

The “Holographic paradigm,”³ as it is sometimes referred to, earns its current namesake from the hologram, a photo-optical technique made feasible only with modern laser light technology, though, the same basic idea exists throughout ancient spiritual, metaphysical, religious, and mystical literature.

³ The notion of a “Holographic Paradigm,” as such, primarily stems from the works of physicist David Bohm, neuro-psychologist Karl Pribram, and transpersonal psychologist Stanislav Grof. For a dedicated work on this subject see Talbot (1991).

Arguably the prime example, predating our holography by at least 1500 years, arises from the Hua Yen school of Buddhism and the story of Indra's net. As the story goes, an artificer hangs a net stretching to infinity in all directions in order to demonstrate their devotion to the deity Indra. At every nexus is placed a perfect jewel that reflects every other jewel. Thus, there are an infinite number of jewels, each reflecting the entire infinite web -- i.e., each individual gem is a reflection of the whole (Cook, 1977). A mundane example of this idea is illustrated by a room full of mirrors that are all pointing at each other from slightly different angles.

Unfortunately, many have over-extended the notion of a holographic paradigm, often confusing what is analogous and what is homologous. Though we can say that the universe is like a hologram, it is important to maintain an awareness of the fact that this does not mean that the universe *is* actually a hologram -- to do this is a gross simplification. Moreover, metaphors and analogies, while helpful, can be very misleading -- e.g., it is actually more accurate to say that a hologram is like the universe, as the universe is more encompassing than a specific manifestation therein, such as the much more limited phenomenon of a hologram. So, in order to communicate the essence of this principle I am going to focus, instead, on parts/wholes, or *holons* (see next paragraph). As such, I will be using the terms holon, holonomic (i.e., of, or to do with, holons), and hologrammatic interchangeably. I am not negating the holographic metaphor/analogy, as it is rich, beautiful, inspiring, and thought provoking. I am, instead, attempting to steer away from some potential "new paradigm" hubris.

Arthur Koestler (1978/1983) coined the term *holon* to elucidate common epistemological and categorical errors as pertaining to the whole/part relationship. He describes the term “holon” in the following passage:

[each member in a hierarchy] ...is a sub-whole or ‘holon’ in its own right - a stable, integrated structure, equipped with self-regulatory devices and enjoying a considerable degree of autonomy or self-government... [parts and wholes]...are Janus-faced. The face turned upward, toward the higher levels, is that of a dependent part; the face turned downward, towards its own constituents, is that of a whole of remarkable self-sufficiency. (Koestler, 1978/1983, p. 27)

At the fourth order one is aware of the parts and/or the wholes, or that there are in fact parts and wholes that are in relationship to each other. But at the fifth order one is aware of holons, the way in which every whole is composed of “Janus-faced” parts, and that every part is a “Janus-faced” whole unto its own. Thus, a holonomic understanding allows one to recognize that, ultimately, there are no discrete parts or wholes, only part/wholes, or holons. Or, as Wilber (1995) states, “there is no ‘Whole’, only Emptiness and whole/parts forever” (p. 142). Holons must not be reified as things or understood simply as an abstract concept -- holonomics must be understood in a complex fashion, aperspectively, acategorically, and achronically. Holons are interdependent and interpenetrating, their relationships are always recursive and usually dialogical. Finally, undergirding the notion of holons is relativity -- i.e., something is what it is given its context and, simultaneously, given the complex relationship of that context to an observing subject.

The notion of system - or how the whole is not the whole

We can further approach the notion of parts/wholes in terms of the notion of “system.” Morin’s principles of complex thinking, which are obviously very fifth order, correspond rather well to the modes of thought spelled out by Gebser -- the principles of recursivity and the dialogic, in particular, can be likened to a form of paradoxical thought that combines efficient forms of circular and pyramidal thinking. Yet, a thought form not addressed by Gebser, since his writing predated it, is systems thinking. Systems thinking is a significant step in the right direction towards recursive, hologrammatic/ holonomic principles as it consciously attempts to hold everything together in terms of interconnectivity and relationship. Yet, systems thinking generally suffers from some rather serious flaws.

“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 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. (Kramer et al, 1992,p. xv)

If we look take a close look at the nature of Koestler’s holons we find that the implications of the “Janus-facedness” are less than expected. Many are now familiar with the idea of emergent properties, the idea that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. While this is an accurate assessment, it is also acutely incomplete. Morin points out that not only is the whole more than the sum of its parts, but it is also less than the sum of its parts, that the part is more than the part, and even, moreover, that the whole is not even the whole! I will return to these seemingly absurd propositions, but first it is more pertinent to present

Morin's notion of *unitas multiplex*, a complex unity that makes it *impossible* to "give a system a substantial, clear, simple, identity" (1977/1982, p. 89). Morin asserts that system, as *unitas multiplex*, "is the most simple complex concept" (p. 148) -- which of course is not simple at all! Therefore, "system" must not be construed to mean sheer "totality" -- i.e., though system is the pinnacle of the paradigm of simplification, it is but foundation to the paradigm of complexity.

In a complex holism, the parts have a Janus-faced double identity, making the whole a macro-unity (Morin, 1992). Of course, this only makes sense given the principles of complex thinking -- the recursive and dialogical nature of the part/whole relationship, in tandem with hologrammatic/holonomic characteristics. The notion of *unitas multiplex* simultaneously involves an application of principles of complex thinking while illustrating a core quality of the paradigm of complexity. This can be seen by considering the following passage as it sits within the context of this paper.

The idea of complex unity is going to take on density if we vaguely sense that we can reduce neither the whole to its parts nor the parts to the whole, neither the one to the multiple nor the multiple to the one, but we must try to conceive together, in a way simultaneously complementary and antagonistic, the notions of the whole and the parts, of one and diverse. (Morin, 1977/1992. p. 102)

In true hologrammatic and recursive fashion, an explanation of *unitas multiplex* points to key notions of complexity, while simultaneously being a key characteristic (a part) of an explication of the paradigm of complexity itself. But what is it that integrates these principles, if not the subject? As alluded to earlier, the ubiquitous inclusion of the subject is possibly the most crucial underpinning of complexity as paradigm, and hence not a simple explanatory principle.

Therefore, it is vital to accentuate the role of the observer/subject, as the very act

of perceiving a system is also the creating of the system. Again we find the complex situation, which must be held dialogically, of a subject/observer in relationship to an object/observed. From fifth order/aperspectival TPM there is no great divide, there is no separation (though, this is not to say that there is no difference).

To fully grasp the essence of the paradigm of complexity, as it is symbiotic with fifth order/aperspectival-integral TPM, it is necessary to understand that for there to be a system, *unitas multiplex* or otherwise, there must be a subject who can make distinctions, who isolates the “poly-systemic swarm, cuts it up, qualifies it, and hierarchizes it” (Morin, 1977/1992, p. 139). Any notion of system, if it is to be complex, must in its definition allow for flux, dynamism, and uncertainty “as to the determination of system in its context and its polysystemic context” (Morin, p. 139). A system/*unitas multiplex* can be thought of as a holon nested within holons nested within holons. All of these systems are networked, sometimes in “hard wired” fashion -- e.g., the nervous system is contained within the human organism -- and sometimes in full-on slippery, sliding, dynamically-allocating, “soft-wired” fashion -- e.g., social roles and power dynamics. Especially, though not exclusively, in the “soft-wired” sense, wherein we are not directly addressing physical systems, but instead the cultural and intellectual spheres, can we consider system according to the following principle. This principle, according to Morin, is a principle of art, such that “the systematic sensibility will be like that of a musician’s ear which perceives the competitions, symbioses, interferences, overlappings of the themes in the same symphonic flow, where the brutish mind will recognize only one theme surrounded by noise” (p. 140). Hence, system as *unitas multiplex* is anti-systemic in the fixed,

spatially reified, perspectival sense. Stated another way, system as it is to be understood herein is a fifth order, not fourth order, cognition of complexity.

The form of systems thinking, the systems theory, that Morin proposes is actually anti-systemic (in fourth order terms). He makes the interesting assertion that the more insufficient systems theory/thinking is, the more necessary it becomes. As he poetically states, “what terrifying poverty to perceive, in a living being, only a system! But what foolishness not to see also a system” (1977/1992, p. 150)! The reason for this distinction, which cuts to the heart of the hubris I mentioned at the outset of describing the hologrammatic principle, is as follows:

We must clearly understand that my aim, though integrally systemic, is opposed to the majority of systemist positions which, believing they have overcome the paradigm of simplification by refusing to reduce the system to its components, succumb to the paradigm by reducing all things and all beings to the notion of system. (Morin, 1977/1992, p. 150)

The hologrammatic principle addresses, in a more explicit fashion than the other principles, the notion of “wholeness” or “holism.” But to ensure that the principles of complex thinking are utilized as intended, from a minimally fifth order disposition, it is vital to recognize that holism itself is often a simplified and reduced notion. It is the flip side, the shadow of the fragmenting, isolating, disjoining elements of the paradigm of simplification, which means that holism is not necessarily any more complex than other forms of reductionism and is thus what Wilber (1995) refers to as *subtle reductionism*.

Likewise, Morin (1992) posits that,

Holism is a partial, one-dimensional, and simplifying vision of the whole. It reduces all other system-related ideas to the idea of totality, whereas it should be a question of confluence. Holism thus arises from the paradigm of simplification (or reduction of the complex to a master-concept or master-category). (p. 372)

Morin even goes so far as to state that we need a “non-holistic principle of knowledge” (1992, p. 372). For those of us that are concerned with “wholeness” and the rampant tendency towards fragmented thought-perception, Morin’s position may seem regressive. Yet, given the preceding pages it should be obvious that this may seem regressive because it is actually highly progressive -- he has spiraled from a pre-holistic to a trans-holistic position (i.e., from fragmentation to integralism, perhaps). In order to unfold why Morin takes issue with the notion of wholeness, or holism, let me finally explain the seemingly absurd assertion that the whole is not the whole.

Fundamental to any system-focused discussion of parts/wholes are the central notions of *constraints* and *emergences*. As stated earlier, we are familiar with the saying that the *whole is more than the sum of its parts*. This statement is illustrative of the notion of emergence, that is, that the whole exhibits emergent characteristics that the parts themselves do not display. It is only when the interactions between the parts reach a threshold that new abilities, properties, characteristics, or qualities emerge. For example, water can be thought of as an emergent property of the complex interactions between a specific proportion of hydrogen and oxygen, as neither of them in isolation resembles water at all -- i.e., oxygen and hydrogen in gaseous form are flammable and combustible, and most significantly, not drinkable. We might also consider what Burroughs and Gysin (1978) refer to as “the third mind,” a form of intelligence and creativity that emerges from the close collaboration of two artists, thinkers, or musicians.

At the same time, however, the *whole is less than the sum of its parts* (Morin, 1992). Based on the constraints of the systemic relationship, certain qualities, properties, abilities, or characteristics are suppressed or inhibited (Morin). To

illustrate this constraining principle, consider the individual's loss of creative expression within a bureaucracy, such that there are talents or skills that one may possess that are inhibited by the rigid frameworks of the system itself, even though the system exhibits emergent characteristics. Moreover, Morin (1992) also posits that *the whole is greater than the whole*. To explain this beautifully paradoxical statement he tells us that, "the whole as a whole affects the parts retroactively, while the parts in turn retroactively affect the whole" (Morin, p. 374). In other words, the whole is more than a global entity as it has a dynamic organization.

Given the holonomic complexities of "the whole," it follows that "the parts" should likewise demonstrate a similar complex character. Morin (1992) also posits that *"the parts are at once less and greater than the parts"* (p. 374). Not only do constraints limit the part's potentialities, but the inter-retro-actions of the part/whole relationship also allow for global emergences to appear in the parts themselves. This is illustrated in the individual/society relationship, wherein it is the individual, not the society, that is self-conscious -- i.e., a society is only conscious through its parts (Morin). Moreover, *"the parts are sometime greater than the whole"* (Morin, p. 374). This last notion arises from the realization that a system can evolve in such a way that, instead of further progressing the cause of the whole, the parts/individuals continually gain autonomy and freedom. In this sense, the system itself sacrifices some of its global/holistic autonomy so that the parts can maintain an active diversity (Morin).

It is also the case that *"the whole is less than the whole"* (Morin, 1977/1992, p. 124). As Morin states, "within every whole there are penumbras and mutual incomprehensions -- indeed schisms and rifts -- between the repressed and the

expressed, the submerged and the emergent, the generative and the phenomenal” (1992, p. 375). Emerging from this notion is the idea that *the whole is insufficient* (Morin). Hence, and moreover, *the whole contains uncertainty* (Morin). In other words, given the contextual, polysystemic, holonomic, and complex reality of whole/parts, there is no certainty as to what is “a whole” in any absolute sense. Finally, following on the basis established by the principle of the dialogic, *the whole contains conflict* (Morin). As Morin states, “every system contains forces that are antagonistic to its own perpetuation. These antagonisms are either virtualized/neutralized, constantly controlled/repressed (through regulation and negative feedback), or made use of and incorporated” (p. 375). In other words, the whole (the whole/part) must be considered as *unitas multiplex*.

In the context of a paradigm of complexity, founded on thinking that is dialogical, recursive, and hologrammatic/holonomic, it is perfectly reasonable that there is such a diverse, seemingly paradoxical reality to the part/whole relationship. It is important to realize that all of the above notions about the whole or the parts *are not mutually exclusive*, as these characteristics co-exist in a mutually interpenetrating, aperspectival, atemporal, systatic fashion. In other words, since we are dealing with holons, “part” and “whole” are relative terms, dependent on a subject for their context, and reliant on a principle of art that discerns and combines. As each part is a whole unto its own, while each whole is also a part, we are thus lead to the realization that “holism” is also “partism.” Thus, the whole notion of independent parts and wholes, distinct from a complex holonomic disposition, is in fact founded on a perspectival, dualistic epistemology. Morin is presenting an aperspectival epistemology, a minimally

fifth order means of making sense out of our world. Given this understanding, it is perfectly reasonable for Morin to assert that *the whole is not the whole*.

Since it not safe to assume that the whole is even the whole, then what does “holism” really mean? As already mentioned, “holism,” including most systems theories, is still primarily grounded within the paradigm of simplification -- i.e., fourth order, perspectival consciousness. Yet, in all fairness, a move towards a “holist” perspective is usually a step in the right direction.⁴ I am no doubt unfairly lumping many theories together, yet, generally speaking, since the level of focus is paradigmatic, it is not inaccurate to say that “holism” is a simplification. There is no doubt that more holistic thinking is necessary and that we must cease with rampant reductionism and rationalizing. We must recognize relationships as prior to the illusion of independently operating parts. We need, in no uncertain terms, an ecological “worldview” on all fronts. Yet, we must not see only the whole, only the relationship, only the network, only the context, only the emergences. To do this is to simplify (albeit in a fashion that fosters hope of a brighter future), and therefore ultimately fails sufficiently to transform our fundamental understandings of the world so as to meet our challenges.

Most importantly, keeping Gebser’s wise words in mind, spatial understandings themselves are limited and limiting, and therefore are inherently truncating, fragmenting, and simplifying. Just by discussing “system,” one is lured into spatial language, into spatial conceptualizations, and further into

⁴ Practically speaking, if the worst epistemological problem we faced were the reduction to the whole, then we most likely would not be facing the current ecological crisis. Though, politically and socially, fascism and totalitarianism would be more likely.

perspectival consciousness. A paradigm of complexity is not limited to perspectival perception of space and time, as complexity can only be truly complex when “warded” transparently -- aperspectivally, acategorically, arationally, achronically -- i.e., integrally. Thus, we should not limit our thinking in terms of “broadening our perspective” or “deepening our understanding.” I am not simply presenting more theory or explanatory principles, but fundamental characteristics of a paradigm.

It is at the level of the paradigm that the vision of reality, the reality of vision, the face of action change, that reality in short changes. We discover, therefore, that complexity is situated, not only at the level of the observation of phenomena and of the elaboration of theory, but at the level of principle or paradigm. (Morin, 1977/1992, p. 391)

In Closing

A paradigm of complexity is one way in which to understand complex thinking, perceiving, and meaning-making. The point of stressing a *paradigm* of complexity is that our basic dispositions, at least epistemologically, must become more complex. Yet, it is not necessary to take these principles to extremes in every situation at all times, as this would not be balanced or healthy. Maintaining an awareness of the dynamics of transformation (e.g., repudiation), in tandem with common epistemological errors (e.g., the pre/trans fallacy), is a first step in attaining much needed clarity. In the search for liberation from the restrictive bonds of the paradigm of simplification, it would be wise to ensure that we do not simply blindly react against that which we are differentiating ourselves from. As Bélanger states, “complexity is not the rejection of the less complex by the more complex; it is on contrary the integration of the less complex in the diversity” (in Morin, 1977/1992, p. xxx). Repudiation is a natural

part of the process, but simply to polarize oneself against a deficient mode of consciousness just breeds more pathology. Opening ourselves to the complex world around us will enable us to embrace uncertainty, chaos, and disorder as partners in the adventure of life. Those initiated into a paradigm of complexity not only see the proverbial grain of sand in the world, but simultaneously, like Blake, see the world in a grain of sand.

Conclusion

The early voyagers, from their perspective, risked their very lives when they sailed near to what they regarded as the edge of the universe. Neither the world as they knew it *nor their very way of knowing* would be the same after the voyage as before it. Likewise, a change in our order of consciousness is not just a change in the figures of our attention, it is a change in the very ground from which we attend. (Kegan, 1994, p. 266)

Acceptance and elucidation of the “new” always meets with strong opposition, since it requires us to overcome our traditional, our acquired and secured ways and possessions. This means pain, suffering, struggle, uncertainty, and similar concomitants which everyone seeks to avoid whenever possible. (Gebser, 1949/1985, p.36)

Our thought must lay siege to the unthought which commands and controls it. We use our structure of thought to think. It will also be necessary to use our thought to rethink our structure of thought. Our thought must return to its source in an interrogative and critical loop. Otherwise, the dead structure will continue to secrete petrifying thoughts. (Morin, 1977/1992, p. 16)

Whether considering Kegan’s fifth order, Gebser’s Integral consciousness, or Morin’s paradigm of complexity, it is the process of thinking-perceiving-meaning-making that has been under discussion. In other words, ultimately, I have been exploring the foundations of complex TPM. Given the discussion to this point, the following should be clear: 1) consciousness evolves, both in the individual and collectively, 2) individuals recapitulate much of the collective’s phylogeny in their ontogeny -- e.g., in the way that Kegan’s first order corresponds to Gebser’s magical consciousness, 3) the dominant mode of consciousness, collectively, is the deficient form of fourth order/mental-perspectival-rational consciousness, which corresponds to modernism and Morin’s notion of a paradigm of simplification, 4) there is emerging what is referred to as fifth order/postmodern/integral/complex consciousness, 5) it is this mode of consciousness that requires our attention if we are, to use Gebser’s phrasing, to make the necessary leap over the abyss to the new mode, 6) this new

mode of consciousness offers the promise of a necessary healthy relationship to ourselves and the world, and finally, 7) fifth order/postmodern/integral/complex consciousness is the constitution of complex TPM -- i.e., how it is that we come to relate to our world/reality in a non-simplifying manner.

Though not exclusively, complex TPM is fifth order/integral/post-modern “paradigm of complexity” consciousness. Making meaning of the world, of what we commonly refer to as “reality,” in terms of complex TPM is the radical shift in ground of our Self/culture from the fourth order to the fifth order, from modernism to post-modernism, from perspectival/mental consciousness to aperspectival/integral consciousness, from the paradigm of simplification to the paradigm of complexity. As Wilber (1995) states, “all knowledge of other is simply a different degree of self-knowledge, since self and other are of the same fabric, and speak softly to each other at any moment that one listens” (p. 110). In other words, it is of central importance to be aware that the boundaries between self and other, or any boundaries for that matter, are relative and slippery. Contexts are not fixed and cannot be reified. Therefore, given Kegan’s description of the shifts in subject-object relations, we must conclude that not only is “the world” other than what we think it is, but that most importantly, we are not what we think we are either. Everything is always more than we think it is, though this is less so if we truly are able to take to heart, and awaken to, the emerging Integral structure of consciousness -- i.e., the awareness of, and participation in, aperspectival, achronic, arational, and acategorical verition, or in other words, the “transparent” modes of TPM.

Complex TPM is predicated not only upon the realization that any boundaries between self and other are fluid and shifting, nor solely on the

“transparent” integral modes of verition, but also on an explicit recognition of complexity. Epistemologically speaking, to live in accordance with the principles of complex thinking is crucial to TPM -- i.e., the principle of the dialogic, the maintaining of a complex relationship that is simultaneously complementary, concurrent, and antagonistic; the principle of recursivity -- the verition of the complex circular relationship between two principles, normally seen as disjoined, but that are ultimately inseparable, e.g., subject/object; the hologrammatic principle -- that the whole is “in” the part as the part is in the whole, and that the part/whole relationship is complex and is to be understood in holonomic terms as *unitas multiplex*.

The necessity of the emergence of a new mode should be obvious given the following: 1) we are living in a time of great upheaval and transformation -- i.e., the end of the West’s Modern Perspectival worldview, 2) we as individuals recapitulate what has collectively preceded us (present context accounted for), and 3) this process is developmental. TPM that is founded on perspectival simplification cannot continue its course and avoid disaster (intrapersonally, interpersonally, culturally, ecologically, etc). A more complex, more intense, “higher” order context is evolving even as we speak, and we must recognize it if we are to survive. This means that we must relinquish many of the fundamental assumptions that we hold so dear, that we, in fact, tacitly hold as primary to our existential foundations.

As discussed, central to Kegan’s (1994) work is his insight into the fact that there is a definite pattern underlying the evolution of our structures of meaning making -- i.e., differentiation always precedes integration. And while we are always “embed-duals” as much as we are “indivi-duals,” complex TPM is a

liberation from the crushing weight that our collective psyche is experiencing as the enormous shift to a planetary culture transpires. The freedom that I refer to here is different than the freedom that comes with the hard won autonomy of the fourth order or rational/mental consciousness, as both of these modes correspond to a paradigm of simplification. The freedom that co-emerges with the manifestation of a complex TPM process is well expressed in the following passage:

Freedom is a development of the ability of a self-organizing being to use uncertainty and chance occurrences in a way that is itself aleatory and uncertain but leads to autonomy. Freedom therefore appears as a consequence of complexification... (Morin, source unknown, p. 566)

At the same time, to avoid further deficient mental gropings towards perspectival and rational manifestations, we must also realize that we cannot force this shift. Since complex TPM is a natural emergence of the dynamics of the evolution of consciousness, we can only foster it. On this point Gebser (1949/1985) states the following:

The new consciousness structure has nothing to do with might, rule, and overpowering. Thus it cannot be striven for, only elicited or awakened. Anyone who strives for it, intending to attain it mentally, is condemned to failure at the outset... what is needed is care; a great deal of patience; and the laying aside of many preconceived opinions, wishful dreams, and the blind sway of demands. (p. 300)

Since we cannot mentally reach for it (to use a spatial/perspectival metaphor), then how can we actualize this new consciousness? If, as Kegan holds, we are in subject territory when we do not know what we do not know, then it should be no surprise that we do not truly know how to “awaken” to the new consciousness, as to some extent that would mean casting it as “object.” Yet,

there is a way for us to garner some insight into this new emergence and our relationship to it. As Kegan (1994) insightfully states:

Those who long for more fifth order consciousness -- for the recognition of our multiple selves, for the capacity to see conflict as a signal of our overidentification with a single system, for the sense of our relationships and connections as prior to and constitutive of the individual self, for an identification with the transformative process of our being rather than the products of our becoming -- let them take heart. The aspiration for more fifth order consciousness has one extraordinarily robust asset on its side, though oddly enough, it is hardly ever remarked upon. (p. 351)

What is hardly ever remarked upon is a simple fact: people live longer than they used to! Kegan (1994) posits that, given an added generation of life from a hundred years ago, there is likely to emerge “a qualitatively new order of consciousness” (p. 352). This order of consciousness is none other than the fifth order on a widespread collective level.

The evolution of human consciousness requires long preparation. We may gradually become ever more ready to engage the curriculum of the fifth order because we have found ways to increase the number of years we live. And why are we increasing the number of years we live? Are we living longer as a species so that we might evolve to the fifth order? (Kegan, 1994, p. 352)

Wagner (1999) reports that, as of 1998, the world population of centenarians (people age 100 or higher) was around 135,000 and it is estimated that by the year 2050, there will be 2.2 million people over the age of 100. The U.S. Census Bureau has estimated that in the year 1900 there were 3,500 centenarians and that now, in 1999, there are nearly 66,000 (Wagner). Assuming that we do not destroy ourselves or our ecosystems, and given the advances in modern medicine and the integration of “alternative” medicine into the mainstream, we can expect more people to live even longer.¹

¹ Russell (1995) persuasively argues that a world population of 10^{10} is necessary for the emergence of the “global brain,” and that, moreover, we are steadily heading in that direction.

We are thus confronted with a paradox, as fourth order, perspectival/mental consciousness has made it possible for so many people to live such a long time, and for more complex modes of consciousness to evolve. Yet, this very same phenomenon -- i.e., people living longer and increasing the population -- is directly related to the growing ecological crisis. If so many people are still functioning according to a rationalistic, dualistic, perspectival TPM process, then our future is rather grim. Yet, this very same phenomenon is forcing the transformation, the mutation, to a new mode of consciousness that is sustainable. Recall that Gebser (1949/1985) holds that consciousness is not simply an awareness, but that it is also an active agent in its own evolution, and in this way we can see that the fourth order/perspectival manner of relating to the world not only brought forth our condition, but inherently includes the genesis of its transformation in latent form.

In short, we are living in exciting times. There is much uncertainty and we can only guess what will transpire in the years to come. My intent here was to explore, and present, what I see as a positive potential in our future -- that potential being the emergence of a new mode of consciousness: fifth order/postmodern/integral/complex TPM, which will sublate the current dominant mode that has become deficient. According to Gebser (1949/1985), we must "achieve the new integral structure without forfeiting the efficient forms of the previous structures" (p. 299). This last point is where Morin's vision becomes crucial, as we must develop the ability to be aware of our complex surroundings in all of their complexity. We must recognize what is and is not working, to repudiate that which we must differentiate ourselves from, and to reintegrate the efficient forms of that which we have repudiated -- that which we have

projected, or “thrown from” ourselves, and cast off as “object.” We must realize that holism and atomism are both forms of simplification, and that any one point of view is limited by its very definition, and is therefore an incomplete and distorted perception of reality.

If we are able to accomplish this “mutation,” as individuals and as a collective -- epistemologically, psychologically, spiritually -- then we not only have a good chance of survival. There is also the likelihood of a truly planetary culture. As a diverse, dialogically interconnected planetary culture we can look to the stars and realize that we are galactic citizens living in a vast and mysterious universe. Finally, as Gebser states, “if we do not overcome the crisis it will overcome us; and only someone who has overcome himself is truly able to overcome. Either we will be disintegrated and dispersed, or we must resolve and effect integrality” (1949/1985, p. xxvii). Personally, I prefer integrality.

References

- Abram, D. (1997). The spell of the sensuous. New York: Vintage Books.
- Bache, C. (1997). Dark night, early dawn: exploring the field dynamics of mind. (unpublished manuscript).
- Bohm, D. (1997). On Dialogue. (L. Nichol, Ed.). London & New York: Routledge.
- Briggs, J. & Peat, F.D. (1989). Turbulent Mirror. New York: Harper & Row.
- Burroughs, W. & Gysin, B. (1978). The third mind. New York: Seaver Books.
- Capra, F. (1996). The web of life. New York: Doubleday.
- Cleary, T. (1983). Entry into the inconceivable: An introduction to Hua-Yen Buddhism. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Combs, A. (1996). The radiance of being. St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House.
- Cook, F.H. (1977). Hua Yen Buddhism. Pennsylvania: Penn State University.
- Eagleton, T. (1996). The illusions of postmodernism. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Eisler, R. (1987/1988). The chalice and the blade. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco.
- Elgin, D. (1993). Awakening Earth. New York: Morrow.
- Feuerstein, G. (1987/1995). Structures of consciousness: the genius of Jean Gebser. Lower Lake, CA: Integral Publishing.
- Gebser, J. (1985). The Ever-Present Origin. (N. Barstad & A. Mickunas, Trans.). Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press. (Original work published 1949, 1953)
- Gleick, J. (1987). Chaos: making a new science. New York: Penguin Books.
- Goodwin, B. (1994). How the leopard changed its spots: the evolution of complexity. New York: Touchstone.
- Grof, S. (1985). Beyond the brain. Albany, New York : SUNY press.
- Grof, S. (1993). The holotropic mind. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

- Kaku, M. (1994). Hyperspace. New York: Anchor, Doubleday.
- Kegan, R. (1982). The evolving self: problem and process in human development. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press.
- Kegan, R. (1994). In over our heads: the mental demands of modern life. Harvard University Press.
- Kelly, S. (1991). Beyond materialism and idealism. Idealistic Studies 29-38. Worcester, MA : Dept. of Philosophy, Clark University.
- Kelly, S. (1996). Order, disorder, and the absolute: an experiment in dialogue. World Futures, 46, 223-237.
- Kelly, S. (1998). Hegel and Morin: the science of wisdom and the wisdom of the new science. The owl of Minerva: biannual journal of the Hegel society of America, 20-1, 51-67.
- Koestler, A. (1978/1983). Janus: a summing up. London: Pan Books.
- Koestler, A. (1972/1973). The roots of coincidence. New York: Vintage Books.
- Kofman, M. (1996). Edgar Morin: from Big Brother to fraternity. London, Chicago: Pluto Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors we live by. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Kramer, E.M. & Mickunas, A. (1992). Introduction: Gebser's new understanding. In E.M. Kramer (Ed.). Consciousness and culture: an introduction to the thought of Jean Gebser (pp.xi-xxxi). Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Kuhn, T. (1970). The structure of scientific revolutions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lahey, L., Souvaine, E., Kegan, R., Goodman, R., & Felix, S. unpublished manuscript. A guide to the subject-object interview: its administration and interpretation. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education.
- Laszlo, E. (1996). Evolution: the general theory. Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press.
- Lovelock, J. (1979). Gaia. New York: Oxford University Press.

Masterpasqua, F., & Perna, P.A. (Eds.). (1997). The psychological meaning of chaos. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962/1995). The Phenomenology of Perception. (C. Smith, Trans.). London & New York: Routledge. (Original work published 1962).

Morin, E. (unknown). Complexity. Epistemology p. 556-582 (source unknown).

Morin, E. (1977/1992). Method. Towards a study of humankind, volume 1: the nature of nature. (J.L. Roland Belanger, Trans.). New York: Peter Lang. (Original work published 1977).

Morin, E. (1992). From the concept of system to the paradigm of complexity. Journal of social and evolutionary systems, 15(4), 371-385. (trans. Sean Kelly).

Morin, E., & Kern, A.B. (1998). Homeland Earth: a manifesto for the new millenium. (S. Kelly. & R. Lapointe, Trans.). Unpublished manuscript.

Peat, F.D. (1987/1988). Synchronicity: the bridge between mind and matter. Toronto, New York: Bantam Books.

Peterson, J., Wheatley, M., & Kellner-Rogers, M. (1998). Three views on Y2K. Future Times, Fall 1998, A5.

Russell, P. (1995). The global brain awakens: our next evolutionary leap. Palo Alto, CA: Global Brain, Inc.

Wagner, C.G. (1999). The centenarians are coming! The Futurist, May 1999, 16-23.

Piaget, J. (1952/1995). Logic and Psychology. In Gruber, H.E., & Vonéche, J.J., (Eds.), The Essential Piaget (pp. 445-477). New Jersey, London: Jason Aronson, Inc.

Progogine, I. (1984). Order out of chaos. New York: Bantam Books.

Ray, P. (1996). The Rise of Integral Culture. Noetic Sciences Review, 37, 4-13.

Schellenberg, J.A. (1978). Masters of Social Psychology. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sheldrake, R. (1988/1995). The Presence of the past: morphic resonance and the habits of nature. Rochester Vermont: Park Street Press.

Talbot, M. (1991). The holographic universe. New York: Harper Perennial.

Tarnas, R. (1991). The passion of the Western mind. New York: Ballantine Books.

Walsh, R., & Vaughan, F. (Eds.). (1993). Paths beyond ego: the transpersonal vision. New York: Tarcher/Putnam.

Wagner, C.G. (1999). The centenarians are coming! The Futurist, May 1999, 16-23.

Webster's new universal unabridged dictionary. (1955/1983). New York: Simon & Schuster.

Whorf, B.L. (1997). (J.B. Carroll, Ed.). Language, thought, and reality. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Wilber, K. (1983/1996). Eye to eye: the quest for the new paradigm. Boston & London: Shambala.

Wilber, K. (1980/1996). The atman project: a transpersonal view of human development. Wheaton, Illinois: Quest Books.

Wilber, K. (1985). Physics, mysticism and the new holographic paradigm. In K. Wilber (Ed.), The holographic paradigm and other paradoxes (pp. 157-186). Boston & London: Shambala.

Wilber, K. (1995). Sex, ecology, spirituality: the spirit of evolution. Boston & London: Shambala.

Wolf, Fred, A. (1989). Taking the quantum leap. New York: Harper & Row.

Appendix I

Below is a chart that shows the basic correspondences between Kegan's (1994) subject-object model and Gebser's (1949/1985) structures of consciousness.

<u>Kegan's orders</u>	<u>Gebser's structures</u>
Zero	Archaic
First	Magic (early Mythic)
Second	Mythical (early Mental)
Third	Mental (residual Mythic)
Fourth	Mental-Perspectival/Rational
Fifth	(early) Integral
(Sixth) ¹	Integral
?	Integral ?

Following are three diagrams, which in tandem succinctly show the structures of Kegan's and Gebser's theories as discussed herein. The sources are listed below for the interested reader.

- 1) "The Five Orders of Consciousness" -- Kegan, 1994, p. 314-5.
- 2) "A helix of evolutionary truces" -- Kegan, 1982, p. 109.
- 3) "Space and Time Relationship" -- Gebser, 1949/1985, p.117-8

¹ Just as Piaget does not posit a fifth order, Kegan does not posit a sixth order. For in-depth discussion of a sixth order, see Wilber as referenced.

insert charts here

Appendix II:

A few words on “postmodernism

When I use the term “postmodern” I am purposely and consciously painting with an extremely broad brush. I am not concerned with defining sharp boundaries of what is or is not “postmodern.” Eagleton (1996) makes the useful distinction between “postmodernity,” a specific historical period, and “postmodernism,” a style of culture that is reflective of postmodernity. For present purposes this distinction sits in the background, so when I use the term “postmodern” I am purposely ignoring this otherwise important differentiation. In this sense, for this paper, postmodernism can be considered in light of the following passage:

Postmodernity is a style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity, and objectivity, of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation. Against these Enlightenment norms, it sees the world as contingent, ungrounded, diverse, unstable, indeterminate, a set of disunified cultures or interpretations which breed a degree of skepticism about the objectivity of truth, history and norms, the givenness of natures and the coherence of identities.... Postmodernism is a style of culture which reflects something of this epochal change, in a depthless, decentered, ungrounded, self-reflexive, playful, derivative, eclectic, pluralistic art which blurs the boundaries between ‘high’ and ‘popular’ culture, as well as between art and everyday experience. (Eagleton, 1996, p. vii)

Postmodernism should not be reduced or limited to its specific manifestations -- e.g., critical theory, relativity, complementarity, surrealism, dada, existentialism, transpersonal psychology, cultures of appropriation (e.g., DJ culture), musique concrète, global media, syncretic new age religion, quantum physics, chaos theory, politicization of the private sphere, gender or cultural studies, feminisms, counter-cultural movements, issues of race, sexuality, or gender, or any of the numerous other realms, fields, disciplines, forms, schools, genres, movements, or discourses stemming there from.

Most importantly, I am assuming that postmodernism is not simply an intellectual identification,² that it is increasingly emerging throughout the culture such that many adults today live postmodern lives without ever thinking about it in explicit terms. Hence, if postmodernism is truly becoming a widespread culture of embeddedness, then simple *participation* in cultural life is sufficient for a postmodern existence. Unfortunately, to present an in-depth exploration of the general usage of the term is far beyond the scope of this paper, and as such, this discussion of “postmodern” will be more than satisfactory for the present work.

² More specifically, as is often the case, the intellectual identification is with ideas stemming directly from the works of white males from France and Germany -- e.g., Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Habermas, Marcuse, Adorno, Horkheimer, Derrida, Levinas, Foucault, Deleuze. I am not making any value judgement here, I am simply pointing out a common state of affairs that is overlooked all too often given the central concerns of many “postmodernists.”