

Ideas We Think Other Ideas With:
An In-Depth Look at the Commingling of Process Philosophy
and Mutations of Consciousness

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Whitehead's Adventure in Cosmology:
Toward a Physics of the World-Soul (PARP-6133-01) Fall 2023

December 22, 2023

“As we think, we live. This is why the assemblage of philosophic ideas is more than a specialist study. It moulds our type of civilization.”

Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*¹

Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) and Jean Gebser (1905-1973) are two critical speculative², or what might be considered metaphysical, philosophers that seem to have been given to the western realm to help mold our civilization. They offer thoughts and insights that help us live and approach life differently through consideration of their extensive and inspired work. Neither provides a philosophical process that is easy to comprehend. Yet, they lure us in to study, digest, and consider what potentialities they offer as we strive to navigate the chaos, challenges, and yes, even pure excitement, of our current modern times.

Whitehead and Gebser were born forty-four years apart and differ in many ways. They represent different generations and were born and lived in different countries. Whitehead was born in Ramsgate, England. Gebser, although born in Poznań, a German territory in 1905, became a Swiss citizen after fleeing to Switzerland in 1939.³ They also had very different educational and professional backgrounds. Gebser was a self-educated literary critique, poet, linguist, and philosopher. By contrast, Whitehead was a mathematician and college professor who later became a philosopher and professor of philosophy after he published *Concepts of*

¹ Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), 63.

²Note: I am making reference to Gebser generally as a speculative philosopher even though he states in *The Ever-Present Origin* (p1) that “It [*The Ever-Present Origin*] is not based on ideas or speculations but on insights into mankind’s mutations from its primordial beginnings up to the present...”. In this instance I am using Whitehead’s definition of speculative philosophy, to which I believe Gebser’s opus aligns as “the endeavor to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted.” Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), 4.

³ Jean Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, trans. Noel Barstad with Algis Mickunas (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1984), xviii.

Nature in 1920 and was offered a professorial position at Harvard in 1924.⁴ Both men were prolific writers, and both experienced cataclysmic world wars.

Whitehead, who was fifty-three years old when World War I broke out, suffered the loss of one of his son due to the war.⁵ Gebser, on the other hand, was thirty-four when the Second World War erupted. He was already in exile in Paris at the time — having fled Spain to escape the violence of the Spanish Civil war. In 1939, he fled once again, and barely got across the border into Switzerland two hours before the border was closed.⁶ Gebser published his philosophical opus, *The Ever-Present Origin*, in 1949, four years after the war had ended.

Given the differences between these two men — their backgrounds, nationalities, life experiences, educations, etc. — it is not surprising that their philosophies are also different. Yet, if the aim of philosophy is “sheer disclosure”⁷ then the purpose of this paper will be to compare what their philosophies disclose, to explore how they might be considered together, and to identify what insights, if any, this commingling imparts. To that end, the following topics will be examined: 1) The Nature and Process of Their Philosophies; 2) The Problem of Dualism; and 3) The Role of the Spiritual and God.

Comparative Overview

In comparing the philosophies of these two visionaries, it is important to consider the position of their respective gazes. The metaphoric embedding of “vision” here in the previous

⁴ Ronald Desmet and Andrew David Irvine, "Alfred North Whitehead", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2022/entries/whitehead/>.

⁵ Matthew David Segall, “Alfred North Whitehead: His Life and Work,” PARP-6133-01.23FA: Whitehead’s Adventure in Cosmology: Toward a Physics of the World-Soul (class lecture at California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, CA, August, 2023), accessed December 14, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDrlzo9_3c8.

⁶ Jean Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, xviii.

⁷ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 63.

sentence (i.e., visionary, gaze), is used without wanting to fall into the abyss of the “despotism of the eye” which both men found limiting, and a detrimental aspect of the dualistic subject-object divide. Yet in order to analyze, critique, or comment on, it is assumed that one has to stand apart from that which is being examined. Gebser, despite all his misgivings about what he terms the current state of deficient mental consciousness with its extreme dualistic fragmentation, does seem to stand apart as analyst and critique. Whitehead, in contrast, places himself more in the middle of his process philosophy which is considered today as a “participatory approach”⁸:

...philosophy must be found itself upon the presuppositions and the interpretations of ordinary life. I will illustrate this doctrine by an [his own personal] anecdote of an incident which illustrated to me the possible irrelevance of moral considerations.⁹

Gebser’s philosophy, as posited in *The Ever-Present Origin*, embraces an anthropocentric perspective, and has an inherent telos. There is an end-state goal, which if achieved, he contends will result in some type of ongoing human existence. If not, all bets are off. He writes of his overall project:

Our [humans’] task is to realize the pre-disposition of ourselves toward discontinuous transformation. The degree to which such transformation is successful will depend upon the breath and stability of the incipient foundations and on our awareness of them. Should the transformation fail, the present possibility of atomization [deficient mental consciousness] will preclude any further development of the already occurring mutation [integral consciousness].¹⁰

Whitehead’s process philosophy is not anthropocentric but all inclusive; and not teleological, but naturalistic.

The doctrine that I am maintaining is that neither physical nature nor life can be understood unless we fuse them together as essential factors in the composition of

⁸ Matthew David Segall, *Physics of the World-Soul* (United States: Sacra Sage Press, 2021), 58.

⁹ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 12.

¹⁰ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 42.

'really real' things whose interconnections and individual characters constitute the universe.¹¹

Process philosophy's ground is the reality of the organic evolution of life—of the cosmos, of the earth's geosphere and biosphere. It is scalable and thus provides a description of everything... from the "eventing" of the smallest subatomic particle, to a slowly eroding cliff of granite, to a whale blow in the ocean, to a human writing a poem, to a star falling in the cosmos. It is also generalizable, so that something actual and concretely experienced in one area is transferable and a potential reality in another. This encapsulates subjective experiencing such as love, attraction, and community found across humans, trees, galaxies, sub-atomic particles, etc.¹² It is therefore pan-psychic. In sum of these characteristics, it is a return to natural philosophy as perceived in a new light where once again there is a connection with concrete experience (*natura naturans*—nature's naturing) and away from the fallacies inherent in the extreme abstractionism of modern science.

Whitehead's process philosophy is evolutionary; an ongoing continuity that flows and evolves with there never being an identical repetition of concrescence.¹³ Thus, the unfolding of Whitehead's Extensive Continuum—his "field of potential" and "field of potential relationship"¹⁴—is like a beautiful fabric being continuously woven and finding its design with the addition of each unique and new concrescence that becomes super-ject and then immortal as a perished object.

¹¹ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 150.

¹² Segall, *Physics of the World-Soul*, 37 & 39.

¹³ Matthew David Segall, "Standing Firm in the Flux: On Whitehead's Eternal Objects," *Process Studies*, vol. 52, no.2 (2023): 161.

¹⁴ Mathew D. Segall, "Time and Experience in Physics and Philosophy: Whiteheadian Reflections on Bergson, Einstein, and Rovelli," *Open Access* (2022), 283.

Gebser, by contrast, finds interest in the epochs of mankind which he uses to expound upon the states of consciousness that have been made manifest over the course of human existence. He does not view them as evolutionary in nature, but as “discontinuous” occurrences, in like kind with biological mutations. He quotes Walter Triptych by way of extrapolation, who writes of such transformative events as “a sudden illumination of a different segment of reality.”¹⁵

And lastly, even though both Gebser and Whitehead view the past as residing in the present and thus informing the future, they explicate these past-present-future temporal relationships differently. Gebser questions humans’ ability to “go back” to a primordial enchanted consciousness because of the awakening of dimensionality—the “severing” and “cutting edge of the visual pyramid.”¹⁶ Yet he simultaneously urges us to “consciously retain and *presentiate* the past”—the “efficient” vestiges of earlier consciousness states from which we’ve also been severed.¹⁷ For Whitehead the past, in the form of perished objects, is *prehended* into the present unfolding and as such influences the future. He writes:

“The present moment is constituted by the influx of *the other* into that self-identity which is the continued life of the immediate past within the immediacy of the present.”¹⁸

“There is a continuity between the subjective form of the immediate past occasion and the subject form of its primary prehension in the origination of the new occasion.”¹⁹

The Nature and Process of Their Philosophies

Gebser’s own questioning about humans’ ability to “go back” to the past while simultaneously underscoring the need to presentiate earlier states of consciousness, necessitates

¹⁵ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 40.

¹⁶ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 23.

¹⁷ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 43.

¹⁸ Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas (1933)* (First Free Press, 1967), 182.

¹⁹ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 183.

that he spends the entire first part of *The Ever-Present Origin* describing these states and their intricacies. He uses his prodigious knowledge of linguistics, literature, history, art, and poetry to bring them to life. He references Whitehead sparingly in his opus. The most significant mention is a quote of Whitehead's which he uses to validate his method of using literature, especially poetry and drama, as a means to know the thoughts of earlier generations.²⁰ In addition to his use of literary references, the breadth of Gebser's evidence is vast, perhaps to overcome that which Whitehead warns about in *Process and Reality*:

“The chief danger of philosophy is narrowness in the selection of evidence. This narrowness arises from the idiosyncrasies and timidities of particular authors, of particular social groups, of particular schools of thought, of particular epochs in the history of civilization. The evidence relied upon is arbitrarily biased by the temperaments of individuals, by the provincialities of groups, and by the limitations of schemes of thought.”²¹

The consciousness states that Gebser describes are archaic, magical, mythical, mental, and integral. (Figure 1.) He makes note of major events and discoveries of certain personages that signal the arrival of each new mutation of consciousness. Space and time are significant barometers. Their meanings and incipient roles change with each new mutation of consciousness.

For example, according to Gebser, humans in magical consciousness, which we can think of as pre-historic humans²², hold an undifferentiated group soul, are merged with nature, survive through instinct and intuition, are oriented toward the whole (in that the whole is present in every part), have a sixth sense trusting, and are deeply embodied with a significant reliance on

²⁰ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 317.

²¹ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), 337.

²² There is no exact date or era when each of Gebser's consciousness states occurred. For example, people imbued in magical consciousness are still alive today, such as the Awá in the eastern Amazon rainforest who have no contact with the outside world. I offer “pre-historic humans” as a mere point of reference for the reader.

olfactory and auditory inputs.²³ The magical encapsulates a spaceless-timeless consciousness that is one-dimensional in nature:

And we shall see that the representative symbol for one-dimensional unity, the point, the basic element of the line, is as such of paramount significance as an attribute for magic man. On the one hand, the point is suggestive of the initial emergent centering in man and is, on the other, an expression of the spaceless and timeless one-dimensionality of magic man's world ... the magic man's world is also a world of *pars par toto*, in which the part can and does stand for the whole... These points can be interchanged at will.²⁴

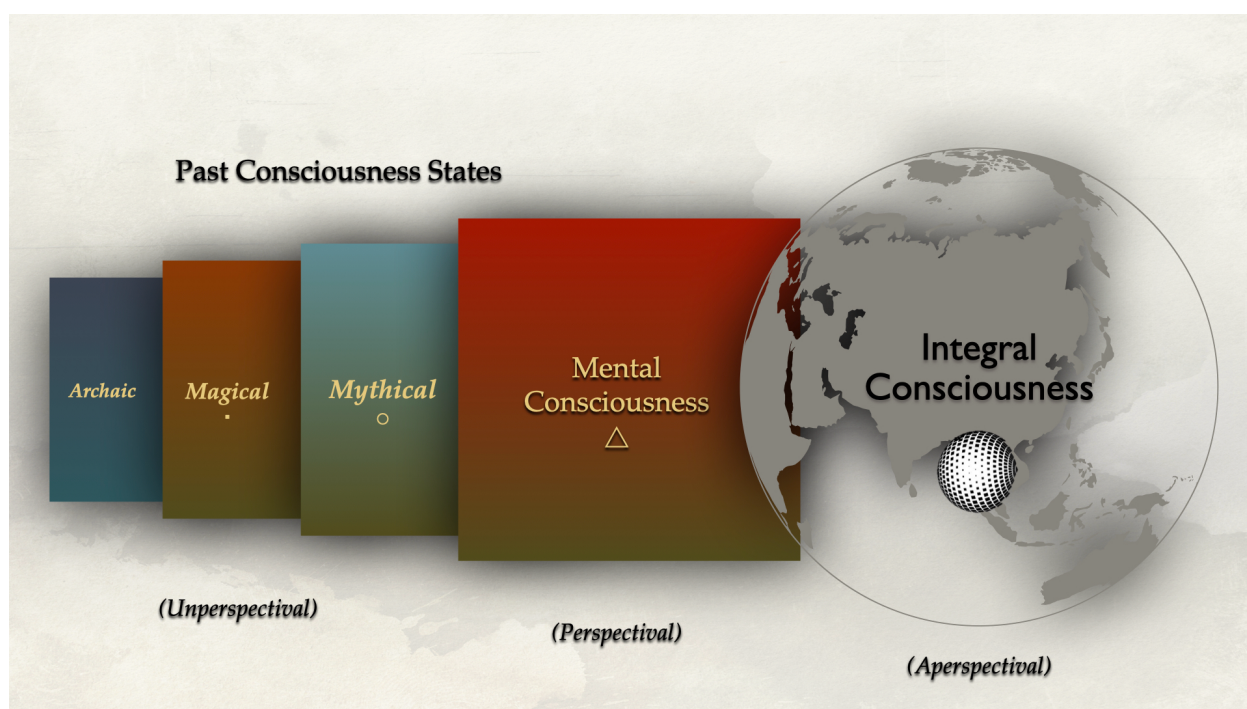


Figure 1. Gebser's States of Consciousness

In mythical consciousness, Gebser posits that seasonal and cyclical time (temporicity) comes into play as humans begin to separate from nature and can distinguish and observe its patterns. Words are sounded as the language of the heart and soul — with poetic utterances that

²³ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 45-60.

²⁴ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 46.

tend toward oceanic circling or the paradoxical.²⁵ Imagery is used as expression of the soul; symbols, metaphors, and rituals link the inner and outer realms; and words spoken and unspoken have equal import. It is a consciousness of inner contemplation and of that which is implicit. The movement of the night sky's ancient cosmos informs that which happens below.²⁶ In mythical consciousness space is two-dimensional and time is the temporicity of the passing seasons.²⁷

With the mutation to mental consciousness, witnessed both in the axial age of ancient Greece (500 BC) and at the dawn of the Renaissance that arose out of the European Middle Ages, perspective is born with the distinct differentiation of foreground and background. Man steps out of the dark night of the soul into the sunlight with his ego and individualism on full display, as seen in the ancient Greek entreaty, γνῶσι σαθτον—*Know Thyself*. There is a newly launched rationality with its dialectic thought, clarity of reasoning, and dualistic models of causation.²⁸ Time in mental consciousness becomes a construct that measures and dissects in distinct snapshots of moments, and no longer has the rhythmic temporicity and fluidity of the seasonal mythical state. The first public clock tower appears at Westminster Palace in 1283 to mark for all the chimed movement of the passing hours.²⁹

According to Gebser, the first appearances of integral consciousness arose out of the world of mathematics with the discovery of multi-dimensional space made by Friedrich W. Gauss around 1829. It made a subsequent step toward concreteness through Einstein's theory of relativity with its space-time fourth dimensionality.³⁰ Integral consciousness is still unfolding as

²⁵ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 252-254; 259-260.

²⁶ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 61-73.

²⁷ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 117.

²⁸ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 73-97.

²⁹ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 12.

³⁰ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 341 & 343.

we in modernity continue to grapple with the discomfort and fragmentation of deficient mental consciousness and its potentiality of leading us to our own destruction.

Totalizing world-views enflamed by what we could describe as ‘digital perspectivalism’ have enabled every individual to splinter off into their own reality, morphing the solidity of perspectival facts into a ‘post-truth’ world. This is the perspectival world’s same propensity towards ratiocination, generating false totalities through ever splintering, ever narrowing points of view. The negation of perspectival consciousness in its deficient phase is infinite fragmentation, and therefore the shattering of space itself...³¹

According to Gebser, integral consciousness is “open” and free from temporal and spatial boundaries. Thus, he refers to it as achronistic³² and aperspectival³³. It is a consciousness state in which all that is latent in “origin”—the unconscious remains of earlier states as well as potentialities yet unrealized—is made manifest through transparency. Thus, it embraces everything, everywhere, all at once. “It manifests itself as the unity of past, present, and future...”³⁴ and is an innate wholeness of all the mutations. Gebser writes:

“To live these structures together, commensurate with their respective degrees of conscious awareness, is to approach an integrated, integral life.”³⁵

For Whitehead, philosophy is the product of wonder³⁶ with all in a process of constant unfolding. Life in all its occurrences and permutations is not a determinate repetition of static instances, but an ongoing morphing where “the many become one, and are increased by one”³⁷ that both endures and constantly changes. The process itself is enjoyment —“joy as sheer

³¹ Jeremy Johnson, *Seeing Through the World: Jean Gebser and Integral Consciousness* (Seattle: Revelore, 2019), 53-54.

³² Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 355.

³³ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 6.

³⁴ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 285.

³⁵ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 272.

³⁶ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 127.

³⁷ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 21.

disclosure.” It is joy that arises out of the experience of experiencing, and which is newly created on an ongoing basis. Thus, “the characteristics of life are absolute self-enjoyment, creative activity, aim” in which “the aim is at the enjoyment belonging to the process.”³⁸

In process philosophy there are no particles of matter or atomic bits. Everything at every scale—quanta, cosmos, organic, inorganic, human consciousness—is included and is explained by the overarching language, method, and metaphysics of process philosophy. Whitehead identified the term concrescence, a Latin verb meaning “growing together,” to “convey the

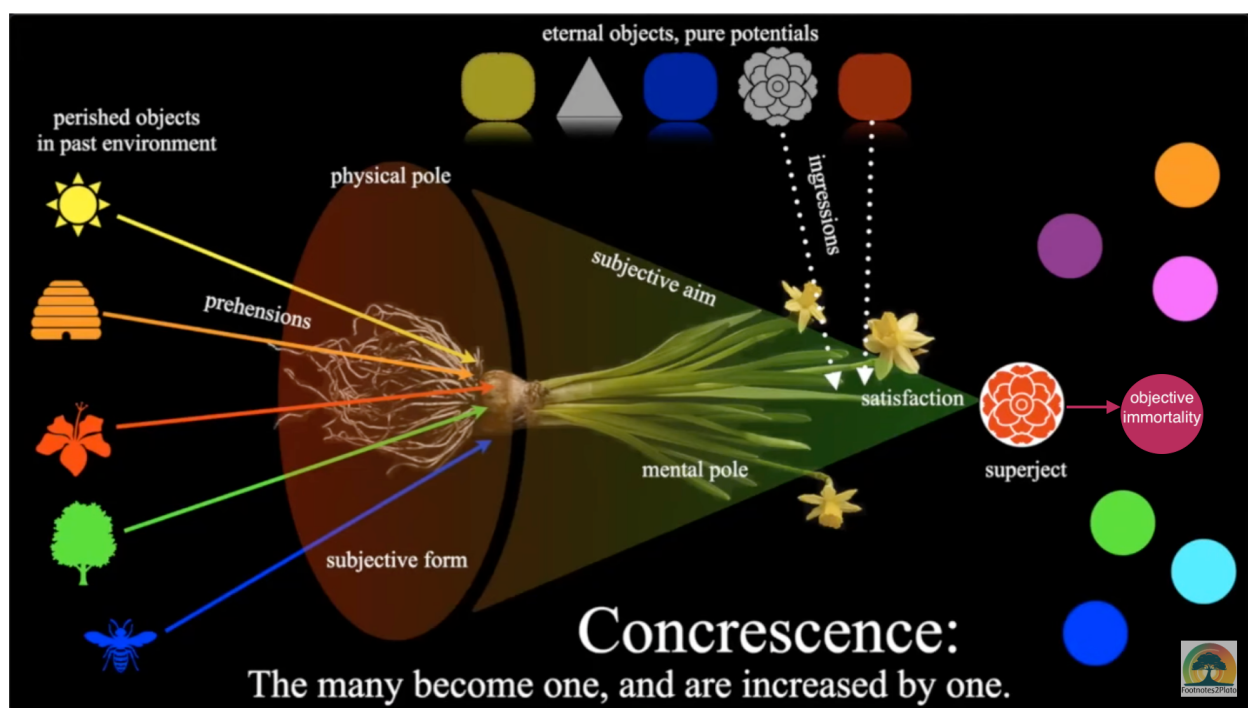


Figure 2. Matt Segall's Model of Whitehead's Concrescence

notion of many things acquiring complete complex unity.”³⁹ Everything is relative to everything

³⁸ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 152.

³⁹ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 235.

else and is a creation of this process of unfolding. Even God, in Whitehead's view, is a creature of this process ontology⁴⁰, whereby the many become one and are increased by one. (Figure 2.⁴¹)

The “many becoming one” is concrescence through a fusing of the physical pole (past experiences which have become perished objects) with the mental, subjective pole, and the ingression of eternal objects which offer the possibility for novelty and something new to culminate. There is the momentary pause of “satisfaction” or the “super-ject” as the experience transcends from an occurrence into the next phase of becoming, a now perished object. In this way the many which have become one, are now increased by one.⁴² The physical pole of perished objects, or of past occurrences, is bound by both space and time — given that these past occurrences are concretized and complete. The subjective or mental pole, by contrast, is outside both time and space, and in some respects might be considered akin to the achronistic, aperspectival nature of Gebser's integral consciousness.

For high-grade occasions, i.e., human occasions, the mental pole includes cognitive experiencing such as thought, memory, imagination, and anticipation⁴³ as well as emotion or “affective tone.” The latter includes what Whitehead refers to as the Quaker notion of “concern.”

“The occasion as subject has a ‘concern’ for the objects. And the ‘concern’ at once places the objects as a component in the experience of the subject, with an affective tone drawn from this object and directed towards it.”⁴⁴

Whitehead elucidates further in *Modes of Thought*:

⁴⁰ Thomas Padiyath, “On the Relationship between God and Creativity in Whitehead and Sachchidananda and Supermind in Aurobindo,” in *The Metaphysics of Becoming*, eds. Nicholas Rescher, Johanna Seibt, Michel Weber (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2014), 285.

⁴¹ Segall, “Alfred North Whitehead: His Life and Work” (class lecture August 2023).

⁴² Segall, *Physics of the World-Soul*, 41-43.

⁴³ Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Free Press, 1967, 170, quoted in Segall, “Standing Firm in the Flux,” 168.

⁴⁴ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 176.

The emotion transcends the present in two ways. It issues from, and it issues towards. It is received, it is enjoyed, and it is passed along, from moment to moment. Each occasion is an activity of concern, in the Quaker sense of that term. It is the conjunction of transcendence and immanence. The occasion is concerned, in the way of feeling and aim, with things that in their own essence lie beyond it; although these things in their present functions are factors in the concern of that occasion. Thus each occasion, although engaged in its own immediate self-realization, is concerned with the universe.⁴⁵

The emotion of the mental pole can also be a type of still-reverberating felt-sense of joy or satisfaction from an antecedent occasion that has just transformed into a perished object. There is still a taste of it in the arising occasion where that past perished object is prehended into the physical pole and is taken in by the mental subjective pole.⁴⁶

The eternal objects which are ingressed in the concrescence of occasions are a crucial component of the process. They are not static nor frozen objects, per se, but are themselves in flux. If not, they would be mere abstractions, and not as Whitehead insisted, infinite potentials that are of the actual world.⁴⁷ Each actual occasion prehends this infinite realm of eternal objects through an “an aesthetic gradation determining the relevant value of each eternal object for its experience.”⁴⁸ When ingressed, they conform to the law of non-contradiction, and ensure an ordering along the spatiotemporal continuum. “Space-time limits how possibilities can ingress into actualities” and is “the locus of relationship possibility.”⁴⁹

It is not possible to discuss eternal objects without also including the role and nature of God, and the lure of aim in Whitehead’s process ontology. This topic will be discussed in greater

⁴⁵ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 167.

⁴⁶ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 183.

⁴⁷ Segall, “Standing Firm in the Flux,” 166.

⁴⁸ Segall, “Standing Firm in the Flux,” 167.

⁴⁹ Segall, “Standing Firm in the Flux,” 167 & 162. Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 22.

detail in “The Role of the Spiritual and God” and include Gebser’s ideas about the concretion of the spiritual.

The Problem of Dualism

One of the most important and crucial ideas that both Whitehead and Gebser address with their respective philosophies is the problem of dualism. The bifurcation of Nature, or what could also be referred to as the subject-object, mind-body, nature-culture divide was a product of the scientific revolution and was first articulated by Galileo in *The Assayer* (1623) as primary and secondary qualities.⁵⁰ What might be considered “exclusionary dualism” continues to haunt us to this day and has fallen into such quotidian acceptance that it is now regarded by many as common sense. Although both Whitehead and Gebser address the problem of dualism, they think about and package it differently, and wrest different implications from it.

Whitehead emphatically disagreed with the bifurcation of Nature, and its inherent splits of mind-body, and nature-culture. He identified six occurrences in nature of which human existence is only one type alongside others, such as animal life, vegetable life, single living cells, large inorganic aggregates, etc. He notes how all “shade off into each other” and are in relation whereby they “influence each other, require each other, and lead on to each other.”⁵¹ Yet, he asserts that dualism, such as the Cartesian “thinking substances” and “extended substances,” and the Lockian “human understanding” and “external things” are all found in the occasions of actuality that process philosophy describes.⁵² Thus, in process philosophy he chooses (and must)

⁵⁰ Martha Bolton, "Primary and Secondary Qualities in Early Modern Philosophy", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/qualities-prim-sec/>.

⁵¹ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 157.

⁵² Whitehead, *Adventure of Ideas*, 190.

include both...not with one as mutually exclusive of the other, but with both together in a dipolar unity.

The universe is dual because, in the fullest sense, it is both transient and eternal. The universe is dual because each final actuality is both physical and mental. The universe is dual because each actuality requires abstract character. The universe is dual because each occasion unites its formal immediacy with objective otherness. The universe is *many* because it is wholly and completely to be analysed into many final actualities—or in Cartesian language, into many *res verae*. The Universe is *one*, because of the universal immanence. There is thus a dualism in this contrast between the unity and multiplicity. Throughout the universe there reigns the union of opposites which is the ground of dualism.⁵³

Thus, Whitehead's process ontology attempts to heal the bifurcation of Nature by holding everything and omitting nothing. It embraces all as a becoming of continuity that is non-deterministic and inclusive of the spectrum of experiences (animate and inanimate) and of scale (from quantum to cosmos). Occasions are viewed as pan-psychic with "aims" and "values" as part of their subjective forms. "Time, Space, and Material are adjuncts of events"⁵⁴ providing description and not their determinate definition. Humans are not "observers" of the ongoing ontology but are a nexus of occasions in the continuously unfolding flow.

Further, process philosophy's dipolar, non-dualistic nature is present across all facets and levels of the ontology. This is found from the physical and mental poles always oscillating in a continuous rhythm, to the realm of concrescences where "the classical logical rules of non-contradiction and the excluded middle do not yet apply"⁵⁵, to the holding of both time (i.e., perished objects in the past) and the time-free (i.e., subjective forms of the mental pole in the

⁵³ Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, 190.

⁵⁴ Segall, "Time and Experience in Physics and Philosophy," 279.

⁵⁵ Matthew David Segall and Bruce Damer, "The Cosmological Context of the Origin of Life: Process Philosophy and the Hot Spring Hypothesis," *Worlds Beyond Imagination* (Unpublished Book), 110.

time and space free realm of *potentia*), to the necessary simultaneous co-existing of macrocosmic transition (moving-changing) and microcosmic concrescence (nanosecond stasis).

Despite Whitehead's "defense of dualism" as a dipolar fusion of wholeness, he objects to its distortions as imposed by science and physics. As a mathematician and scientist, himself, Whitehead attempted to heal the bifurcation of Nature that he found inherent in Einstein's theory of relativity.⁵⁶ First, he came to Bergson's defense after Einstein attacked him as being anti-intellectual. Einstein insisted that only physical, clock time existed, and he viewed Bergson's notion of "lived-time" as a "subjective illusion."⁵⁷ This omission of experienced time was a severe bifurcation. Secondly, Whitehead felt that Einstein's relativity model bracketed out any type of human existence or experience as part of the model. Einstein's theory treats the universe as if it is being examined by an objective distanced observer who is somewhere "out there" viewing it.⁵⁸ This is yet another bifurcation.

Whitehead also found exclusionary dualism to be rampant in science and physics with a number of significant ramifications. These include areas such as treating scientific proofs as facts ("fallacy of misplaced concreteness"), employing simplistic notions of "right" and "wrong" which ultimately only serve as obstacles to true understanding⁵⁹, and of using abstractionism and interpretations which omit our intuitive modes of understanding.

"But in the present-day reconstruction of physics fragments of the Newtonian concepts are stubbornly retained [that omit our intuitive modes of understanding]. The result is to reduce modern physics to a sort of mystic chant over an unintelligible universe."⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Segall, "Time and Experience in Physics and Philosophy, 281.

⁵⁷ Segall, "Time and Experience in Physics and Philosophy," 276-277.

⁵⁸ Segall, "Time and Experience in Physics and Philosophy," 292.

⁵⁹ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 11.

⁶⁰ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 136.

Such abstractionism would include the present Standard Model of Cosmology of astrophysics. As Bjørn Ekeberg notes it is like a five storied house of abstractionisms⁶¹ whereby we can explain only 96% of the cosmos⁶².

According to Gebser dualism arises with the irruption of Mental consciousness and the foreground-background, three-dimensional perspective that comes to the fore. This awareness is exhibited in the life-size three-dimensional human body sculptures of ancient Greece with their archaic smiles (i.e., self-awareness) and free and clear foreheads (i.e., mental cognition).⁶³ In Europe mental consciousness dawned during the Renaissance. Gebser makes note of a letter that Petrarch (1304-1374) writes after climbing to the top of *Mont Ventoux* where he finds the perspective to be so revelatory that he is overwhelmed.⁶⁴ Gebser sees three dimensionality and the vanishing point perspective coming to masterful concretion in the works of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci.⁶⁵

Along with this dawn of perspective, Gebser asserts that the “I am” ego consciousness—the individual doing the perceiving—is also formed. Thus, the subject-object division comes into play. There is also a correlative shift, in the move from mythical to mental consciousness, in emphasis from “left” to “right.” The right is associated with a release from the dark (“left”) of medieval enchanted times and is a form of purification. Gebser provides a quote from a Manichaean text in support:

⁶¹ Bjørn Ekeberg, *Metaphysical Experiments: Physics and the Invention of the Universe* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2019), 147-151.

⁶² Adam Frank and Marcelo Gleiser, “The Story of Our Universe May Be Starting to Unravel,” *The New York Times*, September 2, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/02/opinion/cosmology-crisis-webb-telescope.html>.

⁶³ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 78.

⁶⁴ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 12

⁶⁵ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 19

“The Manichaeans, when meeting each other, extend their right hand as a sign that they have been released from darkness.”⁶⁶

Gebser provides additional examples of elements associated with the taboo “left” when mental consciousness and the “right” gained dominance. The move toward the “accepted right” represented a move away from the “taboo left” of:⁶⁷

- The unconscious and the unknown (versus the consciousness and wakefulness of the right),
- Matriarchal control (versus the patriarch of the right), Many gods and goddesses (versus One God, the Father of the right),
- Counter-clockwise and left-handedness (versus clockwise and right-handedness of the right),
- Cycles and circling (versus ‘forks in the road ’and choice points of the right),
- Lunar, nocturnal, and twilight atmospheres (versus solar and daylight of the right),
- The *unperspectival* — magical and mythical consciousness (versus the *perspectival* —mental consciousness of the right).

This shift, by extension to our recent past, is also seen in actions such as: the political “left” so labeled as mass movements of the underprivileged⁶⁸ and the killing of indigenous peoples associated with magical and mythical consciousness, e.g., Native Americans, Mayans, Aztecs, Incas, etc. And of course, acts of racism, misogyny, and xenophobia can all be considered outcomes of this right against the left movement.

Gebser posited a strong corollary between the individualism that arose with mental consciousness and a form of deficient magical consciousness. The ego isolationism and anxiety that occurs from the rational splintering of mental consciousness drives humans back toward the vitality and unity of magical clan-attunement but in a deficient form.⁶⁹ Gebser writes:

⁶⁶ E.H. Schmitt, *Die Gnosis* (Jena: Diederichs, 1903), 1, 596, quoted in Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 223.

⁶⁷ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 79, 82, 83, 85, 174.

⁶⁸ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 262.

⁶⁹ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 95.

While the beginnings of individuation and the clan formed a unity in the magic structure, they are today rationally torn asunder and, driven to extremes, have in their deficiency a destructive effect.”⁷⁰

We see this “destructive effect” continuing in many of the current national conflicts and wars, gun shootings in the United States, and various forms of racism and discrimination continuing to take place across the globe.

The Role of the Spiritual and God

The role of “the spiritual” and God in Whitehead’s and Gebser’s philosophies is crucial. Neither of their philosophies could exist without the presence of some divine existence and unfolding. They share similarities and differences in their conceptions of God and the spiritual. Whitehead refers to deity in a variety of ways but seems to settle in on the term “God,” while Gebser speaks about “the spiritual” and “origin” as the ever-present transcendent ground. Masao Abe and Thomas Padiyath in their cosmological comparisons summarize Whitehead’s conception of God as being inconsistent with an orthodox Judeo-Christian view, with which Gebser, through omission, also seems in agreement. Specifically, Whitehead holds that: 1) God is not Ultimate⁷¹; 2) God did not create the world⁷²; 3) God does not determine what actualizes⁷³; and 4) God is not static but is dynamic and changing.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 154.

⁷¹ Thomas Padiyath, “On the Relationship between God and Creativity in Whitehead and Sachchidananda and Supermind in Aurobindo,” in *The Metaphysics of Becoming*, eds. Nicholas Rescher, Johanna Seibt, Michel Weber (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2014), 287.

⁷² Padiyath, “On the Relationship,” 287.

⁷³ Padiyath, “On the Relationship,” 292.

⁷⁴ Masao Abe, “Mahayana Buddhist and Whitehead,” *Philosophy East and West*, vol 25, no 4 (October 1975), 420.

Gebser says little about God per se unless he is talking historically about religion which he does sparingly. He quotes Meister Eckhart, whom he felt had achieved the integral mutation⁷⁵, to support his view against orthodox religious beliefs: “Whatever man is capable of thinking about God is not God.”⁷⁶ Gebser instead focuses on “origin” in the unfolding of the consciousness states. He refers to the *I Ching* and its first hexagram of the Creative, which he sees as an articulation of inceptual or germinal situations, but not as “the beginning.” He defines this inception in the way that Catherine Keller interprets the opening in *Genius:1* — “in the beginning” — as “begin (again).”⁷⁷ This seems a way of shifting emphasis to the power of creativity itself without there being an Almighty as the great orchestrator. Gebser states that “the divine-creative principle is suprapersonal and makes itself perceptible only through its all-powerful activity.”⁷⁸ He makes a connection between creativity and the spiritual by quoting Confucius: “But whatever pervades the heaven also pervades the world; and for this reason alone the pervasive, that is creativity, is of a spiritual nature.”⁷⁹

Both Whitehead and Gebser oppose the Christian notion of *creatio ex nihilo* and see the universal unfolding as a *causa sui* or as an autopoietic process at play.⁸⁰ Whitehead sees each occasion as self-creative as it is lured into initiation by joy or appetite of the eternal objects through a subjective aim. God is primordial but not originating; he is “not *before* all creation but *with* all creation.”⁸¹ In comparison, Gebser names his originary consciousness structure, “archaic,” since the word “arche” means inception or origin. He is quick to assert, however, that

⁷⁵ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 298.

⁷⁶ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 312 fn2.

⁷⁷ Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 160.

⁷⁸ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 315.

⁷⁹ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 316.

⁸⁰ Segall, *Physics of the World-Soul*, 58 & 78; Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 41; Padiyath, “On the Relationship,” 286 & 307 fn36.

⁸¹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 343.

its “origin meaning” is to be emphasized “since its essence, as ever-presence, is not true of inception.”⁸² Thus, for Gebser, origin is both primordial and originary, without having a finite beginning or an ultimate, powering-over God as its creator. Origin then, which is also spiritual in nature, is viewed as a force or an energy.

God and the World in Whitehead’s cosmology necessitate one another through their very opposition⁸³ like the oppositional mutual requirements of permanence and flux, the one and the many, joy and sorrow, freedom and necessity. These oppositional necessities also include dipolar entanglement and unity. In other words, one cannot exist without the other. And without God, Whitehead writes, “every thing experienced would be merely a barren detail in our own solipsist mode of existence.”⁸⁴

With God as a keen necessity that is in dipolar opposition with the World, and consequently in dipolar unity, he is “not an exception to all metaphysical principles” but “is their chief exemplification”.⁸⁵ In other words, he does not operate outside the system but is part and parcel of it. He himself is a creature of creativity.⁸⁶ Yet in concrescence, God initiates from the conceptual pole to the physical given his primordial nature and his being conceptually active and physically passive⁸⁷; while the World initiates from the physical pole (given its immanence and being which is physically active) to the conceptual pole.⁸⁸

God is also di-polar and has not only a primordial nature, but a consequent nature. His primordial nature is the lure, the desire that establishes the initial phase for each occasion

⁸² Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 43.

⁸³ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 349.

⁸⁴ Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 102.

⁸⁵ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 343.

⁸⁶ Segall, *Physics of the World-Soul*, 45.

⁸⁷ Segall, *Physics of the World-Soul*, 142.

⁸⁸ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 348.

through its subjective aim leading to its ultimate concrescence. His primordial nature conditions creativity through infinite possibilities of novelty, as well as the finite categories and valuing of eternal objects.⁸⁹ Eternal objects are all ingressed and then negatively prehended through gradations of relevance.⁹⁰ Subsequently, God's primordial nature is also one of limitation which lures an initiation of a definitive outcome "from a situation otherwise riddled with ambiguity,"⁹¹ thus preventing outright chaos or non-concretized meaninglessness.

God's consequent nature is "his judgement of the world" wherein he saves it. It is not a critical judging, nor a white knight kind of saving where he steps in to prevent mass destruction.⁹² Rather it is a concerned and tender nature given to perfecting the aims of each and every occasion while mirroring to it its greatness.⁹³ It is a saving that extends tenderness for all occasions to make sure that nothing gets left behind that can be saved. And God's consequent nature is infinitely patient and indeterminate as he infuses the World with "his vision of truth, beauty, and goodness"⁹⁴.

In Gebser's philosophy a very different process is presented. Indeed, for Gebser too, origin (in an aligned way with Whitehead's use of the term God) and the World are interconnected and interpenetrated. According to Gebser, origin is the impetus behind each new mutation of consciousness.⁹⁵ Thus, origin creates the World. And since origin comprises *all* in latency⁹⁶—everything that is not known or not conscious, everything that has happened and not

⁸⁹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 345-346.

⁹⁰ Segall, "Standing Firm in the Flux," 168.

⁹¹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 344.

⁹² Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 346.

⁹³ Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (Edinburg: Cambridge University Press, 1925/1960, 139, quoted in Segall, *Physics of the World-Soul*, 47.

⁹⁴ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 346.

⁹⁵ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 297.

⁹⁶ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 6.

happened—the World also creates origin. By extension, it is just as true to say that origin is one, and the World many; and that the World is one, and origin many.⁹⁷

Using Whitehead’s terminology, origin could be viewed as an energetic field—spiritual in nature—where eternal objects (i.e., potentiality, integral consciousness) and perished objects (i.e., earlier consciousness states and their efficient and deficient manifestations) are fluctuating and coursing. Yet core to Gebser’s philosophy is his proposition that with each new mutation of consciousness, each new dimensionality, origin and wholeness are distanced and diminished.

There seems, therefore, to be a qualitative reduction of wholeness that corresponds to the quantitative augmentation of consciousness which, by dimensioning, creates its own system of interrelationships. The increasing expansion, extension, or growth of consciousness evident in the mutations is inversely proportional to the reduction of the integral system of interrelationships which it has apparently lost. When viewed in this way, the dimensioned world seems to be one split off from the whole.⁹⁸

With this diminishment of wholeness, there is a loss of connection with the spiritual and the numinous found in nature. Thus, as consciousness unfolds, before the irruption of the integral, art (in its most general sense) becomes a kind of surrogate and acts as a bridge to the numinous:

“The capacity for numinous experiences loses its energizing intensity in proportion to the increment of consciousness... and ...as the possibility diminishes for numinous experiences from nature there is a proportionate increase for such experiences from art as created by man.”⁹⁹

In *The Ever-Present Origin*, Gebser discusses the spiritual primarily in concurrence with the mutation of integral consciousness. He refers to its appearance to consciousness as the

⁹⁷ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 348.

⁹⁸ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 119.

⁹⁹ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 202.

“concretion of the spiritual”¹⁰⁰. The spiritual emerges forth in integral consciousness, as *systasis*, which is both process and effect, and a “conjoining or fitting together of parts into integrality.”¹⁰¹ It is an “opening up” where a new integrating structure makes transparent the efficient natures of all previous consciousness states as they have unfolded over the millennia. It is through this time-free diaphaneity (and it must be time free for the diaphaneity to be made possible) that the “epiphany” of the spiritual opens fully to human consciousness.¹⁰²

And yet, as in Gebser’s words, concretion does not mean “a transformation of the intangible into something tangible or substantial, but rather the completion of *con-*
crescere, ...from the Latin... meaning in being together...to grow, prosper, thrive...that is, the coalescence of the spiritual within our consciousness.”¹⁰³ And with its concrescence there is an “awaring” of truth not unlike “the shadow of truth” cast when an eternal object is altered in ingression to align with the nature and need of the actual occasion that is ingressing it.¹⁰⁴ The spiritual then, in Gebser’s expression of it, becomes like the air that we breath. It is transparent. It is a consciousness of “itself”¹⁰⁵ as it supersedes the dualistic subject-object divide, is time-free, and is made manifest without having a specific spatial locus.

The spiritual as concretized in the integral mutation seems akin to the consequent nature of God as put forth in process philosophy. God or the spiritual is no longer only primordial (ever-present in origin), but with the mutation to the integral structure is made conscious, physical, and

¹⁰⁰ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 299.

¹⁰¹ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 310.

¹⁰² Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 299.

¹⁰³ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 542.

¹⁰⁴ Segall, “Standing Firm in the Flux,” 168.

¹⁰⁵ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 298.

consequent. As Whitehead so beautifully summarizes, “It is true to say that the World is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the World.”¹⁰⁶

Conclusions

This exploration and comparison of Whitehead’s process philosophy and Gebser’s mutations of consciousness reveal that there are distinct differences between their respective approaches and principles. Yet, the ways in which they also interpenetrate one another gives validation and credence to both:

A. Gebser’s mutations of consciousness fit within Whitehead’s process philosophy, and in some ways are further illuminated by it. For example:

- ▶ In the mental pole of high-grade occasions (i.e., human experiencing) there is greater potentiality for the ingressing of novelty¹⁰⁷ which appears to accommodate Gebser’s notion of mutational leaps of human consciousness.
- ▶ Gebser’s necessity for the supersession of dualism is inherently overcome in process philosophy through Whitehead’s recognition of oppositional mutual requirements that also encompass dipolar entanglement and unity. Gebser leaves polarity at the door of the seasonal temporicity of mythical consciousness; Whitehead re-enlivens it, through his own sense of integrality, as a necessary di-polarity which pervades the entirety of process philosophy.
- ▶ The role and existence of “God” (Whitehead) and “the spiritual/origin” (Gebser) are defined by both as outside Judeo-Christian religious orthodoxy. In process philosophy

¹⁰⁶ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 348.

¹⁰⁷ Segall, “Standing Firm in the Flux,” 170.

- and the mutations of consciousness, God, the divine, the spiritual, origin are necessities *in* and *with* the world as a di-polar unfolding wherein both create and are created by one other. Without there being God or the spiritual in the act of concrescence for either philosophy, there is only meaninglessness or chaos.
- ▶ Gebser's notion of latency inherent within ever-present origin is akin to Whitehead's everlasting sense of eternal objects and perished objects. It is here that earlier consciousness states in their efficient and deficient manifestations can be viewed as "perished objects." Additionally, the potentiality of that which has not yet come to conscious awareness or made manifest (e.g., such as forms and movements of integrality) are not unlike the potentialities found in Whitehead's eternal objects.
 - ▶ With the concretion of the spiritual inherent in Gebser's mutational leap to Integrality, there is the awaring of a pantheistic existing as a spatiotemporal-free diaphaneity. This is not unlike the spatiotemporal freedom that takes place in the subjective mental pole of process philosophy where the perfection of God's aim through the eternal objects is ingressed. It is a shared acknowledgment by both philosophies that God/the spiritual/origin is in every occasion and every occasion is in God/the spiritual/origin. Thus, both seem in this sense pantheistic.

(B) Although Gebser gave scant attention to Whitehead in *The Ever-Present Origin*, the exploration of Whitehead's philosophy through Gebser's gaze suggests that Whitehead himself had the integral mutation. The new mutation of integral consciousness appears to be, in essence, a "conscious" living awareness and, at the very least, a directional *verition* of the premises and

principles of Whitehead's process philosophy and theology.

Isabelle Stengers in *Making Sense in Common* refers to Donna Hathaway's notion that "It matters which ideas we think other ideas with." Stengers urges that we "adopt Haraway's phrase as a talisman that forces us to think with the consequences of our ideas."¹⁰⁸ As a talisman, this statement can be held, thought, and engaged when applying process philosophy and mutations of consciousness in modernity.

Both philosophies present the relationship of "God" (for Gebser, the spiritual/origin) and the World as interpenetrating. God and the World necessitate one another. Each is within the other; each creates the other. Thus, it can be argued, as stated above, that both philosophies have an inherent panentheistic principle. The many are one and the one is many. Importantly then, the thought that we think other thoughts with is that *all is sacred*.

To explore this thought, the various relationships between "God" and the World as implicated by process philosophy and the states of consciousness are reflected in Figure 3. This is presumably an over-simplification, yet still seems a useful tool for demonstrating the significant contributions in modes of thought that both philosophies provide.

In the unperspectival consciousness states of Gebser (magical and mythical consciousness) (A) there is both a horizontal and vertical relationality. There is little to no differentiation between humans who are relatively porous¹⁰⁹ and the world. There is also an ongoing assumed dialog (not necessarily verbal) between heaven above and earth below.

¹⁰⁸ Stengers, *Making Sense in Common*, 164, quoted in Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 34.

¹⁰⁹ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 35.

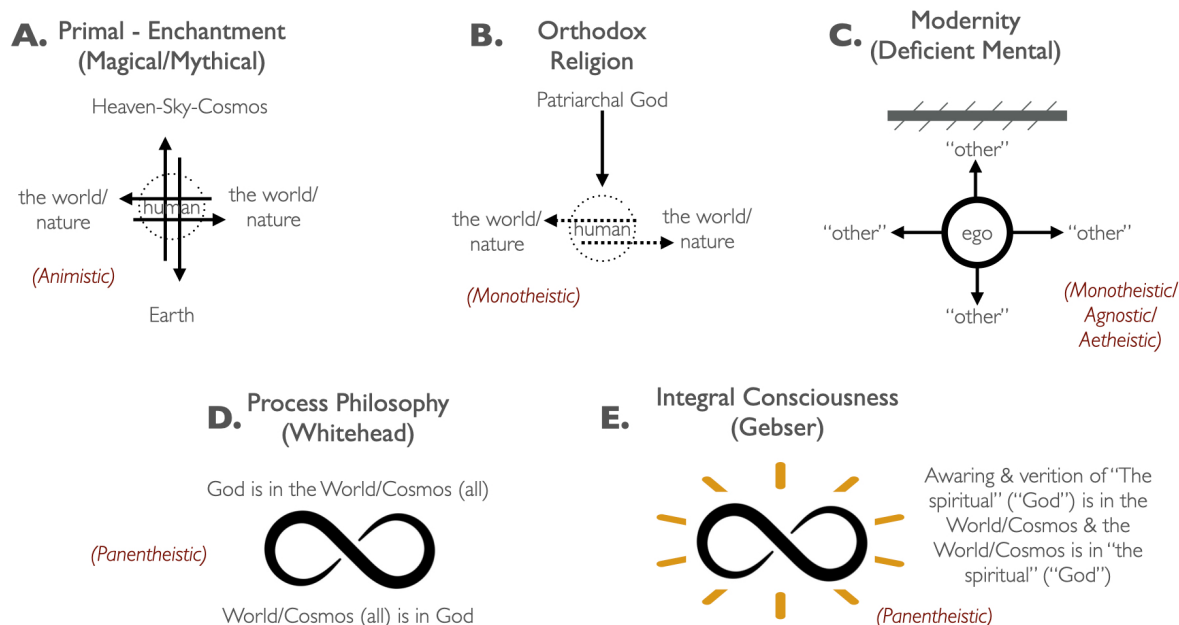


Figure 3. Diagrams of Relationships between "God" and the World

With the advent of orthodox religion (B), the relationality becomes significantly more vertical and one directional as the patriarchal God becomes omniscient and omnipresent.

In modernity (C), which Gebser refers to as deficient mental consciousness, the human "I am" ego state became preeminent with extreme buffering of humans from transcendence, each other, and the world. The world has also become objectified. There are vestiges of lingering monotheism, as well as higher penetration of agnostic and atheistic belief.

In process philosophy (D) the relationship of God and the World is interpenetrating. Each is within and creates the other. Thus, the vertical orientation between God and the World is no longer relevant. There are vestiges of horizontality through the temporal facet of perished objects and the notion of future concrescences.

And finally, integral consciousness (E) as has been discussed is depicted with the same orientation as process philosophy. However, there is an additional level of “awaring” and “verition” of the principles of process philosophy and its articulation of universal unfolding.¹¹⁰

Whitehead, who was preeminent in delineating modes of thought and the ideas we think other ideas with, illustrated his approach for healing the bifurcation of nature, so pronounced in scientism, in many ways. Examples range from his delineation of different kinds of facts and the identification of the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness” to the bracketing out of any type of human existence or experience as part of Einstein’s theory of relativity.

These erroneous ways of thinking other ideas with comes to life, by example, when scientific inquiry tries to prove that the ancient healing art of acupuncture is efficacious. As Isabelle Stengers summarizes: “Science insists on the bifurcation, even if it strips away, to the point of absurdity, everything that makes a situation matter to us.”¹¹¹

In this instance, if an “objective” test of acupuncture were set up in a lab, it would be a complete misrepresentation of this ancient healing approach as it has been practiced for 2000+ years. As the earliest received acupuncture text makes clear¹¹², acupuncture encompasses much more than sticking a needle near a bony landmark of the body. Shamanic in its primordial roots, acupuncture—which includes the needle itself as well as the person placing the needle and her connection with the person being needled—is a numinous pivot that creates an opening to the

¹¹⁰ It should be noted that the time-free notion of integrality is also captured by Whitehead’s process philosophy since it has both perished objects (past) along with the subjective, time-free subjective pole, and the primordial everlasting notion of God and the eternal objects. Gebser makes clear that time-free includes all senses of time prevalent during the different mutations of consciousness. Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 285.

¹¹¹ Stengers, *Making Sense in Common*, 53.

¹¹² Nathan Sivan, “Huang ti nei ching 黃帝內經,” in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley: The Society for the Early Study of China, 1993), 196-199. Note: The *Huang Di Ne Jing* is comprised of two books: the *Ling Shu* and the *Su Wen*.

influences of heaven. Thus, an effective treatment entails not only appropriate needle placement and stimulation but the countenance of the practitioner herself as “the needle must not miss rooting in the spirits.”¹¹³

Thus, a testing lab situation which is presumably at best trying to ascertain a "true" versus "placebo" effect is omitting vital components of the treatment itself — the nature and presence of the acupuncturist, his own rootedness in spirit, and his relationship with the patient. Similar to Stengers’ discussion about the “activist’s art of consensus”¹¹⁴, the acupuncture treatment aims at the creation of an individual concrete fact that becomes part of the healing process. It is not a powering over, or the victory of the practitioner as master expert. Rather both patient and practitioner are “brooding” together, with thought and imagination. And both patient and practitioner are impacted as they work together in overcoming the problem... in this case that of dis-ease in whatever form it takes.

Stengers also introduces in her applications of process philosophy a different interpretation of how to heal the bifurcation of nature. She suggests a new approach to learning that is neither a form of "learning from" or "learning with." Rather, it is a process whereby a new actual occasion is formed through concrescence that ingresses an eternal object possibility, rarely —if ever— explored. She describes this process via Whitehead’s “interstices” that are open spaces in living societies in which life is lurking as the breeding ground for originality¹¹⁵. This manifests as “contact zones” that facilitate “communication between disparate registers” transcending scale and genus¹¹⁶, such as different types of biological cells, mycorrhizae

¹¹³ Claude Larre and Elisabeth Rochat de la Vallée, *The Heart in Ling Shu Chapter 8* (Cambridge: Monkey Press, 1991), 14-15.

¹¹⁴ Stengers, *Making Sense in Common*, 61.

¹¹⁵ Stengers, *Making Sense in Common*, 134.

¹¹⁶ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 215.

symbiotic associations, psychotropic-human interactions, science-public communication, etc. The process also changes the nature of the partners themselves (at least in the human scientific realm) in that it demands that they “make themselves worthy of what they observe, worthy of what they find.”¹¹⁷

In Gebser’s mutations of consciousness, there is also the notion of identifying people’s inclination toward one state of consciousness over another to guide integration and healing.

Gebser writes:

The significance of this becomes evident when we realize that in every human being the one or the other structure predominates over the others....we must bring this structure into balance with the others...the fact that we achieve such an equilibrium by living an integral and not merely fragmented life is the basic condition that makes possible the mutation which could possibly surmount the dualistic dead-end into

	Archaic	Magical	Mythical	Mental
Descriptors	“Ground of Being” Energy Body	Sound Smell Physical Body	Heart & Feelings	Reasoning; Cause v. Effect
Clinical Aspects	Pulse Presence	Tendons Muscles Flesh	Emotions	Talk
Diagnosis	Pulse, Energetic Vitality	Listening...Sounds under the voice/words, Tongue, Body Palpation, Where in Your Body	Dreams & Stories, 5 Element Voice Tones, Images Evoked	Described Symptoms
Treatment Ideas	Chong Mai Kidneys	Lower dan tian, Liver-Gallbladder	Upper jiao (Heart, Pericardium, Throat) Yin Wei Mai	Yang Wei Mai

Figure 4. Clinical Correspondences Associated Using Gebser’s States of

¹¹⁷ Stengers, *Making Sense in Common*, 136.

which we have maneuvered ourselves.¹¹⁸

This is an area that is currently under exploration without my own clinical acupuncture practice. As Figure 4. indicates different clinical approaches are being experimented with to diagnose and treat imbalances of different predominating consciousness states.

In closing, process philosophy and mutations of consciousness clearly amplify Whitehead's idea of philosophy as "sheer disclosure." Of course, the process is never complete. The work of these two visionaries are enticements for consideration of the "ideas we think other ideas with" — and as Stengers suggests, a talisman for modern times. May we continue to seek and find new "contact zones," modes of thought, and relational ways of being with nature, with the cosmos, with each other, and with ourselves.

¹¹⁸ Gebser, *The Ever-Present Origin*, 152-153.

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