

Complexity and Emergent Process, in The Relational Psyche:

'This is the age of the evolution of Evolution. All thoughts that the evolutionist works with, all theories and generalisations, have themselves evolved and are now being evolved. Even were his theory perfected, its first lesson would be that it was itself but a phase of the Evolution of other opinion, no more fixed than a species, no more final than the theory which it displaced.'

Henry Drummond. 1883. 'The natural law in the spiritual world.' 1883.

"Everyone who is intent upon surviving....with worth and dignity, and living rather than passively accepting life, must sooner or later pass through the agonies of emergent consciousness."

Jean Gebser. 'The Ever-Present Origin.' 1949.

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Our method of engaging with a client is at least consciously based on our working-paradigm, and our paradigm is generally nourished by the prevailing assumptions of the era rather than necessarily its most contemporary advances. For example, how theoretically and experientially grounded are Psychotherapy Trainings in quantum mechanics, complexity, chaos, emergence, fractals, and systems theory, or in some cases even something as fundamental as holism?

None of us would suggest that the human animal is somehow distinct from these inherent dynamics patterns of nature, not subject to these defining, guiding, and governing laws that beset all else; and neither would we propose that the psychotherapist might be excused from the participation in nature's principles that the clients are themselves subject to. If it's nature, then we're all involved.

Yet it seems that in some areas we hesitate to theoretically integrate.

This is not explained by a lack of intelligence, imagination, desire, will, discipline, hunger for insight, integrity, or a wish to change the world. Psychotherapists tend towards all of these characteristics. More likely, I imagine, we are inclined to veer away from that which demands from us an approach to ourselves and our work that is radically re-envisioned. Despite what we like to think about ourselves, as human psychotherapists most of us will balk in the face of the painful journey that is our own transformational process, whereby we might transcend the theoretical building-blocks from which our culture, our profession, and our own sense of self have been formed.

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Psychology was gaining traction around about the same time as archaeology, and whereas the latter required the investigator to literally dig down in search of the past, the former can be understood to have adopted the same imagistic principle; and both can be seen as a cultural response to The Church's transcendent vision that took the gaze upwards, away from the ground and away from the immoral horrors of pagan-corporeality. Both archaeologist and psychoanalyst were required to uncover, to reveal, to liberate the relic by diligently applying daylight to the darkness.

Some centuries earlier, the hugely influential philosopher Rene Descartes initiated and immortalised the philosophical movement away from the emotional, felt body, declaring it to be effectively not of self:

"I am, then, in the strict sense, only a thing that thinks."

Meditation on first philosophy. 1641

"It is certain that I (that is, my mind, by which I am what I am) is entirely and truly distinct from my body, and may exist without it."

Discourse on the Method. 1637

Today we might imagine such statements to be an indication of a traumatised mind, dissociated from emotional aliveness; and such a consideration would certainly have received some ballast from the acknowledgement that they came from a man who had not only been at war, but had witnessed the impact of his own military inventions upon mortal humans who bleed. Nevertheless, and perhaps due to a cultural dominance of the left-hemispheric brain over the right, as Iain McGilchrist defines, this Cartesian philosophy formed the basis of what would become a strident privileging of cognitive process over other self-expressions.

Alongside developed a scientific understanding that was essentially deterministic, predictable, measurable, a world in which the greater the exertion the greater the yield, and undoubtedly this Galilean and Newtonian universe was an outlook fortified by The Industrial Revolution which relied heavily on binding its workforce into the promises manifest from hard work and production.

These were some of the cultural contexts from within which early psychological understanding and approach grew. Our cultural landscape is entirely different today, at least theoretically, but yet we remain to some considerable extent echoing the nineteenth century principles of our birth; or, as Michael Soth noted, our birth-trauma.

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I've certainly dropped into the sewers, heroically looking for the wounded-child whose battered body I've dug free and carried to the sunlit surface past the slain remains of dragons and demons; to find then that the child was underground and covered in detritus because it was safer, and that my efforts had done nothing much other than expose him again to the terrors from which he'd been hiding.

I've believed in the omnipotent power of the enlightening insight, the devastating intervention, the dismantling analysis, the truth-bomb that batters down the door, that carves through the lies and distortions and inter-generational brambles that are strangling and suffocating the poor suffering abandoned child that is my client.

I've delivered *the body* back to my clients from the Cartesian shadows, returned them to their roots, to their spirit, to their banished past. I've shown them the path to aliveness, vitality, wholeness, oneness, surrender. I've celebrated their most basic instincts. Scream stamp cry fuck bite. Tear at the flesh with your fingernails. Howl at the moon. Or sometimes simply sit in the beautiful resonance of your energetic self, and be here, in this moment that is the only moment of your life; in which all other moments are enfolded.

However, much as I still admittedly quite like the sound of all of this intention, I know that its impact has only usually been partial, or else considerable but short-lived, un or under-integrated. The extent of therapeutic input hasn't equated to an equivalent degree of lasting therapeutic impact, as we intuitively assume that it might when we have fulfilled the fundamental criteria of identifying the wounded story, standing strong against its internalised-perpetrators, and defining a route out of the perilous unlit streets of the client's enshadowed habituations.

It would seem that knowledge of truth, heroic robustness, and purposeful direction are not enough to save a soul, and this epiphany contrasts sharply with some therapeutic-positions that a psychotherapist might likely adopt, believe in and prefer. Knowledge doesn't generally set us free, not on its own. A hero is often no more than the constellated fantasy-rescuer from a trauma imprint, destined to never quite succeed in his therapeutic quest because, in short, he is a fantasy. And to openly value aliveness, vitality, wholeness, oneness, fearlessness is inevitably to run the grave risk of de-valuing that which they are imagined to be a solution to. How might we possibly embody fearlessness, for example, without intimately experiencing our terror, oneness without our separation, wholeness without our fragmentation, vitality without our exhaustion, and aliveness without inhabiting the depressive morbidity of our internalised dead-spaces.

Whatever we think we are, we are also not.

And whatever we think we are not, we also are.

And both. And neither. All at the same time.

In a linear and deterministic world, this is all tricky. We should be more clearly definable, more accessible and more predictable. Big things pretty much are, of course. Planetary movements and the like do conform to Newtonian principles, but the smaller into detail we look the more that the rules of nature change; and change dramatically.

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The arrival of Complexity Theory across a range of disciplines in the latter decades of the twentieth century has not become quite as much of a game-changer in psychotherapeutic interaction as it perhaps should have, although its consideration is increasing. For me, Complexity Theory is one of those theories that, once I began to understand it, *especially in the context of the relational human psyche*, everything that I already understood changed shape. I once felt the same way about holism, transference, projective-identification, internal self-states, systems theory, collective unconscious, synchronicity, enactment; each of which being, in turn, the grandest of revelation in me.

Complex Systems live by different rules than those forwarded into psychology by the Newtonian and Cartesian mechanical and deterministic dictates, in which an expert machinist can fix the broken, in which thought is greatly privileged over feeling, everything is theoretically predictable, measurable, weighable, and nature is to be thwarted.

Complex Systems can be influenced but they cannot be controlled, nor pre-determined with accuracy. They are spontaneously and unconsciously self-organising. There's no centrally controlling force, instead change and transformation happen through the *synergistic* (rather than conflicted) *relationship* of its various aspects. They operate as a holistic-system rather than as an aggregate collection of distinct components, and can only be well understood through this relational, dynamic and *whole-istic* lens. For an everyday example, we can think of the human physiology in distinct parts, but can only fully understand them when we assess their synergistic interaction with other parts and processes.

Complex Systems, such as the human psyche, are dynamic and in flux. There's an investment in equilibrium and stability, but also in change, and they are at their most

efficient at (what is called) *the edge of chaos*, where there is enough stability with which to maintain equilibrium and yet enough chaotic potential for novel emergence.

To get a real sense of complexity we need to start small and work up: a sub-atomic particle is complex, as is the atom within which it is nested, likewise a cell, a molecule, an organ, a nervous system, an endocrine system, a respiratory system, a cardiac system, a digestive system, a nervous system, a psyche, an organism, a relationship, a family, a community, a country, a species, all life-form, the earth, the bio-sphere, the cosmos, the universe. Each a complex system nested (in the words of Arthur Koestler) within ever more complex systems.

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The arrival of Complexity Theory provided a theoretical home for the concept of *emergence* which, though had been noted in literature under different guises at least as far back as Aristotle, had become a disclaimed and esoteric understanding of nature, and remains discounted by many still. From what I can gather, there are three principle reasons for this: firstly, it offers quite the challenge to the institutionalised belief in Darwinism as the primary evolutionary principle, secondly because it implies a force of nature that, in its more radical conceptualisations, incorporates inherent spiritual process and teleology. But perhaps simply that it counters many principles from the Newtonian and Cartesian mind-map, whereby the human is distinct from nature, can thereby impose control upon it, and everything is deterministic.

I think it's useful to discuss *emergence* within the context of evolution, because that offers a big-picture understanding of the significance of the theory, but I want to begin with a more contemporary explanation of what constitutes an emergent property. As it is a theory that pervades many disciplines, it can become pretty complicated, but a good basic starting-place I think is with the economist Jeffrey Goldstein: emergence is:

'the arising of novel and coherent structures, patterns and properties during the process of self-organisation in complex systems.'

Jeffrey Goldstein: 'Emergence as a Construct: history and issues'. 1999

Complex Systems spontaneously produce novel and structured offspring during the process of self-organisation. To elaborate: not only does a Complex System spontaneously self-organise under beneficial conditions, but from this process manifests new and formed structures, distinct from the components whose synergy were their building-blocks. For a simple chemical example, we can see that both sodium and chloride are poisonous to the human, but in their synergy create salt which is essential to the human. Both oxygen and hydrogen are flammable, but their synergy can create water, which is novel, again essential, and entirely inflammable; in fact, an antidote to flammability. Both of these simple examples testify to the first reference in literature to emergent process:

'The totality is not, as it were, a mere heap, but the whole is something besides the parts...'
'Metaphysics' was an Aristotelian compilation by Alexandrian scholars in the first century AD

This observation would come to evolve into the more commonly known statement that *the whole is greater than the sum of its parts*; a central formulation of Gestalt Psychology, Systems Theory, holism and ecology. But let's look more closely at evolution, and the theoretical deficit in Darwinism that *emergence* offers a solution to.

The work of Charles Darwin in 'The Origin of the Species' 1848 was in some respects a triumph of mechanistic determinism. *This* characteristic is more successful than *that* characteristic when it comes to surviving, and so it has a greater chance of being procreated into perpetuation, the species moving through an ever-improving gradual adaptive evolution. However, there's an inherent problem with Darwinism, in that its own sound logic can disprove itself; as intimated by this quote:

"Darwin knew that nature had to produce variations before natural selection could act ...The problem had been caught by other evolutionists almost as soon as The Origin of Species was first published. Sir Charles Lyell saw it clearly in 1860 before he even became an evolutionist..."

Robert Reid. 'Biological Emergences: evolution by natural experiment.' 2007.

To borrow an example from the Cambridge chemist, Rupert Sheldrake: human limbs were originally the fins of the tetrapods that emerged from the water some 350 million years ago. According to Darwinism, after many millennia of incremental changes one eventually became the well-functioning other. However, there is a problem here, in that Darwinism itself suggests that a rubbish fin and a rubbish limb, as they would have been for quite some time, would be incapable of efficient survival; and therefore would have brought about our downfall rather than our exceptional success.

Unless of course there was a more radical emergence first, a more defined limb that was capable of surviving long enough for Darwinism to act upon it.

As far as I'm aware, outside of more fundamental religious circles, Darwinist Natural Selection isn't generally discounted as being significant to evolutionary process, but is instead re-envisioned as a stabilising movement of equilibrium rather than as a generator of radical adaptation. In short, Darwinism doesn't produce a limb from a fin, but may develop that limb into one that is honed for greater survival.

It doesn't produce novelty, but perhaps embeds it.

I think that it's worth noting here that Darwin's cousin was Francis Galton, who initiated The Eugenics Society, and Darwin's son was one of the early presidents of the society; so it doesn't feel to be a huge leap to imagine that Charles himself may have had a vested philosophical interest in a system of evolution that imagined human progress to be determined solely by the incremental biological perpetuation of the fittest, of the best, rather than through seemingly random and radical mutations.

The Dutch Botanist Hugo de Vries' Mutation theory of 1903 suggested an explanation for more radical evolutionary change through the theory of *saltation*, which asserted that new species can manifest from a single-step mutation. This was an exceptional claim: no longer is evolution reliant upon a millennia of gradual adaptations, but instead upon a radical manifestation. Create a limb, and then Darwinism will embed it.

The theory of saltation was elaborated by C. Lloyd Morgan, an ethologist and psychologist who in 1922 published '*Emergent Evolution*' which, as with de Vries, emphasised the single-step speciation of saltation but, as distinct from de Vries, was not focussed principally on the botanics of the Evening Primrose, but on evolution itself. A contemporary variation of this theme can be seen in the theory of *Punctuated Equilibrium*, defined by Stephen Jay Gould and Niles Eldredge in 1972, whereby the species remains for a long time basically stable, their evolution coming in rapid punctuations rather than in solely deterministic increments.

These theories can be understood to explain the considerable gaps in fossil records, which seem not to tell the tale of *gradualistic* evolution. Darwin himself did note this, but believed that the relative youth of palaeontology was to explain, and that time would be a rectifier. But that hasn't especially transpired.

The term *emergent* itself was first used in this context by the philosopher G.H. Lewes, an interesting man who lent into acting and medicine before engaging in intellectual and philosophical exploration across a range of subjects, including Comte's Positivism, which he later moved away from, and Darwinism. He also had, perhaps in the spirit of The Romantic Poets, an open-marriage; and in fact lived with the writer Mary Ann Evans, better known by the pen name George Eliot.

'The emergent (property) is unlike its components insofar as these are incommensurable, and it cannot be reduced to their sum or their difference.'

From: 'The Problems of Life and Mind.' 1875

This introduction of the term *emergent* feels very significant to me. Emergence, Emergency, Emerge and Merge have etymological root in the Latin ***emergere***, meaning 'to rise up'. An *emergency* suggests the rising up of something unexpected, and *merge* suggests dissolution of separate identity: so we might say that through a process of synergy there is an unexpected uprising: an emergence.

For those who remain attached to a mechanistic cause-and-effect model, however unconsciously, this novel emergence of something that cannot be simply reduced to its component parts can seem to be a magical emanation. However, rather as a paradox is only a paradox if we don't understand how mutually-exclusive elements are concurrently true, perhaps if we free ourselves from the unvitalised cage of mechanism we may no longer need to understand an unexpected emergence as magical, but instead as entirely inevitable; as an inherent process of nature.

For the philosopher Samuel Alexander, though, who continued the exploration of emergence-theory in the early part of the twentieth century, there was a scientific adamance combined with a sense of the inexplicable:

'The higher quality emerges from the lower level of existence and has its roots therein, but it emerges therefrom, and it does not belong to that level, but constitutes its possessor a new order of existence with its special laws of behaviour. The existence of emergent qualities thus described is something to be noted, as some would say, under the compulsion of brute empirical fact, or, as I should prefer to say in less harsh terms, to be accepted with the "natural piety" of the investigator. It admits no explanation.'

Samuel Alexander: 'Space, Time, and Deity': 1920

Samuel Alexander was notable in many ways, but perhaps of particular significance was his recognition that the mind could not be simply reduced to the firings of neural pathways, that it had at least a significant degree of non-materialist identity, and held in its essence an *emergent* reflex. In this respect he may have been influenced by the earlier philosopher James Stuart Mill who, in his 1829 book 'Analysis of the Phenomena of Human Mind', noted that ideas and thoughts combined can coalesce into a new idea that is greater than the sum of the parts that formed its base.

We can see this quite apparently in an epiphany, whereby a collection of considerations, even long held, can suddenly give birth to a realisation that had been hitherto elusive, manifesting a clarity and *an experience of that clarity* that is clearly greater than the sum of the same parts that had previously failed to perceive it.

Extraordinary also is the manner in which the emergent process of one person's epiphany, transcribed into words and printed in a book, can manifest in the reader a comparable epiphany, as though the written words themselves carry in their ink a residue of the revelation that they describe. More obviously we see this in music, whereby a musician can transcend the simple notes that she plays, move into another level of expression and experience what the Spanish refer to as *duende*, and the listeners too are drawn into the moment and away from themselves, hair on end, lost in this musician's perfect moment in which the music is greater than the sum of its constituent parts; greater than the sum of its notes.

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Whilst there are hundreds of thousands of words that could be spent on emergent properties across different disciplines, and a great deal of highly sophisticated research and theory that could be re-presented, it's within *consciousness* and the *mind* that I want to centre the rest of this article; and I'll continue with the wonderful Jean Gebser, whose 1948 publication 'The Ever Present Origin' is to date probably the most exciting and inspiring book that I've ever read; although I should footnote the grand exclamation of "read" by acknowledging that I'm still probably, after four years, only a third of the way through it.

When I first picked it up, following a recommendation that I took from one of Ken Wilber's works, I felt much as I had when, as a child of antiquarian booksellers, I would occasionally pluck books from the shelves and know that they were important or beautiful without being able to quite understand why.

I barely had any idea what Gebser was talking about at first, but felt transfixed by his words. I put the book down, read up about him from other writers, picked it up again, understood a bit more. On my third attempt, I started to get it. Suddenly the language made some sense to me, and his central theory flowed through these senses. Pleasantly and perfectly, this early experience of the writing of Gebser paralleled the theme of the work itself: I read the words and paragraphs over and over and over and over, and then suddenly an understanding *emerged* in my consciousness that was greater than the sum of the same parts that had previously thwarted me.

Gebser contends that cultural consciousness has unfolded from before the birth of time in clear and distinct emergent structures, each with coherent characteristics that transcend, subsume, and offer some form of antidote to the deficiencies of the previous structure. He tracks and elucidates these patterns of emergence with a breath-taking scholarly and intuitive reference to a range of cultural expressions, including art, literature, architecture, psychology, science, time, perspectivity, and so on. He names these structures: The Archaic, The Magic, The Mythical, The Mental, and The Integral.

The movement from one to the other is not painless, but in fact culturally agonising, much as is the breakdown that may precede transformation in individual process. He understands each structure to have an efficient phase and a deficient phase, and in its latterly collapse towards dissolution we tend towards chaos and destructiveness. The beauty of mythology, for example, which carried in its heart the stories of old and the emergence of soul, became enforced with an absolutism that burnt at the stake those in disagreement. Interestingly, whilst The European Enlightenment condemned such practice, it did itself, in France at least, introduce the guillotine for much the same purpose.

The arrival of the individual from the collective allowed independent and ground-breaking thought to flourish into new ideas and inventions, but the collapse of the self into the narcissistic pathology that drives the current cultural collapse is the deficiency that we may not this time survive.

Despite the distorted selfie of our pathological narcissism, there *is* something special about the human being. Unlike other species, we did learn how to make, control and utilise fire; which kept us warm in the ice-ages and the cataclysms, freed our food from debilitating parasites, provided a context for our socialisation. We *did* become artistic, out of nowhere, establishing a medium that would not only come to express in a variety of ways everything that the human experiences, but would also come to predict and define what was newly emerging in culture. In our ongoing, perhaps unfolding process of *consciousness* we have produced more adaptation and novel emergence than in any other sphere of our evolutionary development.

Let's take for one example among very many the ascent of Mount Ventoux in 1336 by the Renaissance poet and artist Petrarch, a climb that he had fantasised since childhood. He was emotionally overwhelmed by the aesthetic vision of landscape that greeted him at the peak

and, before you consider this to be unremarkable, you should note that Petrarch's is the first such literary description; whereas, previously, views from mountains were considered in utilitarian or military terms only.

He was so moved by his vision that he was made anxious, and turned to his favoured tome by St Augustine, the Christian philosopher, in search of some solace. He came synchronistically upon a passage that condemned the outward gaze in favour of the inward contemplation of soul; and Petrarch descended the mountain in some conflict.

Gebser understands this moment in history, this primary vision of aesthetic landscape firstly as just that, the opening of human consciousness to such an aesthetic, also as the beginning of the *perspectivity* that the Renaissance would come so deeply to explore, the world extending from the self in what perhaps comes also to inspire global exploration and then colonisation, as we are driven to step forward into and occupy the space that we had not before conceived as emanating from our own ego.

Gebser's vision of the dynamics of human cultural consciousness is for me a unique and exceptional experience, and I just wish to say, before moving on, that no writer has effected me quite as he, and no book has changed me quite as his.

Publishing from 1977 to the present day, the exceptional mind of Ken Wilber brilliantly elaborated emergent consciousness from Gebser's five structures into seven fulcrums: Archaic, Magic-tribal, Magic-mythic, Mythic-conformist, Rational-modern, Pluralistic post-modern, and Integral. Whilst he may not be as poetically engaging as Gebser, nor as intuitive, he is way more accessible as well as somewhat elaborating.

Significantly, he coherently links cultural process to individual developmental-process, the latter a subjective imprint of the collective former. What emerges in the species becomes then a potential emergence in the individual; or, as this Jungian Psychologist says:

"The individual has in his own life to follow the road that humanity has trod before him."

Erich Neumann: 'The origins and history of consciousness.' 1954

For example, *emotional individuality* is a highly significant developmental process in a child these days, and a failure for it to emerge can suggest significant psychological and mental difficulties. However, it is only available to emerge in a subjective developmental process because it has already emerged in the species. Back in the day when we were sniffing and snuffling on the ground for food, we weren't concerned with such things.

I found Wilber compelling in many ways, but not least being this description of the inherent force of nature, within which radical processes of growth, evolution and mutation unfold. Of potentially great interest to the psychotherapist is Wilber's detailed linking of emergent fulcrums with psychological process, and personally I'm not aware of a more useful and inspiring account of developmental process.

Archaic	Birth of the physical self
Magic Tribal	Birth of the emotional self
Magic Mythic	Birth of the conceptual self
Mythic Conformist	Birth of the role and rule self
Rational Modern	Birth of the mature self
Pluralistic Post Modern	Birth of the authentic self
Integral	Birth of the Integral self

Wilber extended these fulcrums into detailed transcendent structures also, greatly elaborating on Gebser in this respect. These first seven structures I have detailed as an addendum at the end of this article, though not the latter ones, partly because I don't know them well but also because they are of less benefit to a psychotherapist as few of us move healthily into these transcendent structures of consciousness, instead bypassing the painful psychological work in favour of the somewhat more pleasant energetic identity; and few who do would necessarily seek psychotherapy as a support.

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Before moving on more specifically to the psychotherapeutic relationship, let me briefly reference the complex-system of the human psyche in this context of complexity and emergence:

the human psyche can be influenced but not accurately controlled, nor accurately predicted or pre-determined. It is spontaneously self-organising, holistic, synergistic, can only be understood through the relationship between its parts and in its relational interaction with other complex systems.

As a psychotherapist, therefore, we need an outlook and approach that is holistic, that looks for systemic relationship and synergy, both internally and externally, and facilitates a psychological environment that encourages spontaneous self-organisation, in the client in the context of her relational life, and in the therapeutic relationship itself.

Let's note here too that each human psyche is partially composite of inter-generational psyches, their passed-down wounds, liberations, and dynamic patterns, each a complex system internalised complexly within the complex system of the client, of the therapist, and of the therapeutic relationship. In the therapeutic encounter there are therefore the vibrations of hundreds of complex systems, nested within each other, interacting, co-organising, and guided by rules quite distinct from those that initially formed the building-blocks of our psychotherapeutic models for intervention, containment, growth, and integration.

My sewer-searching hero suddenly seems hopelessly naive and adolescent.

Psychological Process:

If nature demonstrates complexity and emergence, then so must the psychotherapeutic relationship, which can no more exist distinct from these processes than the participants can be excused from gravity. The choices that we are faced with as professionals are firstly whether we embrace them conceptually, and secondly whether we seek an experiential embodiment of them.

If we don't find these perspectives compelling or else not especially significant to the modality that we practice, then of course a disinclination makes sense. If though we do accept them theoretically but with a resistance towards personal embodiment, rather as one might believe in holism yet not seek to develop an holistic experience of oneself, then questions must be considered and answered regarding our position as professionals: do we

require our clients to absorb processes that we ourselves resist, to discard habitual and out-dated belief-systems when we hold on to our own, to surrender to radical change when we our selves remain more or less bound by the comforts of static familiarity.

If so, then whatever the guidelines of our modality, we are committing robustly to a medical-model practice of therapy, in which the expert dispenses healing to the injured from the illusion of a higher-ground that is, in any relational-modality, simply a detachment from process. Whilst justification for doing so might be found if the modality practiced veers its focus away from such perspectives as systemic-holism, intersubjectivity, re-enactment, and so on - perspectives that implicate the psychotherapist in the *re-wounding* as well as in the *healing* processes of therapy - this becomes more difficult when theoretical advances suggest to us that we are working with a mis- or a limited understanding of how a process of therapeutic change *fundamentally* occurs.

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An experiential embodiment must be understood as an ongoing process, of course, and one that absolutely evokes an awareness of one's own *resistance* to that which is being concurrently accepted. In our Rational Modern world we might likely note a concurrent *acceptance* and *resistance to acceptance* as being a conflict, but within a complex-system seemingly opposing positions can be understood as synergistic rather than oppositional; just as a braking system is only oppositional to an accelerator in a car if we are focussing solely on velocity. If we focus instead on the safe and efficient driving of a car, then a braking-system and an accelerator are mutually-reliant.

So even should we adopt principles that fundamentally challenge our paradigm, that overturn our apple-cart, it's essential also to connect with our resistance to do so, and to recognise that both positions are expressions of the same movement in a complex-system that requires both the *stability* that allows a sense of balance and equilibrium and the *instability* that allows for new emergence

We need both acceptance and resistance.

This conflict between *instability-change* and *stability-stasis* is built deep in me, as my father, at least before he married my mother, very much consciously occupied the former whilst my mother the latter. I can still feel the argument in my mind, in which in one breath I want to encourage more anarchy from my father, more disruption, more overturning of apple-carts, and then in the next breath a castigation towards him for any impulse to do so, as surely the stability of the family must come first.

I can see my life as being, at least for its first few decades, a tension in this respect between my internal-father and my internal-mother; in fact perhaps the tension that they themselves never fully inhabited, as my father I think concentrated his rebelliousness into a fantasy-world that left his real world relatively untouched by his more adventurous side, but left him also somewhat emotionally absent.

My father was driven to escape from the crushing mediocrity of his birth-home life and of the conventional culture that strangled him. I remember very clearly him speaking of his discovery of Jazz in the early 1940's, the blast of rhythm, movement, sex, emotion and potency that crushed underfoot the brass-band musical culture that he grew up within; and I understand this story as literal, metaphorical, fractal, even holographic: his whole early-life is condensed herein. He found challenging literature, psychology, the arts, and made the pilgrimage to the 1950's Soho in London, where many Bohemians found themselves when in search of something flagrantly different from convention.

My mother, somewhat younger than my father, grew up in London during the second world war, in which her father was fighting. Bombs fell on London, killed people, destroyed their bakery business, and in the absence of the mobile phones that were some sixty years away, they never knew, from moment to moment, whether the deeply loved husband and father was still alive.

It's not at all surprising that, upon his return, safety became the priority, as I'm sure that, along with most other families with their men at war, the only thing that mattered *was* their safe return. I doubt alternatively if many folk wished their absent men a powerful metaphysical experience on their journey. Come home safely. That was all.

Interestingly though, my mother chose to marry my father despite how different he was to all of the many other men in her family. She wanted some of that particular kind of adventure. It was in her shadow. And my father chose to marry this woman who, despite

being perhaps a little unusual for her milieu, did want the safety and security of a stable family. Stability was in his shadow.

So I have a conflicted inclination towards both positions, and the drive of each of these is slowly becoming grounded by the other in a way that allows me to more closely feel the relationship between them, their tension, their synergy, whereas in the past I've tended towards either being too comfortable and stable in myself, or else inclined to jump blindly into the deep-end because an intuitive spark tells me to. I can understand this as my father's excesses jumping in at the last moment to save me from my mother's lack thereof. What I have always understood as conflicted, I'm beginning to acknowledge as synergistic:

I need them both, to protect me from the perilous or stagnating blindspots of the other.

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Whether of the infant discovering the need to walk or the old man stepping into the invitation of his death, transformations (rather than incremental change) are emergent, greater than the sum of their parts, and so too are the nervous breakdowns that, post puberty, have an increasing likelihood of preceding and thwarting a transformation. Breakdowns have a bad-press because they can be so scary and painful, the boatman rudderless in white water, and the journey threatening to abandon us on a shore whose essential characteristics we might never have imagined to be our fate.

This is the nature of complex emergence: it might certainly unfold within us as (*what-we-might-understand-to-be*) a developmental stride, but it also dissolves our castles-in-the-sky, our fantasies, prophecies and predictions, false selves, aspirations, idealisations, and assumptions, our habituations, compulsions and structures of character, our definition of what we think life should look like; and this is not always easy, and rarely wished for in advance of its manifestation. A breakdown like a transformation can take us anywhere, and in the following quote I think we might use these terms synonymously:

"The talent for transformation which has given man so much power over all other creatures has as yet scarcely been considered or begun to be understood. Though everyone possesses it, uses it and

takes it for granted, yet it is one of the great mysteries, and few are aware that to it they owe what is best in themselves. It is extremely difficult to understand the true nature of transformation. The most hopeful course is to approach it from several different angles."

Elias Canetti: 'Crowds and Power.' 1960

The capacity to break down the structures of our psyche that don't serve us well despite our attachment to them, and the capacity to engage in a radical mutation of consciousness, are inherent reflexes within us, affording us the impulse to develop in the giant strides that a more Darwinian rhythm disallows; and despite (or *along with*) our resistance to doing so. Over the years I have often heard people reference past-selves whose behaviour and attitudes are bewilderingly distant to them in the present day, or relationships of the deepest significance in one era that have come to feel utterly irrelevant in another.

Our process of transformation begins from the earliest times of our life, as we develop a physical self, an emotional and conceptual self, and so on, through adolescence and into the individuating path of adulthood, whose entire length is notable for its periods of radical change in our way of experiencing and being in the world.

*

Intuition is what we call the experience of knowing something without knowing how we know it, an invaluable tool for the psychotherapist though a subject that seems to be bizarrely under-discussed in the literature. There are a small handful of books available, and notably most of them were written in the last few years.

Intuition is an emergent process, of course, as a concrete route to the realisation cannot, by its nature, be accurately defined. Even were we able to forensically deconstruct the sources of our intuition, as might Sherlock, nevertheless the moment of intuition is emergent. It is greater than the sum of its parts, and it arrives spontaneously, crossing subjective boundaries and crossing space.

I'm aware of four generalised types of therapist when it comes to intuition:

- Those who simply don't feel it.
- Those who feel it but don't trust it.

- Those who experience and trust, but still think of it as being kind of magical.
- Those who wholeheartedly accept and work with it instinctively and with focussed consideration.

I wonder if the defining quality is whether we think that we are entirely distinct from each other or not. If we believe that we are all essentially separate, then it will be hard to imagine how something significant from one person's psyche might spontaneously manifest in another, but if we instead believe that we are both separate *and* coalesced then it feels natural to experience the apparent transmission of information between our bodies and minds.

Personally I've come to believe that everything that I spontaneously think, feel, intuit, or imagine in a session is significant to the client's therapeutic process, for why else would it have arrived in my mind? Even when it seems to be a gross distraction, a clear emanation from my own psyche, I would assume that this particular distraction means something in situ.

Sometimes this is obvious: I'm thinking now of a client who in his first session was telling me how he had been abused as a child but that it was no longer a problem for him. His face was broad and smiling, amicable and accepting whilst I had the spontaneous image of beating the shit out of a cowering priest. It was towards the end of the session when he told me that his abuser had been a priest, confirming what I had already assumed.

Most of the time it isn't so obvious though, not such a clear-cut rendition of my client's shadow in my own psyche; but why would we consider the emanation of a surprising thought, feeling, or image to be only significant if we can easily define its origin? I once called a long-term client by the wrong name, which could have been put down as a mistake, a tiredness, even an enactment of her early experience of being always forgotten. But I could sense that it was none of these and, pushing against her understandable irritation, after a few moments she had a memory emerge of a doll she had by that name when she was an infant; a lonely, rejected, and abused infant who told her secrets to this doll. With the return of the doll came the return of the secrets.

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As with intuition, anything that appears to be non-linear in its expressions may be subject to a suspicion that veers from doubt to ridicule to aggressive disregard. For a great many people *synchronicity* makes no sense because it seems impossible to rationally explain how it might be that the universe is directly responsive to one's own psyche, how symbols and representations immediately significant to me will emerge in my proximity and my awareness.

In the West especially, we tend to instinctively veer away from any notion or sense of an alive universe, in which we might therefore be interactive, integrative, holistic-systemic, or holographic participants. In such a universe, synchronicity would seem obvious and inevitable.

It's interesting that awareness of synchronicity seems to increase around times of change and transformation, their emergence more common and concentrated. For me currently, this is related to *time*. Time has been bothering me for a few years now. For decades I thought of time as being identical to the human construct of it, broken down into rhythmic structures, exactly like a clock. Then I learnt about Einstein's *time* being merged with *space*, into *spacetime*; dynamic, bendable, relative, existent. I thought a lot about how the ancient people discovered time by looking at the movements of the solar system before their eyes in the unpolluted skies, time defined by night and day, by the passage of seasons, and so on. I was intrigued to learn that there is no such thing as NOW, only HERE and NOW, also that time moves differently at speed and at height. The world of time opened up to me, conceptually. There was no synchronicity though, just a diligent curiosity.

One morning recently over breakfast I was abruptly overwhelmed by the sensation that the second that I was currently living in was the only second that had ever existed, that every other second, both past and future, was simply enfolded within it. I hadn't ever felt anything like that in my life, and I still don't quite know exactly what it all means. It happened about a dozen times a day spontaneously, and now I can bring the experience on with a focus.

This all became a little too much after a while, and I welcomed a Christmas and New Year break with a determination to watch lots of Netflix. I watched a film first that I thought

looked fun, and it turned out to be about the dissolution of time. I turned to one of very many box-sets that I'd marked as potentials over the last few years. I hadn't looked into it at all. It transpired to be a very dark German story centred around the dissolution of time. When I finally finished it, I decided just to watch another film, which also transpired again to be about the dissolution of time. In this break, two supervisees contacted me, discussing their experience of time-distortion, questioning the meaning and structure of time, neither with an awareness that the subject was personally intriguing to me; and I have just recently learnt that a friend of mine in another country, who I have never met, is experiencing something extremely similar to my emerging relationship with enfolded time; in particular this:

Just last week I noticed that I have almost no memory any more of my childhood. It's a far away sea of something with the occasional lighthouse dotted across the shore. It's virtually gone. I don't care about it. It feels to have no meaning. The same is so with past relationships, even those that were long and significant. They're now suddenly very distant, meaningless even. I don't think that I've ever felt calmer in my life.

My latest thought about time,
which arrived spontaneously,
is that time is an organism.

I don't know what this means, or if it's going to go anywhere. I mention it simply because it emerged in my mind and I couldn't shake it off as a foolish flight of fancy, despite stridently trying.

Within the world of psychotherapy, the distortion and dissolution of time are not unusual experiences, of course, as the nature of trauma itself includes a merging between the past and the present. Also, the presence of inter-generational patterns, traumas, and wounds demonstrates a disruption in strict linear time, whereby we might be in dialogue or conflict with a character long-dead in the mortal world.

Time, identity, and spatial separation are further disrupted in the emergent complexity of *re-enactment*. Re-enactment is when the complex dynamics of a primary trauma re-emerge and manifest in the unconscious dynamics of the therapeutic relationship. Whereas for example a client might have *transferentially* constructed the therapist as a controlling father, with re-enactment the therapist becomes not only a controlling father, but *the* controlling father, occupying the uprising energy of the primary wound as it constellates relationally and unconsciously; in line with its fundamental nature.

The seemingly magical way in which the dissociated, wounded pattern of one person can re-emerge, manifest and *re-enact* in the unconscious dynamics with others, replaying the primary story in both dramatic and nuanced detail, is for me the most beautiful example of a complex and emergent process:

the uprising and constellating details of one person's old story manifests in the unconscious psycho-energetic process of another, coalescing with that person's own psychological history in what appears to be an inherent drive for a re-experience that is thoroughly out of the conscious control of both parties. There would seem to be a teleological movement towards the experience of inter-connection and trauma-repetition, which might be understood as self-destructive, but is principally an attempt to re-experience and thereby re-write in the present-day how it is that the dynamics of an old wounding story and the defensive adaptation emanating from it have become imprinted in the relational psyche.

*

This seemingly magical quality of complexity and emergence, apparent in transformation, synchronicity, intuition, and re-enactment, reveals itself distinctly also in the dreamworld. Whether understanding dreams as the unconscious processing of daily events, wish-fulfilment, movement towards resolving moral conflict, the symbolic re-enactment of wounds and traumas, prophecies, parallel lives, inter-dimensional interactions, or whatever, the unfolding of a dream-narrative is spontaneous, complex and emergent, undefined and unpredictable, often defying rationale, laws of physics, and conscious preoccupation. And of course the meanderings of the dream-world are prized by an analytic mind for exactly their

complex and emergent qualities, for bypassing the rigours of the waking-life's egoic capacity to bolt the doors, black out the windows, misdirect, and privilege habituality, familiarity, and comfort.

The same is so with the use of psychedelics to aid and enable therapeutic process, encouraging the psyche to unravel in a manner that undermines the habitual, compulsive adaptational-structures that serve to protect against uprising energies that might be disruptive. Of course, psychedelics also open the door to deeper processes, especially of a spiritual character, by which I mean deeply inherent in nature, though not necessarily easily accessible with normal processing.

There is a long history of this indulgence, going right back at least 100,000 years to the early shamans, whose job it was to become the bridge between the mortal world and the transcendent realm of spirits. This path led at some indiscernible time to what would become The Mysteries, ancient sects known for transcendent experience presumed to be centred around hallucinogenic plants, who kept their methods and experience so secret that still little is known in detail about their practices. Interestingly, it is considered that Jesus of Nazareth himself may have engaged in these spiritual rituals, and that this may have been what distinguished the twelve disciples from other worshipping folk. It was the chosen disciples who did the deep work, who explored radical emergent transformation rather than simply a new moral and spiritual belief-system.

*

Given that complexity and emergence are defining qualities of nature, definitively therefore they must permeate all levels of psychological process, and we use very many terms and perspectives so readily that we can neglect to pay closer attention to the same non-linear qualities that can seem so striking in transformation, intuition, re-enactment, and the dreamworld.

Projective identification, the internalisation of objects, the formation of self-states, inter-generational patterns, systemic dynamics, embodied transference and counter-transference, de-realisation, character-formation, the collective unconscious, the formation and embodiment of archetypes, and so on; all of which can sound bizarre to those who

haven't studied or witnessed them repetitively, none of which had been fully theoretically delineated before the last 150 years or so, and so would have been problematic even for those in related fields. Yet we know and work with them intuitively.

Sometimes the most bizarre can become ordinary simply because we know it through repetitive experience, yet we can nevertheless dismiss other processes that rely upon similar characteristics and qualities. I have for example heard many who proclaim from a scientific background assert the impossibility of homeopathy, insisting that there are no models by which highly diluted remedies could possibly be effective; yet physics itself offers us chaos-theory and complexity-theory, which clearly clarify just such a potentiality in nature.

*

The integration of complexity and emergence will require and inspire from many of us a considerable revision as to how we experience our life as well as our manner of engaging in the therapeutic encounter. Most notably, whilst we must maintain our capacity to contain and work with the therapeutic process using an expertise that is not the responsibility of the client, we must also acknowledge that the belief that this expert-position distances us from being fully active in the therapeutic process is an illusion. If our clients are subject to complexity and emergence then unavoidably so are we and so is the relationship itself.

Our detached expertise now paradoxically requires us
to be able to stand back and observe
the extent to which we are utterly immersed.

Witnessing and seeking to hold conflicts such as this are central to working with complexity, as it is the tension held between opposing positions that provides the environment from which change might spontaneously self-organise. Indeed, it is ideal if we can step into a realisation of how it is that these conflicted positions are synergistic. In the above example it's clear: we are by virtue of psychological nature immersed in the process, but must also maintain the detached expert-position that affords analysis, interpretation, conceptual understanding, and the intensity and safety of therapeutic containment.

The conflicts to be held are on many dimensions: relational, inter-generational, sometimes in a complex web of psychological correlations that play out through different systems connected to both client and therapist, and in their relationship to each other. Here's an example:

My long-standing client announces that he will banish his son from his house if he catches him taking drugs. I question if, in doing so, he is banishing his own wish to rebel against the harsh rules that his own father tightened around him as a child, and continues to do so despite being no more of this earth: banishing his son's rebellion as his father banished his own? My client says:

Oh my god, you're right...I've become my father and my son's become me.

His epiphany rapidly gathered some steam, and he came quickly to realise (even though I'd mentioned it a number of times before) that he and his siblings had all become bound in corsets at the behest of their controlling father, rigidly and tediously compliant to the elders, to religion, to polite-society, to their inner-sanctioning voices. My image of their family-gatherings was of a collection of virtue-signallers encircled by their interesting children, who secretly brought life and vitality to the family energy; though not necessarily always with dignity.

As he threw his arms open wide, towards himself, his son and towards life in general, so his wider family-system began to fall apart. As the oldest son of his own controlling father, his had been a forceful and coherent voice within the family-system, and its change in shape had a considerable impact. The family-spell had been broken. The balloon had popped. Some of the children who had been living in the desert of the hinterland moved closer homeward, and some of the others became engaged in a more openly challenging stance with their parental dictates, bringing the conflict out of the darkness and into the light.

As the complex-system of my client's psyche radically and spontaneously self-organised into a new form, so it translated outward to the other complex-systems of the wider family. We could say that it was my (frankly, somewhat unremarkable) analysis that opened the door to such significant change, in a kind of linear way, but that's all it did. All of the rest of

the change, or most of it, emerged and erupted spontaneously throughout the family system with little or no influence from me.

It was certainly far greater than the sum of its primary constituent parts.

What I *had* done, however, and which remained less measurable, was to contain in our therapeutic system an honouring of his strident attachment to rules in its tension with my instinctive opposition to them. I understood that I was a representation of his rebellious son and of his own rebellious shadow, that he and his controlling father also ostensibly represented so many authority figures who I had challenged over the years; and (as with the family children) sometimes with dignity, sometimes not so much.

I understood that my client's controlling father had good reason to fear the urge to rebel against the fundamentalist culture in which their family-system was nested, that compliance had a realistic as well as an habitual quality of self-protection to it. Although this controlling suppression belonged to another era, its character was to be deeply respected even as it was to be moved away from. Quite plausibly and paradoxically the family would not now be in the situation in which they could change their cultural values had it not been for their forceful imposition in the first place.

I understood that there was a complex, multi-relationship, deeply-rooted attachment to the habitual position (compliance and safety), alongside an emerging liberation from the dungeon it had become. The tensions and conflicts were many, and I paid close attention to how they emerged and played out within me; intuitively, conceptually, imagistically, transferentially, and in enactment.

This was the work, most of it done quietly. The actual interpretation itself, the suggestion that by banishing his son he was banishing himself, was so obvious and uninspired that it can only really be understood as warranting the credit for such a subsequent tsunami of change by being seen as the tiny splinter that finally burst a fractured dam, the straw that broke the burdened camel's back, the utter simplicity from which a radical mutation can manifest; *but only when we understand this process in terms of complexity and emergence.*

From within a cause-and-effect landscape,
it was just a little bit next-to-nothing.

So whilst this unravelling of habitual positions across interlinked systems might be understood to have been impossible without my initial interpretation and my client's synergistic capacity to embody its meaning, the unravelling itself was clearly *emergent*. It had a life of its own. It was self-propellent.

As psychotherapists we can take credit, of course, and the more enamoured by our expertise we are the more we may be inclined to do so, but to do so is to miss the point, is to condense and solidify an unfolding process of nature into a self-satisfying cause-and-effect narcissism. In this particular story, who is the most significant participant? Me, the client, his son, his brothers, their wives, their hinterland children? To single out a particular moment or person in this scenario is silly, virtually meaningless, and bypasses the far more interesting tapestry of our energetic and psychological entwining.

*

We can have a need for certainty more than we sometimes celebrate the presence of complexity, inclined towards the stability of *knowing* rather than the instability of not. Certainty befits any preference for the expert medical-model therapeutic-position, of course, but ironically only in a culturally-dated way. Certainty is a principle that certainly belongs to a pre-quantum world in which there was still a pervading deterministic predictability, and to a pre-postmodern world in which reality has only one face. In contrast, the complex world is largely one of explicit or else lingering uncertainty, like Heraclitus' river that is always in flux, never the same, or Bohm's truth which is always dynamic and never fixed; and it requires some courage sometimes to surrender the canoe to our intuitive relationship with the fast moving water of multi-dimensional dynamic process.

This might sound to be dramatic, but in fact often it is quite to the contrary. As a therapist we can be inclined to deliver a powerful session, one to write home about, one that the client will be impressed and moved by, but so very often the greater challenge is to facilitate the sessions that, rather than impress, simply serve to establish an environment from which

radical change might at some point emerge; not necessarily in the session itself, and not necessarily in a manner from which we will receive any credit for it whatsoever.

*

So we don't have to entirely shed our expert-position, but certainly its habituality. We need to seek an awareness of our engagement in the process, our role in the wound that we believe our selves to be seeking a solution to. We need to look for the story in all of its paradoxical aspects, maintain the tension between these fragments, and seek to understand their synergistic identity despite their more apparent conflict.

However, shedding an habitual expert-position is somewhat more attractive-sounding than it is necessarily easy to implement, and it is certainly in my own experience easier to imagine that I have implemented it than it is to have actually done so. The same is so with certainty. I've been acclaiming the virtues of therapeutic uncertainty for some decades now, but I see myself in many sessions micro-adjusting to deliver to myself, my client, or the relationship some sense of certainty, clarity, a solid ground. I'm not suggesting that this is wrong as such, but rather noticing that I do so out of habit, out of reflex, despite knowing that not so much interesting stuff happens when we are standing on sturdy foundations.

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So in general, I feel that to begin to work with complexity and emergence, presuming that we have come to accept them conceptually, we need to deconstruct our paradigm accordingly whilst acknowledging how it is that we hold on to it tight; particularly if we think that we don't. We should seek multiple concurrent perspectives, as Picasso introduced into culture in his early cubist period, as the post-modernists have emphasised, and as quantum superposition defines in the sub-atomic wave-particle that is all of its possibilities at the same time.

Every single moment that we focus upon has a complex and multi-dimensional, inter-generational, inter-subjective story behind it, within which it is woven, that gives it depth

and perspective, nuance, conflict, and complex synergy of wildly varying visions; yet we tend towards that which we can understand, and thereby that with which we can have some kind of illusion of control.

Psychotherapy, as with the psyche, cannot be about certainty nor clarity, at least not for longer than a passing period of time. It is in flux. It is out of control. It is profoundly self-organising. And yet, as an unfolding process that we might sit within, it most usually can be trusted; not to deliver necessarily anything comfortable, but to deliver an emergent, unfolding process of ever-deepening complex experience that goes...somewhere... certainly with significance, and possibly even with intent.

Addendum:

Following are the first seven fulcrums of Ken Wilber's elaboration of emergent consciousness. You will see that they are given a cultural-historical context as well as a subjective developmental context. The developmental process is understood to emerge in the individual because it has emerged already on a collective cultural level. For example: we only work towards a separate sense of personal identity because the species has invented the experiential notion of such a thing.

Saying this, there are the occasional trail-blazers, those who take culture beyond itself, who introduce the paradigm-shift that the rest of us will from then have the opportunity to integrate in to our own individual developmental-process.

Some people are emergent, greater than the sum of their parts, though in our world of pathological narcissism we should probably note that, contrary to the self-belief of many, these people are very very rare, and certainly not defined by the total of their sycophantic social-media cheerleaders.

Wilber draws upon and correlates many thinkers, and I've tried to form a coherent structure via a number of different sources. Notably:

- **Basics sphere of consciousness:** reference to Jean Gebser
- **Cognitive line:** Jean Piaget and Sri Aurobindo.
- **Self identity:** Jane Loevinger.
- **Values:** Clare Graves.

Wilber understands that each structure of consciousness is emergent, that it transcends but includes those structures that it is subsequent to, subsumes them even as it forms a novel property that is far beyond them in complexity; just as a molecule transcends but includes an atom, a cell a molecule, an organ a cell, an organism an organ; and so on.

Of the many developmental-systems that I've read,
this is the one that I find most useful, that I most often refer to.

Fulcrum 1:

The Birth of The Physical Self.

Emerges around 4 to 9 months of age.

Undifferentiated self.

Pre-moral.

Evolutionary roots: began about 300,000 years BCE. (Foraging)

Basic Sphere of Consciousness: archaic.

Cognitive line: basic sensorimotor.

Self-identity: undifferentiated.

Values: survival.

Bottom line: staying alive.

Characteristic Pathology: Psychoses. Schizoid characters.

Having survived birth, the first few months of life are an adualistic transition-phase, in which there is no separate self, except in the eye of a beholder. No inside or outside, no body or environment, but an undifferentiated, pre-temporal, pre-spatial, pre-conscious world where everything is everything and there is no I. Freud's 'primary narcissism' and Jung's 'Pleromatic fusion.'

Our first emergent task is to begin to identify with our physical body, to gradually develop a perception of where we begin and the environment ends, towards a *seating of consciousness* in the physical body. A reliably accurate perception of physical self and boundary will take time and practice, but this is the dawning of self-distinction.

I and It.

There is an increase in sensorimotor co-ordination and dexterity, a capacity to experience the world through the senses, the emergence of primitive emotions, and the beginnings of a fight or flight response.

If consciousness fails *adequately* to centre itself in the physical body, the experience of self and object will remain highly confused, with significant characteristics of this structure in adults being severe reality-distortion, hallucinatory images and thoughts, narcissistic

delusions of reference, and hallucinatory wish-fulfilment. Physical contact can be felt as inherently confusing, disturbing and invasive.

If consciousness fails *completely* to centre itself in the physical body for organic reasons, the consequences for self-care and self-identity will be likely severe; and, if for developmental reasons, will likely manifest in psychoses.

Fulcrum 2:

The Birth of the Emotional self:

Emerges around 15-24 months of age.

Emotionally Symbiotic.

Pre-moral.

Evolutionary roots: Began about 50,000 BCE

(European Early Modern Humans 45,000 BCE)

(Language established 50,000 BCE)

(Horticulture 20,000 BCE)

Basic Sphere of Consciousness: magic-tribal.

Cognitive line: pre-operational (symbiotic).

Self needs: physiological.

Self-identity: impulsive.

Values: magic-animistic.

Bottom line: safety and security.

Characteristic Pathology: Narcissistic-borderline. Splitting and fusion of self and object-representations, and a splitting of all-good and all-bad objects.

Although the separate physical self is on the path to becoming more clearly distinguished, the emotional self remains fused with those around it, especially the mother, in an intense boundary-less narcissism. As the emotional self begins to differentiate from the emotional environment, we begin to wake up to the conflicted experience that we are each a separate self.

I and You.

The boundaries between self and object are still developing and on a spectrum of differentiation. The self can confuse itself with its environment, the environment can be seen to take on human-like qualities, and the self can be imagined to magically influence the environment. The perception tends to be fantasy-based, wherein every wish is expected to

materialise, and every wish that does materialise does so because it has been willed. The world is enchanted, and there is a capacity to sense and attach to mystery and magic.

The wishes are basic in an infant, and announced with a cry that is magically responded to (hopefully) by an enormous, looming, loving Goddess; although sometimes the cry summons the angry, impatient, exhausted, or self-absorbed Witch. All-good, and all-bad; a theme whose common manifestation in cinema suggests the extent to which many of us still identify with or at least resonate with this structure.

Significant characteristics of this structure if it doesn't go well are that the self may remain in fusion at an emotionally narcissistic stage, whereby others exist as an extension of the self, leading towards narcissistic pathologies; or else differentiation begins but remains unresolved and unintegrated, leading towards borderline pathologies. The self remains confused with the other, and perception of other can remain split between all-good and all-bad. A belief in voodoo-like curses and good-luck charms, magical beliefs, superstitions and mystical signs, practices believed to influence nature, such as rain-dances.

Fulcrum 3:

The birth of the conceptual self:

Emerges around 4 years of age.

Egocentric.

Pre-conventional.

Evolutionary roots: Began about 15000 years ago.

(Agrarian Revolution 11000 years ago)

Basic Sphere of Consciousness: magic-mythic.

Cognitive line: pre-operational (conceptual). The representational mind.

Self needs: safety.

Self-identity: self-protective.

Values: egocentric.

Bottom line: power and action.

Characteristic Pathology: psycho-neuroses. Repression, dissociation.

By now, the self has hopefully transcended its exclusive identification with the emotional level of consciousness, and is no longer only a collection of sensations, impulses, and emotions, but also beginning to identify with the mental or conceptual self, with the representational mind - which comprises *images*, which begin to emerge around 7 months; *symbols*, in our second year; and *concepts*, which dominate from 4-7 years.

The mind is now structured and strong enough to repress and dissociate lower impulses, to establish neurosis, and an anxiety about safety and security fuelled by a strong set of power-drives and a continuing inability to *clearly* take a perspective other than our own, can leave us inclined to take what we want, and believe that whatever we want is right because we want it.

The self is understood as egocentric. This doesn't suggest a strong and robust ego. To the contrary, the egoic sense of self is still underdeveloped, but the immediate world and its inhabitants, although now differentiated, are still very much seen from our own perspective.

In the previous magic stage we will have experienced an enchanted and magical merging with the environment, which is imagined to be influenced by our will, but we are now

gradually emerging insecurely into the realisation that this isn't so. We cannot control nature, but *someone* can. Gods, Goddesses, all-powerful God-given leaders, spirits, superheroes - all given energy through this increased power-drive and our insecure sense of existence. An attention to superstitions, prayer, and worship will protect us.

Egocentric magic power gives way to egocentric prayer and ritual.

Significant characteristics of this stage are the beginnings of a healthy drive towards self-empowerment, seeking of opportunity, self-promotion, and conceptual thinking. Self-interest is heightened - our own needs, protection, security, and power. Vigilance and aggression, courage and determination, an attachment to the mythic, an idealised attachment to gurus and prophets, mentalities of conquering and domination, heroism, the demand for immediate gratification, the chronic need for respect, the supernatural.

Fulcrum 4:

The birth of the Role Self and Rule Self:

Emerges around 7 years of age

Ethnocentric.

Conventional.

Evolutionary roots: Began about 5000 BCE.

(Organised Religion.)

(Writing and recorded history 3000 BCE)

Basic Sphere of Consciousness: mythic-conformist.

Cognitive line: concrete operational.

Self needs: belonging.

Self-identity: conformist.

Values: absolutistic.

Bottom line: stability and purposeful life. Love and belongingness.

Characteristic Pathology: script pathology. False self.

We can now take the role of the other and seek to identify ourselves within a group - the tribe, family, peer-group - within which we begin to take **roles**, and our new interest in the integrity of the community encourages the development of **rules** to protect it. We are no longer egocentric, but ethnocentric.

Us.

This can be a highly conformist and absolutistic stage of consciousness. Thinking is concrete, and things are taken literally, including family scripts and religious myths which offer some kind of meaning, understanding, or purpose in life. Those who don't conform can become outcast. In families, this will be the black-sheep, the scapegoat whose power and anarchic insight is diminished by pity and the implication of mental health problems.

Significant characteristics of this stage are the focus on a mission, laws, regulations, rules, discipline, duty, honour, morality and righteous living, right and wrong, black and white, one correct way to think, convention, conformity, us versus them, puritanism, fundamentalism,

nationalism, totalitarianism, salvation, primary prophets, a sin-free-life, heaven upon death, codes of chivalry and honour, devout patriotism, an habitual role within the family or group; and a clear sense of self may be sacrificed for a group-cause or belief-system. There may be a distorted personal and worldview narrative, inherited family-scripts, and an identification with the *false self*. Feedback can be heard as personal disapproval. Values that differ from our own may be entirely dismissed or scorned.

Culture wars:

Historically, this structure conflicted ideologically with its magic predecessor, most explicitly in The Church's condemnation of heretic magical practices such as witchcraft and paganism, although interestingly The Church does of course celebrate the magical in its own scriptures, under the guise of miracles; and it conflicted also with the emerging sciences, such as of Galileo. As an absolutistic structure, there was an inclination to respond to both of its ideological enemies with banishment, imprisonment, or death.

Fulcrum 5:

The Birth of The Mature Self.

Emerges in Adolescence.

Worldcentric.

Post-conventional.

Evolutionary roots: Began about 1750.

(European enlightenment)

(Industrial Revolution)

Basic Sphere of Consciousness: Rational Modern.

Cognitive Line: formal operational awareness.

Self needs: self-esteem.

Self-identity: conscientious.

Values: multiplistic.

Bottom line: success and autonomy. Achievement.

Characteristic Pathology: Identity neuroses.

Concrete Operational Awareness operates on the concrete world, actually needing to do something in order to see how it's done. Formal Operational Awareness, typical of this Rational Modern stage, operates on thought itself. Thinking about thinking, the capacity to reflect upon reflections with a self-critical eye, and to see the world more objectively; all leading towards a greater self-awareness.

Concrete Operational Awareness allows for different perspectives to be taken, but Formal Operational Awareness allows them to be understood as being relative to each other.

Introspection is possible, and our inner visions are no longer from external nature, from mythic gods, or from conventional others, but from an inner voice. The moral stance moves from conventional to post-conventional, and we can criticise our own conventional society rather than being merely identified with it. Rules and roles can be judged rather than accepted wholesale. However, this can lead to an identity-crisis when we find that we no longer benefit the family-convention, narrative and myths.

If I don't belong here, where do I belong?

A **planetary** consciousness emerges in line with a further narcissistic de-centring, another transcendence. No longer fully identified with conformity, with fitting-in to a localised sense of group, the self now has global perspective and wants to succeed independently and stand out from the crowd.

Significant characteristics of this stage are a focus on progress, prosperity, optimism, self-reliance, risk-taking and competitiveness, goals and professional development, rationality, objectivism, demonstrated results, technology and the power of science, the spread of wealth, advancement, capitalism and materialism, “if it’s not quantifiable or measurable it can be dismissed”, a sense of justice, equality.

Cultural wars: Rational Modernity, in evolutionary terms, brought much to the party. Modern science, medicine, physics, biology, collective medical-care, the prevention and combatting of disease, a belief in universal rights, democracy, the legal end to slavery, the rise of feminism, and so on. The beneficial impact of Rational Modernity can be seen and experienced on nearly every level of our functional existence.

All of these developments were made possible, in large part, by the differentiation between the arts, morality, and science that Rational Modernity forged. No longer, for example, would a scientific discovery or theory be silenced under the threat of heresy, or an artist condemned for not having a religious muse. Mythicism was the convention, and Rational Modernists were set free by post-convention.

Rational Modernity can be reductively seen to have emerged in response to, and as a perceived antidote to, the excesses and domination of its Mythic predecessor; but as with its predecessor it is, at its extremes, absolutely certain of itself. Rational Modernism believes itself to be the road to truth.

Just as the myth (an archetypal reservoir *for* the collective psycho-spiritual human experience) became pervasively understood in literal terms, so the empirical perspective became reductionist and positivistic to an extreme; existence explained solely in terms of matter/energy and reducible parts: the death of the spiritual, the symbolic, the holistic, the systemic, the interpretive, the uncertain, and the subjective along with the literal-mythic.

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It's worth noting in passing that a number of significant physicists of the twentieth century expressed belief in a realm of existence that is unexplainable by the abstraction of maths, and this acknowledgement was a foot in the door of postmodernism.

Fulcrum 6:

The Birth of The Authentic self.

Emerges in adulthood.

World-centric.

Integral-aperspectival

Evolutionary roots:

Began about 1960

(Information revolution.)

Basic Sphere of Consciousness: Pluralistic post-modern.

Cognitive line: pluralistic mind. (Meta-systemic planetary mind).

Self needs: self-actualisation.

Values: relativistic, communitarian, egalitarian.

Self-identity: individualistic.

Bottom line: community harmony, equality, and human-bonds.

Characteristic Pathology: existential pathology.

When the self's centre of gravity identifies with this stage we can *inhabit* a global perspective rather than just talk about it or use it to our advantage. There is a sensitivity towards others and to the environment, as an antidote to the relatively-cold rationality of Modernism.

All of us.

Reality is now a question of subjectivity, intersubjectivity and interpretation in a minefield of social-constructs, and we become more conscious and tolerant of the complexities of life, as well as of individual and cultural struggles, as we begin to question old identities and understand systemic connections. Whereas *thought* was central to the Rational Modern stage, *feeling* is central to the Post Modern Pluralist; which is a significant movement towards the experience of an integrated body-mind self.

Significant characteristics of this stage are a focus on harmony and equality, reconciliation, consensus, dialogue, relationships, bonding and spirituality, deconstruction, diversity and

multiculturalism, relativism and pluralism, civil rights and environmentalism. A scientific focus moves towards quantum, complexity and chaos rather than its more cause-and-effect and reductionist precedent. We become more interested in personal accomplishments that are independent of socially-sanctioned reward.

Culture wars:

The *postmodern performative-contradiction*, its theoretical blindspot, is seen at the extremes of this stage of consciousness: the pure postmodern vision is that, due to everything being a social-construct, the highest understanding of life is that there is no higher understanding of life. The most advanced perspective on life is that all perspectives are equal.

So for example: a racist worldview that de-privileges those from a different ethnic group would have to be understood by strict postmodernism as being of equal value as a worldview that does not; such as postmodernism itself. Postmodernism can thereby champion exactly that which it disclaims.

When this performative-contradiction remains unresolved, the tension between the absolute but mutually-excluding positions can collapse into itself, toxifying its contradiction with a rigid code, a thought-police mentality, or an enforced definition of political-correctness that is aimed at anyone who is non-adherent, and with an ironic disregard for context. This contradiction becomes reconciled in the subsequent *Integral* structure of consciousness.

Fulcrum 7:

The Birth of The Integral Self.

Emerges in adulthood.

World-centric.

Beginning of transpersonal.

Evolutionary Roots: The leading edge of evolution.

Basic Sphere of Consciousness: integral.

Cognitive line: low vision-logic.

Self needs: self-transcendence.

Values: systemic.

Self-identify: autonomous.

Bottom line: wholeness.

Characteristic of the previous structures is our fixation with and within them, an identification that can be distrusting or contemptuous of the perspectives of other structures. This is most obvious culturally with the relationships between magic and mythicism, mythicism and modernism, modernism and post-modernism; each to some degree being both an antidote to the extremes of its predecessor, and a disguised representation of that which is being inoculated against.

This can lead to the familiar character who is in fact
exactly the problem that he thinks that he is the solution to.

This *Integral* sphere understands, values, sees the benefit and inevitable necessity of all of the structures. As a 'nested-hierarchy', all of the preceding structures have been subsumed and embraced within the most sophisticated of the structures. To disregard the value of any particular structure of consciousness would be to misunderstand the process of evolution. However relatively unsophisticated an atom might be, there can be no organism without it; no family, community, no species, no planet, no universe. A fully mature adult is still the once-newborn, and the modern human still the once-primal man.

Precedent structures are not only understood as essential stepping-stones towards a greater wholeness, but their perspectives have significant value unto themselves. If evolution has manifested differences, then differences must be crucial to the expression and process of evolution.

Differing perspectives may now be consciously processed *dialectically*; with a focus upon the *synergistic integration of apparent opposites* (rather than their unresolvable conflict) being the path towards truth or growth.

However, although all stages and perspectives are understood as being definitively of value, they are not necessarily recognised as having *equal* value or sophistication. There *is* a growth-hierarchy that is intuitively understood and celebrated. A world-centric vision *is, for* example and in developmental terms, more sophisticated than an ethnocentric vision.

Feeling (central to postmodernism) and thought (central to modernism) are of equal significance to us at this stage, and their integration into a bodymind experience of the self is a characteristic. However, the observing self is beginning to transcend both the mind and body, and be conscious of them as objects in awareness; which is a significant movement towards the transcendent states.

Other significant characteristics of this structure are a focus on integration, holism, systemic processing, inter-connectedness, complexity and chaos, inter-relatedness within conflict, a comfort with paradox and dialectics, the celebration of an all-embracing and universal humanity, and an emerging focus on transcendence. Our perspective is holistic-systemic and synergistic-integrative.

Everything.

Whereas the previous structures that we are subjectively tasked with navigating are already wide-spread in cultural humanity, this structure is at the leading edge of evolution. It is estimated that perhaps as few as five per cent of the world's population have significantly dipped their toes into this worldview, and it is understood that once that number reaches about ten to fifteen percent there becomes a cultural tipping-point, the spread becoming exponential rather than incremental.

Ultimately this new emergent structure will become as integrated into cultural and subjective availability as, say, Rational Modernism is today.

Culture wars:

The postmodern performative contradiction is no-longer understood as a paradox of mutual-exclusives, but as being easily reconcilable. The postmodern perspective inherently distrusts hierarchy as being socially-constructed, which is generally true of typical dominator-hierarchies.

However, the structures of consciousness are a *growth*-hierarchy, a hierarchy of actualisation; and, for example, an ethnocentric perspective and self-identity, as in fulcrum 4, is definitively less sophisticated than the world-centric perspective and self identity of fulcrum 6.

The Integral Perspective has no difficulty in seeing that the postmodern attitude is more highly developed and sophisticated than an ethnocentric attitude that privileges in value only those we immediately identify with. Postmodernism has expanded its centre of consciousness far beyond that of Ethnocentricity, and whilst Ethnocentricity is still understood as having significance and value it is demonstrably less advanced than postmodernism. A cell may not be 'better' than an atom, but it is undeniably of a higher sophistication given that it has both transcended and included the atom.

This Integral structure has no instinctive vehemence towards other structures. Although it does not see everything as equal, it does see everything as relevant and valuable.

This structure's next emergent step is into the transcendent states of consciousness.