

THE EVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND INDIVIDUATION:  
GEBSER, SRI AUROBINDO AND JUNG

RUNNING HEAD: Gebser, Sri Aurobindo, Jung

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## ABSTRACT

In this essay I trace the evolution of consciousness from the time of origins and the archaic structure of consciousness, through the magic structure, the mythical structure and the mental structure up to the present incipient integral culture of consciousness using Jean Gebser's structural categories. I also briefly outline Sri Aurobindo's description of the evolution of consciousness, adding relevant jewels from his epic poem *Savitri*. Throughout, I refer to Jung for thoughts on individuation and the individuation process. Humankind currently lives predominantly in what Jean Gebser refers to as the deficient mental structure of awareness.<sup>1</sup> There are, however, indications of an emerging new structure of consciousness that is being felt in both its efficient expression as integral and its deficient expression as dissolution and atomization. Ultimately, the new integral mode of being is experienced as felt-intensity of being along with a diaphanous openness to unitary reality.

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<sup>1</sup> 1989.

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Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to examine the nature of the evolution of human consciousness and the implications for individuation and the individuation process. The connection is based on the assumption that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny and that a parallel evolutionary process takes place in both the individual and society as a whole. In particular, I refer to Jean Gebser's illuminating book, the title of which has been translated into English as *The Ever Present Origin*, for his description of consciousness at different periods of history and for his brilliant insights into the underlying patterns and meanings he discovers. I also refer to the writings of Sri Aurobindo, a master-yogi, seer and, arguably, the finest poet in the English language. Throughout, I rely on Jung for his understanding of individuation and the individuation process.

Gebser was born in Germany in 1905 and he lived the second half of his life in Switzerland.<sup>2</sup> He was above all a creative thinker and first published his *magnum opus*, and most important book, *Ursprung and Gegenwart*, in 1949. The book, which first entered the English speaking world in 1985, is a detailed account of the history and evolution of consciousness, particularly of the occidental mind. The German title which, when translated, literally, means "From Origins to the Present Time" is suggestive in that the word origins (*ursprung*) implies a "leap into" or "spring into" (*sprung*) original time (*ur*). This puts the emphasis on the fact that creation began with a discontinuous act and that discontinuity has existed from the outset of time. The English title, The Ever Present Origin, is suggestive in a second way --- that, the source or origin,

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<sup>2</sup> 1989.

however concealed, is always present to the human mind, regardless of how far away the psyche, individual or collective, appears to have strayed from its base.

Sri Aurobindo writes a remarkably insightful book on the evolution of human consciousness as well. Its title, *The Human Cycle* is suggestive in a third way -- that the human psyche has evolved and continues to evolve in a cyclic fashion or, as he actually insisted, in a spiral-like way.<sup>3</sup> This insight precisely parallels Jung's observation that the individuation process appears to proceed in a spiral-like circumambulation around the Self.<sup>4</sup> At least according to the suggestive nature of the book titles then, we can hypothesize that the origin or the Self, which Jung defines as both center and totality of the psyche, is always present. In addition there is a cyclic or spiral-like process of individuation for both society and the individual, and there are times of discontinuities or quantum leaps in consciousness.<sup>5</sup>

In the context of the evolution of consciousness, a discontinuous, ever-present beginning seems to suggest that, at times, there are purposeful mutations of consciousness, quantum leaps that are teleologically directed from a transcendent Source. In Book one, "The Book of Beginnings," canto one, "The Symbol Dawn" of his epic poem, *Savitri*, Sri Aurobindo captures this ever-present archetypal moment, that begins even before consciousness, with these haunting words:

It was the hour before the Gods awake  
In the sombre symbol of her eyeless muse  
The abyss of the unbodied Infinite;  
A fathomless zero occupied the world.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 1972a, pp 1-254 passim

<sup>4</sup> 1977, p 28

<sup>5</sup> As reported in Jacobi, 1974

<sup>6</sup> 1972b, p 1

Just prior to world consciousness even the Gods were asleep. The all-embracing darkness, however, concealed “an unshaped consciousness [that] desired light,” “an infant longing [that] clutched the sombre vast.”<sup>7</sup> There was, in other words, an occult instinct that was seeking the light of consciousness. There was or there always is an activation of the archetype of consciousness.

Indeed, in the following lines, an ursprung or quantum leap into creation is recorded as,

Insensibly somewhere a breach began:  
... [and] .  
An eye of deity pierced through the dumb deeps  
... [as] ...  
Its message crept through the reluctant hush  
calling the adventure of consciousness and joy<sup>8</sup>

As a contemporary seer, Sri Aurobindo poetically offers a symbolic glimpse into the omnipresent origins at the beginnings of consciousness when humankind was called to an essentially joyful adventure that involves a meaningful unfolding of the Self over space and time, an evolution of consciousness.

### Stages in the Evolution of Consciousness

Jean Gebser describes the evolution of consciousness that includes five distinct structures of consciousness, with quantum leaps between them.<sup>9</sup> Each structure of awareness comes in what he refers to as an efficient and a deficient mode of organization. A brief discussion on each of these psychic dispositions now follows.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p 2

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p 2

### The Archaic Structure of Consciousness

As suggested above, in the distant reaches of time, humankind lived in what Gebser calls “the origin” with its archaic structure of consciousness. It was, according to the author's speculations, a zero-dimensional world similar to the Biblical paradise, a time of complete *participation mystique*, or full identity and non-differentiation between humankind and the universe. During this time the soul was dormant and unaware of dreams, without any capacity for self-reflection; it was a time without dualistic opposition or even polarity.

If such a time ever really existed in its efficient form, one can imagine archaic people living something like sophisticated animals in their natural habitat, in perfect harmony with the instincts or fixed patterns of action. If there were such a thing as a deficient form of the archaic structure, it would be during periods of torpor and almost complete inertia combined with times of restless agitation and activity. It is a structure of consciousness that contemporary individuals can, to a degree, relate to when they are drawn into a state of *participation mystique* and creative unconsciousness. It ends with a constellation of the Self --- when “the Gods awake” that comes with a feeling of wholeness and illuminating insight.<sup>10</sup> But the most immediate experience of this psychic condition, although largely unconscious, may take place during early childhood when the child is still psychologically contained in the mother.

According to the Mother, there actually was a time before the Biblical Fall of a paradise on earth that is recorded in the earth's memory.<sup>11</sup> She lays claim to having experienced this state of consciousness on several occasions and describes it as a

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<sup>9</sup> 1989, pp 1-274 passim

<sup>10</sup> Aurobindo, Sri, 1972, p 1

<sup>11</sup> La Mère, 1979, pp. 123, 119-127 passim

natural out-flowering of animal life, simple, luminous, spontaneous and extremely beautiful. There was, she observes, none of our preoccupations, nor any oppositions or contradictions. She notes that, during that time, “it was the first human form capable of embodying the divine Being,” by which she means “the first time that the Being above and Being below were joined by the mentalisation” process.<sup>12</sup> These early humans expressed a natural joy of living and love, and harmony reigned between humans, flowers, minerals and animals.

J. R. R. Tolkien’s description of the life of Tom Bombadil and Goldberry in the *Lord of the Rings* appears to capture the essence of this reality in a marvelous way.<sup>13</sup> To begin with, their house is described as emanating a golden light that surround their guests. In answer to the question of who Tom is, his companion, Goldberry, responds simply that “he is” and that he is master of wood, water and hill and yet all the things growing in the land belong each to themselves. Inasmuch as Tom masters nature and engages in magic through chant and ritual, he is able to separate himself from nature and therefore partake of the magic structure of consciousness as well as the archaic structure. In fact, he describes himself as Eldest, already here at the origin of Creation, and his luminous way of living and harmony with surrounding nature and existence as simply “he is,” indicate his essentially archaic consciousness.

Tom lives joyfully contained in song, fears nothing and is immune to temptations of power and, typically, has no pre-occupations beyond simple existence and being joyfully engaged with his soul-mate, Goldberry. Indeed, he and Goldberry are described as existing in perfect harmony and weaving together a single dance of being. She is the River-Woman’s daughter and described as something of the personification

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, p. 123

of primal nature, especially related to water, as harmonious and beautiful. Like Tom, she, too, expresses herself in merry song.

### The Magic Structure of Consciousness

If the archaic structure consists of zero-dimensionality, the magic structure of consciousness is that of a “one-dimensional unity” with the point as its representative symbol.<sup>14</sup> Gebser notes that the point is suggestive of emergent awareness and centering, as well as being an “expression of the spaceless and timeless one-dimensionality of magic man's world.”<sup>15</sup> Magic individuals, he argues, no longer exist as “being in the world” as there is now a felt need of “having the world” that is, of standing apart from nature and mastering her.<sup>16</sup> There is, accordingly, the beginnings of consciousness of human will and a way of life that has been admirably described by Van der Post and Taylor regarding the K’ung [Bush] People of the Kalahari Desert.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the incipient development of human will, the time of magic people is a time of relative lack of ego. Although there is individual projective identification or *participation mystique* with the tribal group ego, as separate from nature and the universe, the power that masters nature, for instance during the hunt, is experienced as coming from outside even the group ego. It is, for instance, understood to be the symbolic sun-ray that kills the animal while the actual killing projectile is taken as a symbol. It is a time of point-like unity, at the basis of which is an acausal interweaving of life in all its manifestations. It is experienced as a spaceless/timeless world of unity

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<sup>13</sup> 2005, pp. 161-175 passim, 48

<sup>14</sup> Gebser, 1989, pp 1-274 passim, p 48

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p 48

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p 46

<sup>17</sup> 1984



in which every “point” as object, event or action is interconnected with another, independent of time, place and causality.<sup>18</sup> It is a time that contemporary individuals can consciously experience by way of a lowering of conscious awareness, the constellation of an archetype and synchronicity.<sup>19 20</sup>

It is a time too of merging which, writes Gebser, suggests not only interweaving of magic people with their environment, but an ultimate separation between the parts, that is to say the “points,” and the whole, disrupting the ultimate sense of unity. With a deliberate and conscious act of will that came along with attending emotions, magic people give direction to events. This indicates another characteristic of the magic structure of consciousness, which Gebser refers to as “magic reaction.”<sup>21</sup> Magic people become aware of themselves as a group-ego, along with the capacity for actively detaching themselves from participation mystique with nature and acting upon it by way of ritualistic maneuvers, or “magic reaction.”<sup>22</sup> This leads to the next leap in consciousness, to the mythical structure.

What I have described so far is the efficient form of the magic structure. A deficient form of this structure of consciousness is a devitalized attachment to magic ritual, perhaps the case of many so-called aboriginal and primal peoples today. White and black magic can both be expressions of grandiose ego power over events and, as such, also represent a deficient form of this kind of consciousness. Contemporary individuals interested in aboriginal cultures can be confused by the two world structures of consciousness, the mental with its developed ego and proactive will, and the magic

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p 48

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p 48, 49

<sup>20</sup> Jung, 1975a, pp 418-531 passim

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, pp 50, 51

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

structure, where the ego is diminished and, in the deficient mode, there is easy regression to *participation mystique* with others and nature. The potential psychological effect of such a deficient magic structure is that shadow complexes can be activated and, without a developed ego structure and ability to turn consciously inwards, there is unconscious shadow projection on others and, in place of the ego, delusion and paranoia take over consciousness. Otherwise, I propose, the exceptionally sophisticated contemporary approaches to propaganda and advertising, which are designed to affect people's will, desires and motivations, are based on the deficient mode of the magic psyche.

### The Mythical Structure of Consciousness

Although there is relatively recent evidence of people living in the magic structure of consciousness, witness the [*K'ung*] Bush people of the Kalahari Desert, it dates back some 30 or 40,000 years to Paleolithic times. Idols, Gebser observes, were then depicted with auras and without a mouth, suggesting that silence and the sounds of nature were emphasized and not the spoken word. With the mythical structure of consciousness, in contrast, the mouth replaces the aura, and the spoken word gains importance. As Gebser notes, however, while *mythemai*, the verb for *mythos*, means "to discourse, to talk, to speak, a related verb, *myein*, means to close, eyes, mouth, wounds."<sup>23</sup> This indicates that this way of being involves a deliberate act of turning inward as well as outward verbal expression. Both an inward and outward movement indicates that a two dimensional polarity is intrinsic to the mythic structure, a subjective

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p 65

experience of reality which contrasts with both the zero-dimensionality of the archaic mode and the point-like dimensionality of the magic structure.

The turn inward brings a concomitant awareness of soul, what Jung refers to as the *anima*, and what might be described as soul-time, or periodicity with its “natural temporal rhythm.” Gebser chooses the circle, with its inherent polarities, [for example, the perpetual cycle of the seasons], for the symbol of this structure of consciousness.<sup>24</sup> In the efficient mythical mode of being, then, the soul becomes visible and audible through a silent inward turning in search of vision for outward artistic expression, particularly by way of a vision-based oral expression or poetry, for example the epics of Homer.

The mythical structure lays emphasis on the imagination and the ability to see and hear soul with a poetic eye and ear. It is this mode of awareness that contemporary people participate in when they turn inwardly to dreams and authentic fantasy -- a deepening away from the overly active and dynamic principal driving the Western ego. It is the seductive pull of James Hillman and his acolytes, and archetypal psychology, with its call for a return to Homer's Greece.<sup>25</sup>

As Gebser astutely observes, during the first part of *The Iliad*, the hero's moving words “*Eim Odysseus*” are indicative of the essence of the Western mind and its search for a sense of individuality.<sup>26</sup> Underlying “*Eim Odysseus*” are two characteristics emphasized by the poet: that Odysseus, the hero, is both active and inventive and the passive, “one who endures.”<sup>27</sup> Individuality that is to say is, in essence, cast in a furnace fueled by both acting and being acted upon. In the mythic structure it also

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p 66

<sup>25</sup> 1983

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p 71

becomes apparent that the motive-force that spurns the individual on toward self-assertion and the development of individuality is anger. The *Iliad*, accordingly, begins with “Anger be now your song: immortal one.”<sup>28</sup> Psychologically, these are all important reminders to the contemporary seeker. Anger can be positively directed towards the development of consciousness, and the path of individuation requires both passive receptivity and endurance and active involvement in life.

The deficient form of the mythical structure can be experienced through story and words that run on for their own sake, without self-reflection. Such a stream of words is separated from authentic vision and without relationship to a contextually significant deeper reality. It is a state of consciousness which, in men, reflects anima possession, and, in women, possession by the animus and a loose tongue. It is exemplified by a mentality that is centered on “the tip of its tongue,” the spot, incidentally, where Jung put the Western mind in a sardonic reply to Migual Serrano's query, on where it is centered in consciousness.<sup>29</sup>

### The Mental Structure of Consciousness

With time, the emphasis of the Western mind shifted from the balance and polarity implicit in the mythical mode of being to the mental structure, and an increasingly active, dynamic principal of being. With “Eim Odysseus,” or “*Am Odysseus*,” the “I”-ness remains latent in the name, reflecting a balance between the inventive, active nature and the passive, enduring nature. With the mythological death of Odysseus and the advent of the mental structure of consciousness, there was an

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p 71

<sup>28</sup> Homer 1974, p. 11

<sup>29</sup> Serrano, 1974, p. 55

increasing shift towards the ego or the “I” along with its active propensity and willfulness.<sup>30</sup>

As with the other structures of consciousness, there is both an efficient and deficient form of the mental structure. The deficient form entered the Western world in Europe around 1250 AD, albeit inspired by the efficient mode that took place around 500 BC in Greece with its emphasis on the world of universal ideas. Although both forms of the mental structure can be described as rational -- the word “rational,” with roots based on *ratio*, meaning, “to reckon,” “to calculate,” in the sense of “to think” and “to understand,” particularly fits the deficient mode and its quantitative orientation.<sup>31</sup> The meaning of the word “rational,” however, suggests that the principles underlying thinking, whether efficient or deficient, imply sectional partitioning, perspective and directedness. The mental structure, in other words, involves directed or discursive thought. Energy no longer comes directly from an enclosed cyclic polarity of being, as in the mythical mind, but from the ego which dualistically directs energy towards objects.

As in the mythical mode, in the mental structure, anger continues to play a major role. Now, not blind rage but “thinking wrath” orients “thought and action.”<sup>32</sup> Gebser gives the example of Moses with his anger, who confronts the Israelites with a vengeful God, and Athena, who is born from the head of Zeus, and who is variously described as “clear thinking,” “of never failing aim” and as “being pugnacious and bellicose.”<sup>33</sup> For the contemporary individual, anger can indeed be the driving passion directing thought,

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<sup>30</sup> Calasso, 1993

<sup>31</sup> Gebser, 1989, p. 74

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p 76

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p 75

especially when in search for creative new directions, and when involved in the individuation process.

Along with the awakening of the mental structure came laws; those of Moses for the Israelites, Lycurgus for the Spartans and eventually Solon for the Athenians. Whereas in the mythical mode, law is based on retributive justice, in the mental mode “Man [who becomes] the measure of all things,” was put in the position of having “to direct and judge himself.<sup>34</sup>” Although this ultimately means prescribed law and the law courts, it was originally conceived as codes of ethical conduct. Although Gebser does not specifically refer to the formulation of aesthetic principles, this too comes with the development of the intellect.

With the mental organization of the psyche, the physical world is experienced in a three dimensional perspective and there is, notes Gebser, “a fall from (mythological) time into space.<sup>35</sup>” The concern with [physical] space and a diminishing interest in imaginal reality *per se* is evident in Greek sculpture of the seventh and sixth centuries BCE with its an awakening sense of both the human body, although idealized, and the facial countenance. Concerning the latter realization, Gebser observes that there was a gradual clearing up of the forehead, which in earlier sculptures was covered by plaited hair. With this development, the mind becomes entrenched in an intense dualistic focus, which becomes increasingly narrow in the deficient form of this structure of consciousness. Dualistic tensions in the mental mode are resolved by an appeal to a third point for a creative synthesis. Both the triangular nature of perspective vision, with its vanishing point, and the triangular nature of creative synthesis suggests the triangle as representative symbol.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p 77

The efficient mode of the mental structure works by moderation along with intuitive referral to the gods and goddesses of the mythic realm, along with emphasis on qualitative factors. The deficient mode, in contrast, entrenched in *ratio*, is quantitative and immoderate, without balance. Such a perspective allows for goal setting and the realization of purpose; in short, it allows one to deal efficiently or effectively with the world, at least in the short run. What we are beginning to become painfully aware of, however, is that there is, at the same time, a separation from the ecological gestalt.

The deficient form of this psychic structure began to emerge with the Renaissance and the exalted ego, as man now becomes the center of the universe. There is subsequently a further decent of mind into material space with the subsequent ages -- of reason, of industry, and now of information and digitalization, with its stress on quantification along with its distancing effect on the psyche. From the point of view of the evolution of human consciousness, particularly of the Western world, this seems to be the inevitable outcome. It reflects, nonetheless, extreme one-sidedness and an excessively egocentric active attitude of "acting upon." It glorifies a hubristic ego, inflated "beyond measure." In this sense it is immoderate and out of balance.

### The Contemporary World

Such is the nature of the predominant structure of consciousness that organizes the contemporary, particularly Western world, albeit along with some moderating, humanistic influences. The modern psyche, by and large based on purpose, abstractions and quantitative measure, is separated from its own essence, and inevitably must give way to fragmentation and atomization. Such a structure, without

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p 77

connection to a qualitative, subjective base let alone the Self, must break down, indeed, is breaking down. In a world that is increasingly post-modern and relativistic, wherever one casts a glance, there is a sense that things are falling apart.

Something else, another way of being, appears to be suffering its birth pangs. A New World has been born, existing side by side with the old organization and structure, with a world view that is more integral and that includes a passive or receptive mode of being as well as an active, dynamic one. Signs of change in the contemporary mind include the advent of depth-psychology, especially that of C. G. Jung's, interest in non-Western ways of thinking and spirituality, the rise in feminine consciousness and now in male consciousness, and the general concern for ecology. The emerging integral consciousness embraces more than the intellect, whether in its deficient or efficient mode. Indeed, it seems to necessitate the recapturing of the essence of all the historical structures of the psyche, in order to live more fully in the moment, to be more present. Jung's dream of his multistoried house, representing different periods of history, points in this direction (Appendix).<sup>36</sup> A return to origins and recapturing the essence of the ever-present beginning, along with the essence of all the different layers of consciousness, seems to be essential in order for the emergence of the new integral structure of consciousness.

### The Integral Structure of Consciousness

Humankind appears to be poised on a narrow bridge over an abyss of dissolution, which leads from a mental structure, essentially deficient, to a new integral structure of consciousness, which Gebser briefly outlines. He declares that the

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<sup>36</sup> 1965, 158, 159



precondition for the new way of being which, he observes, is a-categorical, involves “the concretion of time” as “only the concrete can be integrated, never the merely abstract.<sup>37</sup>” This statement makes sense when one considers Jung's notion of a unus mundus or “one world” and the psychoid nature of the archetype, which includes and transcends both the spiritual and physical poles.<sup>38</sup> It parallels his observation that the archetype comes with effective power of work, that is to say, a drive to be realized over space and time.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, as Gebser observes, the new integral structure involves an intensification of consciousness and a “diaphanous present” or a “transparent presence” that comes with “spiritual verition” or authenticity of being<sup>40</sup>. Like all structures of consciousness, however, the new integral structure comes with shadow or a deficient mode, which Gebser describes as involving dissolution and atomization or fragmentation. As I indicate above, this eventuality is indeed emerging today along with the incipient urge for a new way of being.

Although Sri Aurobindo describes the evolution of consciousness in roughly similar terms to Gebser, there is one noteworthy distinguishing difference.<sup>41</sup> Rather than a straight line development of consciousness, he argues that humankind has been going through a long cyclic or spiral-like process, which begins with a spiritually high point, the *Symbolic Age*, although relative to later times, culturally limited. The *Symbolic Age* was a time when life was organized symbolically and according to sacred ritual. Thus the *Vedas*, the original revealed scriptures of India date back to prehistoric times when humankind lived according to mythical and magic ways of being, without

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid p. 99

<sup>38</sup> 1971

<sup>39</sup> Jung, C. G., 1975 a, pp 418-531 passim

<sup>40</sup> Gebser, 1989, pp 70, 102, 269

<sup>41</sup> 1972

being separated from nature and archaic oneness, were transcribed by mystics who broke through to unparalleled levels of inner consciousness and truth. Religious ritual embraced gods and goddesses, as well as Mother Earth and Father Heaven. According to Sri Aurobindo, the *Symbolic Age* was a time of a relatively equal distribution of male and female deities, harmony of being and gender equality.<sup>42</sup>

From the *Symbolic Age*, there is a gradual degeneration of consciousness to the *Typal Age*, when the spiritual urge is less dominant and folk live according to an ethical pattern and determination grounded on their soul-types. There is further degeneration to the *Conventional Age*, when not only the original symbolic truth of life is repressed, but so is the natural ethical instinct, as life takes on a conventional pattern based on inflexible and fixed dogma, doctrine and tradition that protect the status quo. The injustice and inequality of convention is subsequently challenged and disabled by thought and an upward surge of consciousness that begins with the *Age of Reason*. But reason alone does not suffice, and its narrowness and limitations in recognizing truth and determining codes of conduct is increasingly acknowledged to the point that it is presently giving way, with considerable resistance, to the *Subjective Age* and an inner turn.

Given the development of the intellect and growing self-awareness, humans have become more aware and knowledgeable about the potential for a growth in consciousness, which presently requires a turn within and the development of an inner foundation. But the *Subjective Age* has a shadow side, which is all too apparent today. Reason is giving way and is being replaced by a solipsistic subjectivity, aided and abetted by the advent of the Internet, video games, I Pads and the like, along with

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<sup>42</sup> 1971

considerably less interest in intelligent reading. The actual evolutionary need of the *Subjective Age*, observes Sri Aurobindo, is to progress toward a triple transformation of being and an integral transformation of consciousness. There is, in this case, a double movement,: an aspiration and ascent from below through the psychic being, the evolved expression of the incarnated aspect of the soul; and a descent from above, as in the original act of creation.

### The Ever Present Future.

As I indicate above, according to Sri Aurobindo, a return to a symbolically organized life, at least potentially, opens up to the possibility of aspiring towards truth of being like the mystics of Vedic India. It involves what Jung refers to as a symbolic life, which necessitates a progressive detachment from the outer depiction of the symbol along with its internalization.<sup>43</sup> According to Jung, It also requires the difficult psychological transition from a trinitarian psyche to a quaternarian psyche as foreseen by the alchemists. It necessitates a symbolic movement from three to four, which demands some integration of inferior aspects of the psyche including the inferior function.<sup>44</sup> Jung tirelessly insists on the fact that this means integration of opposites against the backdrop of a double faceted paradoxical God, both “a sea of grace” and “a burning lake of fire,” where God wants to incarnate in humans and become conscious.<sup>45</sup>

To give a sense of what this eventually points to, I conclude this essay with several lines from the last stanza of the epilogue “The Return to Earth” of Sri Aurobindo's epic poem, *Savitri*, from which I quote at the beginning.<sup>46</sup> The story is based on a legend that dates back to the *Vedas*, and is about *Savitri*, “Goddess of

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<sup>43</sup> 1975

<sup>44</sup> 1977

<sup>45</sup> 1973, p 89

supreme truth” and *Satyavan*, the soul, which carries “the divine truth of being within itself.<sup>47</sup>” These lines are, I believe suggestive of what lies ahead and the direction to which the soul of humanity now aspires.

With linked hands Satyavan and Savitri,  
Hearing a marriage march and nuptial hymn,  
Where waited them the many voiced human world

. . . .

[while]

Night, splendid with the moon dreaming in heaven  
In silver peace, possessed her luminous reign.  
She brooded through her stillness on a thought  
Deep-guarded by her mystic folds of light,  
And in her bosom nursed a greater dawn<sup>48</sup>

Sri Aurobindo is pointing to a new period of harmony and truth, and union of the Divine Masculine and Feminine on Earth, portending a more complex and integral consciousness, fully benefiting from the past.

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There has been an evolution of consciousness, which has evolved in a spiral-like fashion, with discontinuous leaps between stages defined by radically different organizations of consciousness. These stages include the time of origin and the archaic mode of being, the magic, the mythological and now the mental structure of consciousness, each of which can develop in either its efficient or deficient form. According to Sri Aurobindo there is a spiral-like movement downwards from the *Symbolic Age* to the *Typal Age*, to the *Conventional age* and then upwards to the *Mental Age* followed by the present *Subjective Age*. At this point in history, the psyche is in the process of evolving toward an integral consciousness, of which its shadow and deficient form involves dissolution and fragmentation, necessary to undo the tenacious grip of the present mentally structured order of life. The new integral mode of being

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<sup>46</sup> 1972b, 715-724 passim

<sup>47</sup> Sri Aurobindo, 1972c, p 265

<sup>48</sup> Sri Aurobindo, 1972 b p 724

involves integration into awareness of the essence of all past organizations of consciousness along with authenticity and transparency to the Self.

## APPENDIX

## Jung's Dream

I was in a house I did not know, which had two stories. It was “my house.” I found myself in the upper story, where there was a kind of salon furnished with fine old pieces in rococo style. On the walls hung a number of precious old paintings. I wondered that this should be my house, and thought, “Not bad.” But then it occurred to me that I did not know what the lower floor looked like. Descending the stairs, I reached the ground floor. There everything was much older, and I realized that this part of the house must date from about the fifteenth or sixteenth century. The furnishings were medieval; the floors were of red brick. Everywhere it was rather dark. I went from one room to another, thinking: “Now I really must explore the whole house.” I came upon a heavy door, and opened it. Beyond it, I discovered a stone stairway that led down into a cellar. Descending again, I found myself in a beautifully vaulted room, which looked exceeding ancient. Examining the walls, I discovered layers of brick among the ordinary stone blocks, and chips of brick in the mortar. As soon as I saw this I knew that the walls dated from Roman times. My interest by now was intense. I looked more closely at the floor. It was of stone slabs, and in one of these I discovered a ring. When I pulled it, the stone slab lifted, and again I saw a stairway of narrow stone steps leading down into the depths. These, too, I descended, and entered a low cave cut into the rock. Thick dust lay on the floor, and in the dust were scattered bones and broken pottery-like remains of a primitive culture. I discovered two human skulls, obviously very old and half-disintegrated.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Jung, 1965, p 158, 159

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