

CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL STUDIES

PREEMINENCE OF  
MYTH AND  
THE DECLINE OF  
INSTRUMENTAL  
REASON



*Pat Arneson*  
*Žilvinas Svigaris*  
*Editors*

NOVA



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# **CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL STUDIES**

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**PAT ARNESON  
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## PREFACE

Jean Gebser (1905-1973) was a philosopher who examined how cultures are generated, situated and, oriented in the world. He explored meaningful interconnections between cultures, seeking to provide a fuller account of their nature and workings. Gebser was a man of science, the arts, and mysticism, who was interested in the direct human experience of unity with the divine. He perceived the fullness of humankind to occur in the coalescence of spirituality and consciousness. This essay provides an intellectual biography of Gebser's two-volume work, *The Ever-Present Origin, Part I: Foundations of the Aperspectival World and Part II: Manifestations of the Aperspectival World*. An overview of the chapters in this volume, emphasizing the preeminence of myth and the decline of instrumental reason, is then presented. Gebser's writing offers a valuable contribution to understanding how humans are situated in the all-of-life with respect to our contemporary spatiotemporal condition of chaos.

The collection of essays represents the Gebserian way to explicate the limits of modern Western deficient mental structure, in the form of "instrumental reason." The work of Gebser is well known in various parts of the world and has now appeared in Lithuania where it is received with great interest, specifically in light of questions of national identities, mythological backgrounds, and questions of globalization. The essays represent research from scholars of diverse disciplines and civilizations;

their contributions to Gebser's scholarship and the understanding of the current turmoil form a framework on how any local culture can benefit from Gebser's work.

*Chapter 1*

**INTRODUCTION:  
JEAN GEBSER AND UNFOLDING ORIGIN**

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**ABSTRACT**

This essay provides an intellectual biography of Jean Gebser's (1905-1973) work, *The Ever-Present Origin, Part I: Foundations of the Aperspectival World and Part II: Manifestations of the Aperspectival World*. Gebser's life experiences brought about the development of his scholarly ideas: Post-World War I hyperinflation in Europe that brought about anxiety and pessimism, the post-World War II emergence of feelings of isolation, his connections with leading scholars across academic disciplines who inspired his various scholarly projects, and the expansion of his understanding generated in extensive exploration of cultures. In these life experiences he traced the source of nonhierarchical consciousness structures—drawing physical evidence from nearly all major fields of inquiry, including poetry, music, visual arts, architecture,

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philosophy, religion, classics, and the natural sciences. He exposed traces of differing structures that emerged from origin and recognized five mutations of consciousness: origin or archaic, magical, mythical, mental, and integral. Each of these structures of consciousness expands into a new stage in a surge from origin. As each structure of consciousness intensifies, time-space emerges (efficiency), thrives, and collapses (deficiency). Only in transforming our relationship to the world do humans have an opportunity to rise above the limitations presented in a structure of consciousness, which invariably presents us with new obligations in life. Following this discussion, an overview of chapters in this volume is presented, which emphasize the preeminence of myth and the decline of instrumental reason.

## **GESTATION OF THE EVER-PRESENT ORIGIN**

Jean Gebser's aristocratic lineage dates back to 1236 in the Franconian-Thuringian Highlands of Germany. He was born Hans Gebser on August 20, 1905 in the town of Poznań on the shifting border between Prussia and Poland [1]. His father became a legal counselor with the Royal Prussian Higher Consistory Counsel, and was often required to relocate for his work. Gebser's childhood during World War I was difficult. He attended five schools in ten years, receiving his education in Breslau, Königsberg, and later at Rossleben on the Unstrut.

As he matured, Gebser adopted his father's scholarly nature and his mother's vibrant personality. Post-World War I hyperinflation led to an extreme devaluation of the German currency. As family finances were reduced, his parents' differences produced increasing domestic conflict. Gebser sought refuge by reading books, writing poetry, and studying languages – including German, Greek, Latin, French, and Italian. In 1922, Gebser's father died from injuries incurred when he hurled himself out of a window in a suicide attempt, possibly driven to the act by his wife. At age 17, Gebser was compelled by his mother to leave his academic studies to financially support the family. He accepted an apprenticeship in a Berlin bank in 1923. Gebser disliked the work, finding the drudgery of the corporate world unbearable.

The 1920's was a time of great anxiety and pessimism in Europe. Philosopher-poet Paul Valéry described the situation as “a crisis of the mind” [2]. Cultural pessimism was rampant throughout middle Europe. Sigmund Freud first delved into the unconscious in *The Interpretations of Dreams*, later redefining civilization (*Kultur*) as a source of illness [3]. Gebser, who was prone to depression during this time, wrote that Freud's pessimism provided “an excellent guide into Hades, but does he also lead us out of it?” [4].

Later Oswald Spengler published his two-volume *The Decline of the West*, in which he probed the origin and fate of civilization. Spengler explained his approach to history, civilization, and culture as using mathematical law to identify “dead forms” and analogy to understand “living forms”: “By these means we are enabled to distinguish polarity and periodicity in the world” [5]. He explained that in history and society reside “the drama of a *number* of mighty cultures, each springing with primitive strength from the soil of a mother-region to which it remains firmly bound throughout its whole life-cycle; each stamping its material, its mankind, in its own image; ... Each culture has its own new possibilities of self-expression which arise, ripen, decay, and never return” [6]. The book was a popular success; readers inferred that the downfall of Germany was part of an unavoidable process in world history.

In response to rampant pessimism, there was a popular revival of the spiritual and cultural movement of Rosicrucianism, allegedly formed in late medieval Germany [7]. In 1924, Arthur E. Waite issued a revised and expanded edition of his earlier publication on the history of Rosicrucianism in *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross* [8]. Rosicrucianism is a mystic sect based on ancient truths and shrouded in secrecy. These mystics hold to a doctrine “built on esoteric truths of the ancient past” that are “concealed from the average man, provide insight into nature, the physical universe and the spiritual realm” [9]. Thomas Mann's novel *The Magic Mountain* was published the same year, which included the appearance of Rosicrucianism. Set in 1907-1914, Mann portrayed the discontent in Europe and discussed philosophical choices available to people in the modern age, connecting the themes of life and death in the subjective experience of time [10].

Gebser found everyday life to be less and less bearable at the bank, and enrolled in evening classes at Humboldt University in Berlin to keep himself active. He attended lectures from well-known faculty members, which allowed him to stave off boredom and explore ideas beyond his circumstances [11]. Gebser looked for hopeful voices amidst the gloom, and found a refreshing spirit in the Catholic philosopher Romano Guardini. The breadth and depth of Guardini's spirituality left a significant impression upon Gebser. Gebser was also inspired by the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke, glimpsing integrality in Rilke's writing [12]. Gebser could be pulled away from the mundane in his reading and thinking, and so he survived the negativism that permeated German culture.

Gebser's apprenticeship ended in 1925, so he left the bank and moved out of his family home. He was anxious to pursue his passion for literature and art. Gebser and V. O. Stomps, a colleague from the bank, established Stomps & Gebser, an art printing and book publishing company with the imprint Raven Press. They published Herwarth Walden's periodical *Der Sturm (The Storm)*, as well as a monthly magazine called *Fischzug: Monatsblätter zur Förderung werdender Literatur (The Catch: Monthly Essays for Emerging Literature)*, in which Gebser published his early poetry.

Living on his own in Berlin during the very slow economic recovery post World War I, Gebser became severely depressed and near suicide when he was 23 years old. He realized he could no longer live vicariously through books, and sought to shake off his malaise by expanding his lived-experience. After two years, in 1927 he ended his association with the publishing house. He then spent the next two years in Switzerland, traveling and exploring the culture to experience different ways of living [13].

In 1929, Gebser returned to Munich, Germany to work with publisher Kurt Wolff. Munich was "the nerve center of the Nazi party" [14]. Adolph Hitler's *Sturmabteilung*, the Nazi Party's main military force, was growing rapidly. Observing the Nazi hordes, Gebser decided to leave Germany, and relocated later that year to Italy. He traveled first to Florence, working as an apprentice in a second-hand academic bookstore. Soon, his instinct to travel arose once again, and he set out for Paris. In fall 1931, he traveled through

Southern France and along the eastern coast of Spain – Andorra, Barcelona, Valencia, Murcia and Almería – and settled in Málaga, Spain.

Following Rilke, whose time in Spain changed his own writing, Gebser was drawn to Málaga, Spain. Although Gebser could not speak or write Spanish, his facility with languages allowed him to master it in a few months. There, he would begin his first book addressing the importance of Spain to Rilke. During his lifetime, Rilke traveled extensively and did not recognize barriers between humans and the world, “but only a boundless wealth of interchanging relationships, which he experienced as vibrations” – he lived “poised between cultures” [15]. Intrigued by the possibilities that Rilke and Spain presented, Gebser became increasingly cosmopolitan.

While in Spain, Gebser explained, “My concept of the development of a new consciousness ... came to my awareness in the winter of 1932/33 in a lightning-like flash of inspiration” [16]. Writing of the transparent winter sky, he perceived a diaphanous character to reality that transforms the revelation of ‘things.’ Gebser sought to explain:

“It is more than clarity (*Klarheit*) or illumination (*Leuchten*), more than transfiguration or glorification (*Verklärung*), more than radiance (*Strahlung*). One could possibly speak of it as the flashing-forth or sudden shining-through of the whole (*Durchglänztsein des Ganzen*). Who participates in this is more or less purified (*gleichsam geläutert*), as if melted and remoulded, liberated from the scoria of the soul, from the narrow limitations of mentation, without in the slightest manner being lost to the world through intoxication or ecstatic rapture (*rauschhaft entrückt*); rather, who participates in this find themselves well in order, with the deepest trust, and with the sacred lucidity of origin’s ever-presence pulsating through them (*durchpulst von nüchternheiliger Ursprungsgegenwärtigkeit*)” [17].

The experience aroused in Gebser a passion for making explicit what he had intuitively grasped in the diaphaneity. He perceived that the transformations occurring in the arts and sciences during the 1900’s-1930’s exhibited a change in human consciousness that altered how people perceive themselves and their world.

Gebser's experiences in the Latin countries of Italy, France, and Spain were important to his cultural understanding. He sought out members of the Spanish avant-garde, whose constant innovation aided him in articulating his experience. He befriended Federico García Lorca, in whose poetry Gebser "saw deep, pre-rational ontologies incarnated;" Lorca embodied "the maternal, nocturnal, magical consciousness" in his writing [18]. During this time, Gebser drafted his first book, *Rilke and Spain*, and conceived the ideas that would seduce him his entire life.

In 1935 Gebser moved from Málaga to Madrid, and entered the Spanish Civil Service, where he rose to become a senior official in the Ministry of Education of the Spanish Republic. He continued to write, recognizing that "Rilke's use of adjectives breaks the consciousness of perspective crystalized in the Renaissance," infusing them with new value [19]. Gebser interpreted a discontinuity within Rilke's lyrical intensity and use of the adjective. He wrote, "What happens here is that the adjective now accentuates the relationship between the objects and actively emerges as if it was oriented in all directions" [20]. With his book nearly completed, in July 1936 Gebser went to meet the Basque Spanish painter, Don Ignacio Zuloaga. Rilke first met Zuloaga in Berlin in 1900, and corresponded with him after visiting Spain from November 1912 to February 1913. Zuloaga gave Gebser access to letters between Rilke and himself, which allowed Gebser to further expand his impressions of the integral dimension of consciousness.

As the Spanish Civil War began to escalate, Gebser sided with the left, which was formed by the standing government and represented ideas of unions, communists, anarchists, workers, and peasants. His friend Lorca, along with three others, was assassinated by fascists [21]. During the turmoil, Gebser was arrested and imprisoned for several hours in Valencia; his friends saved him from being executed. Gebser left Spain in October 1936, twelve hours after his apartment was bombed. His worldly goods destroyed, Gebser immediately left the country: "I made my way once again on the path of uncertainty" [22]. He spent a short time in Switzerland and then moved to France.

Gebser spent 1937-1939 in Paris, amidst the “hunger years” perpetuated by a dismal economy [23]. He enjoyed an association with other intellectuals, including Pablo Picasso, Andre Malraux, Paul Eluard, and Louis Aragon. Gebser’s conception of the ever-present origin intensified as he discussed ideas with this avant-garde group of intellectuals. Gebser’s identity was also changing. He altered his first name from Hans to Jean (both forms of Johann), in part as a sign of his personal experience of enlightenment, and also in opposition to Hitler’s Germany [24]. Gebser saw war as the ultimate absurdity of which humans are capable, and left France. He crossed into Switzerland near Basel two hours before the borders closed on August 30, 1939. World War II erupted with a vengeance; retribution for occurrences during World War I collided with goals of restoring social order and settling political accounts [25].

In Switzerland, Gebser returned to his native German language and to a relative calmness that enabled him to think and write. He settled in the Locarno-Muralto region, moving to several different locations in Switzerland over the next 35 years. Gebser saw his first book, *Rilké und Spanien* published by Emil Oprecht in Zürich [26]. He also connected with the Eranos circle, a discussion group dedicated to intellectual inquiry that included: Carl Jung, Károly Kerényi, Adolf Portmann, D. T. Suzuki, and others. They held an annual meeting that brought together leading scholars across academic disciplines including: phenomenology, religion, the classics, psychology, and the physical sciences. Here, Gebser further expanded his understanding, developing close friendships with classical philologist Kerényi and biologist Portmann, whose scholarship Gebser would draw from to support his integral theory. Gebser’s project on *Rilké* anticipated what would later become *Transformation of the West* and *The Ever-Present Origin*.

With the support and inspiration of his colleagues, Gebser began writing in earnest. He published a 16-part series in the journal *The Rise (Der Aufstieg)* called “A New Worldview Paves its Way” in 1942 [27]. This series formed the basis of *Transformation of the West: A Breakdown of the Results of Modern Research in Physics, Biology and Psychology [and] Their Significance for the Present and Future*, which was published in 1943 [28].

In that book, Gebser introduced “the emergence of the new consciousness against the background of the prevailing rational ontology” [29]. Yet, he also sensed limitations within that work and recognized the importance of including insights from the humanities, such as political economics, sociology, and the arts [30]. This was Gebser’s impetus for undertaking *The Ever-Present Origin*.

Gebser’s book on *Rilké* also pointed to ideas he would expand on in *The Grammatical Mirror: New Forms of Thought in Linguistic Expression* (1944) [31]. In that project, Gebser revisited his interest in philosophy and poetics to explore the possibilities available in language as grammatical relationships between the function of words begin to loosen. He discerned that “the adjective loses its determining, fixing and perspectival value and finds no more use as an additional or ornamental word; instead, it obtains a completely new colouring by more readily becoming a connecting word, because it no longer applies to the substantive in a one-sided matter (as a purely grammatical assistant), but also to the subject in relation to the object” [32]. This mutation of language, for Gebser, reflects a break in human perspective. This awareness prompted his writing *Winter Poem* on November 14, 1944, which he wrote in 45 minutes. The poem was composed in eight sections, and ran over ten handwritten pages; he made no corrections. That poem is his poetic counterpart to what would become *The Ever-Present Origin* [33].

Gebser’s literary activities were supplemented when he became a lecturer at Carl Jung’s Institute for Applied Psychology in Zürich in 1947. During the summer months, he delivered a series of ten lectures on *The History of the Mind and Spirit* [34]. Gebser’s investigation of Jungian depth psychology offers an expression of ontology of the mythical structure of consciousness within his broader cultural phenomenology. Gebser also returned to writing on his friend Lorca, authoring *Lorca or the Realm of the Mothers: Memories of Federico García Lorca with Thirteen Illustrations by the Poet*, which appeared in 1949 [35]. In that project, “Gebser first articulates the motif of the dark, vital, matriarchal consciousness that ... ‘precedes’ the mythic soul-consciousness that was the concern of contemporary depth psychologists. In Lorca, Gebser sensed a deeper, darker,

nocturnal-feminine consciousness” [36]. Gebser was grasping what would later become his mythical dimension of consciousness.

Although World War II had ended, Europe was still in crisis. Some scholars were trying to lift “the feeling of isolation not only in individual scientific disciplines but in the general public” [37]. The development of cultural philosophy was one way to accomplish this result.

Gebser explained that the early writings of Jacob Burckhardt provided an initial voice for philosophers interested in culture from a variety of academic fields [38]. Other philosophers who influenced the development of that area of inquiry include Ernst Troeltsch, whose works described the historical evolution and decline of religion in society [39]. Philosophers of economics, such as Max Weber, also supplied breadth and depth to this field. Weber wrote about “rationalization, secularization, and ‘disenchantment,’” which he perceived as a new way of thinking, associated with the rise of capitalism and modernity [40]. He was interested in the conditions that made the development of capitalist civilization possible [41]. Psychologist Eduard Spranger also contributed ideas, including his pedagogy of personality theory *Types of Men* [42], which identified different types of individuality as revealing different structures in consciousness. There were also those who had what Gebser called a “man-of-the-world attitude” such as Hermann von Keyserling. Keyserling’s *Das Buch vom Ursprung [The Book of the Origin]* was published in 1947 [43]. He wrote, “Only through delving into both origins, the terrestrial as well as the spiritual, could man finally attain integration and self-realization” [44]. The viewpoints of these and other intellectuals inspired inquiries related to the philosophy of culture.

Gebser continued to explore the fundamental insight that flashed before him 15 years earlier in Spain. Introducing *The Ever-Present Origin*, Gebser wrote, “the principal concern of the present work to elucidate the possibility as well as the emergence of this new consciousness, and to describe its uniqueness” [45].

## THE EVER-PRESENT ORIGIN

The *Ever-Present Origin* (originally titled *The Aperspectival World*) was published in two parts. The first part, *Foundations of the Aperspectival World: A Contribution to the History of the Awakening of Consciousness* appeared in 1949. The second part, *Manifestations of the Aperspectival World: An Attempt at the Concretion of the Spiritual* was published in 1953. The two volumes presented Gebser's study of past civilizations, and his comprehension of how a particular 'structure' of consciousness benefited and eventually restrained human society. He used the term 'consciousness structure' to refer to a worldview, or "the visibly emerging perception of reality throughout the various ages and civilizations" [46]. Gebser traced the source of all consciousness structures to the spiritual, or origin, recalling that everything new is characterized by its originality.

Gebser drew physical evidence from nearly all major fields of inquiry, including poetry, music, visual arts, architecture, philosophy, religion, classics, and the natural sciences. He exposed traces of various structures ("mutations") that emerged from origin, and recognized five mutations of consciousness: origin or archaic, magical, mythical, mental, and integral. Each of these expands into the next stage in a surge from origin. As each structure of consciousness intensifies, time-space emerges (efficiency), thrives, and collapses (deficiency).

Gebser asserted that we are currently in a deficient mental structure of rationalism, and the integral or aperspectival consciousness is emerging. He claimed that only in transforming our relationship to reality do humans have a chance to 'rise above' the limitations presented in a structure of consciousness [47]. In that way, each dimension presents us with a new obligation. The current task is "no less than the achievement of the *Achronon*: the liberation of human consciousness from *time*. Only through this, will we be able to 'stand the test' represented by deficient, dangerous, atavistic or atomising manifestations of consciousness" [48].

In Part I of Gebser's *Ever-Present Origin*, he articulated the various dimensions of consciousness. While a brief overview cannot do justice to

Gebser's finely textured expression, a summary is helpful in interpreting later chapters in this edited project.

The ever-present *origin* is the *archaic* structure of consciousness. The term is derived from the Greek word *archē*, which means inception or origin. In archaic structure, humans and nature/universe are fused in an undifferentiated awareness. There is a uniformness of consciousness that manifests an "undisturbed partitionless continuum of pure being" [49]. Although scholars can use history to support Gebser's theories of ontology, he asserted that movement of consciousness is not an evolution. He intentionally evaded identifying an exact era for each structure, preferring that rationality not inhibit a holistic view of consciousness, as origin cannot be conceived as beginning "in time" [50].

Origin was augmented with a surge that brought forth the *magical* structure of consciousness. In this mutation, all phenomena are configured into a timeless and spaceless unity. Humans are completely embedded in nature; the idea of 'relationship' does not exist [51]. Motivated by survival instinct, humans struggle to distinguish self from nature, beginning to develop an embryonic, rudimentary self-image. In this mutation, "experience" is primary. The human task involves distancing self from nature, and "breaking through ... the netherworld" [52]. In this structure, the human is "only one coincident instant ... [D]ifferentiation is limited to his understanding himself merely as one terminus of a vector of power among all the other vectors intersecting at the occurrence" [53]. There is a "vital blending and a mesh-like interwovenness" of human and nature in magical consciousness [54]. Human actions are driven by urges and instincts with "an emotional and instinctual consciousness responsive to the demands of nature and the earth" [55]. In their struggle against nature, humans begin to disengage self from nature and become aware of an external world.

Origin's next surge supplements the magical by introducing the *mythical* structure of consciousness. The human task in this mutation is to continue to separate the self from nature, to develop the psyche and become aware of the inner world of the soul. This is realized in human "experiencing." The essence of mythic awareness is polarity, "the living constellation of mutual complementation, correspondences and interdependence" [56]. In polarity,

“There is a rhythmic recurrence of natural events and of human reflections on experiencing those events. The human is beginning to recognize self and is coming into his own, although human he still does not experience self as fully independent of nature” [57]. Although “bound-as-time,” humans are no longer limited to the stress of emotion, but are open to the possibilities of imagination, although no point of view is given, and no conflicting perspectives are possible [58]. In mythical utterance, spoken words alone are not pivotal. Words “become decisive – ‘de-cisive’ is the elimination of separation – only when understood in conjunction with what was left *unsaid*” [59].

A *mental* surge from origin again altered consciousness, joining the magical and mental realms of awareness. This structure dominates our current thinking. The deficient structure of mental consciousness seeks to suppress the other structures, and emphasizes humans as solely rational beings. Time is recognized as linear and directional; progress is compulsory. Human energy is directed toward objects as a “fixed-reality” that can be manipulated. Energy is drawn from the individual ego, as one situates the self in opposition to objects (including other people) [60].

Gebser perceived that origin is at the cusp of a surge yielding integrality. *Integral* consciousness is marked by diaphany and transparency, allowing humans to realize “a fully completed and realized wholeness” [61]. This mutation introduces a new relationship with space and time, liberating both, so human consciousness is freed to the spiritual. Human consciousness intensifies beyond any illusion of separateness into an integration of the whole. The universe holds multiple structures to be valid, not only what is ‘rational.’ The qualities of each structure are identified and presented transparently. This awareness allows a person to live in structures, rather than be controlled or ‘lived by’ them [62].

In part one of *The Ever-Present Origin*, Gebser explained that a new structure of consciousness is on the horizon. He identified surges from origin that have occurred since human identity was consubstantial with nature, and recognized glimpses of a fourth integral mutation. Each structure of consciousness is not simply a shift in perspective, but is a fundamentally different worldview that transforms how humans experience reality. After

the publication of part one in 1947, Gebser began to write part two of *The Ever-Present Origin*. In that volume, he provided evidence of irruptions across civilizations in all spheres of life as demonstrated throughout the range of academic disciplines.

Seeking to affirm or refute his theory on the foundations of integral consciousness, Gebser organized a symposium in Zürich around the theme *The New Worldview: International Expressions of the Irruption of a New, Aperspectival Epoch*. The symposium took place in 1950 and 1951, and was organized in two cycles of lectures that were delivered at the Academy of Commerce in St. Gallen, Switzerland. Eighteen of the most respected representatives of the fine arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences met to investigate Gebser's thesis from the perspective of their individual disciplines [63]. In their presentations, evidence of the restructuration Gebser posited was stunningly unanimous. Nearly 25 years after he first perceived the presence of a new consciousness in Rilke's poetry, Gebser's impression was undisputed among the presenters. There were, of course, people who continued to deny his ideas.

After completing the manuscript for part two, Gebser returned to Spain to spend two months in Torremolinos while the book was in production. In 1953, part two of *The Ever-Present Origin* appeared with the subtitle: *Manifestations of the Aperspectival World; An Attempt at a Concretion of the Spiritual*.

## **PREMINENCE OF MYTH AND THE DECLINE OF INSTRUMENTAL REASON**

Continuing to investigate aspects of Gebser's work, participants at an international conference on Preeminence of Myth and the Decline of Instrumental Reason met at Vilnius University in Lithuania in October 2018. The following chapters explicate, illustrate, challenge, and consider the contributions of Gebser's scholarship.

Part I: *Mythos in All Awareness* includes an essay by Algis Mickūnas titled *Before Time Began*. He addresses the decline of instrumental reason and asserts that this decline opens regions of human awareness that are transparent and disclose mythos. He offers examples that disclose the co-presence of mythos in all awareness.

Part II: *Disclosure of the Mythic* includes three essays that illustrate the contemporary presence of myth. Joe Pilotta's *Tuning In: Tai Chi as Mytho-Therapeutic Practice* explains how Geber's work on myth can inform tissue regeneration in people with nervous system challenges. Pilotta illustrates the therapeutic value of Tai Chi practices by joining together constructs of paradoxical intentionality, transparency, mythological cosmology of space time, and kinesthesia. Naglis Kardelis asks *Is Lithuanian Identity Compatible with a European One? Some Considerations from the Perspective of Lithuanian and Classical Greek Thinking*. The philosophy of Arvydas Šliogeris and the writings of Marija Gimbutas offer the possibility of compatibility between a unified European identity and a particular national identity whose mythopoetic legacy is rooted in the country's ethnic tradition. In *Revealing Lithuanian Cultural Heritage: Integrality*, Žilvinas Svirgis observes that there is likely no longer a country or nation that is not decisively concerned with restoring its cultural heritage. Drawing upon Lithuanian folkloric songs that reveal ancient Lithuanian cosmology, Svirgis explains how Gebser's mythical and integral modes of awareness harmonize culture by cohering multiple dimensions of awareness.

Part III: *Skewing Myth: Deficient Mentality* includes three essays that consider how humans in a rational age can twist myth to sway interpretations "in the direction of supporting malignant deeds and accomplish repressive goals" [64]. Rekha Menon in *Mythification of the Maternal Presence* asserts that woman's fecundity is encased in a horizon of mythification and re-mythification of the idealized, therefore suppressing woman. She draws upon Indian traditions to trace the suppression present in the rhetoric of a patriarchal ideology, domination, and colonization of the maternal power, especially subduing the power of cosmic Kali. Eric Mark Kramer's chapter, *The Grand Nihilism: The Fatalistic Absolutism of Infinite Relativism: Subtending Husserl's Positivism and Nietzsche's Negativism*, explores the

notion that multiple realities are all equally valid or equally invalid. That impression is based on subjectivity and personal privilege that results from rational fragmentation, and exacerbates further fragmentation of the lifeworld. Subjugation and even elimination of the Other emerges as alterity, and eliminates any striving for truth and a justice that depends on it. David Worth and Jason Barton explore Myth, Rhetoric, and Division in their chapter. They explain how the deployment of myth in the service of deficient mental rational rhetorical expression shows more than the continued presence of the mythic. They offer political examples to demonstrate mythic expression masquerading as mental rational discourse.

Part IV: Thinking Otherwise Than Gebser includes essays that question Gebser's ideas proffered nearly 75 years ago. Only in the exchange of ideas can thoughts be strengthened for the benefit of everyone. Bienvenido Argueta Hernandez in *The Aperspectival Mayan World and Its Spiritual Approach* explores Gebser's attention to Aztec culture, and the Central American region, including the Mayans, which he considered to be unperspectival mythical cultures. Hernandez asserts that the Mayan world is aperspectival, rather than unperspectival, reminding us of the need to decenter Gebser's Western approach to integral consciousness. Živilė Pabijutaitė, in *Capturing Indeterminacy: Non-Linear Temporal Models in the 20th Century Logic and Metaphysics*, recognizes Gebser's close association of different structures of consciousness with specific models of time. A philosopher of logic, Pabijutaitė presents an alternative to Gebser, overcoming difficulties that arise in the linear understanding of time, without rejecting the idea of describing temporal reality in terms of space. Brigita Gelžinytė's essay, *Integrity and Judgment: Some Gebserian Reflections on Schelling and Hegel*, examines the integrity of Gebser's judgment related to temporality and transparency in the face of a crisis of reason. She inquires whether expanding awareness is necessarily followed by transparency. Friedrich Schelling and Georg Hegel suggested alternative ways to ground the integrity of thought.

Part V: Responding to Civilizational Challenges includes Marius Povilas Šaulauskas' *The Paradox of Liquid (Post)Modernity: Perspectives on Vytautas Kavolis and Umberto Eco*, Jean Gebser and Algis Mickūnas.