

# Annotated Bibliography

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by Eugene Peng, for SFI Independent Study, Summer 2020

**Kegan, R. (1982). *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development*. Harvard University Press.**

In this book, Robert Kegan, a Harvard professor and clinical psychologist, presents a theory on adult developmental psychology that encompasses and extends Jean Piaget's theories on child development. He comes forth with a theory that underlies both Piaget's theory on cognitive development and Kohlberg's theory on moral development, that both of these developments can be explained by the same psychological motion — the movement of an individual self out of the environment that the individual is *embedded* in or *subject* to, to a new self that can hold the old environment or subject as an *object*. It is therefore, also called the Subject-Object theory. The relationship a person has with the environment becomes richer and more complex at each successive stage.

His theory is also called a *constructive-developmental* framework because it combines two big ideas: *constructivism* and *developmentalism*. Constructivism speaks to the idea that human experiences are actively constructed and not passively received. Each person constructs his or her experience. The same event happening to two people may result in two different experiences. Developmentalism speaks to the idea that things in nature are not static, but always in process, and goes through different stages. What appears to be static at any given stage is only a temporary equilibrium in the process.

He describes the several stages an individual can evolve through: 0. incorporative, 1. impulsive, 2. imperial, 3. interpersonal, 4. institutional, 5. inter-individual. The moral behavior, cognitive capacity, and emotional regulation are qualitatively distinct in each stage.

Whereas children and adolescents tend to stop at the *interpersonal* stage, Kegan demonstrates the availability of the institutional and inter-individual stages for maturing adults.

**Kegan, R. (1994). *In Over Our Heads: the Mental Demands of Modern Life*. Harvard University Press**

Kegan extends his previous work by showing how the demands of modern society placed on adults are beyond the developmental capacity of most adults. This comes with the implicit assumption that once a person reaches adulthood, he or she reaches full maturity, and no longer draws the sympathy and support we would lend to children who we know are developing.

Most adults are going through the developmental transition from 3rd order "socialized mind" to 4th order "self-authoring mind". But all areas of modern life — intimate partnership, parenting, workplace, higher-education — demand and expect 4th order capacity. Thus, for most adults, the demands are "in over their heads".

Most of the education and support we provide to adults is more training and knowledge. Or we simply tell them to try harder. This is inadequate, because what the demand is calling for is not *more knowing* or *more effort*, but a transformation of a person's *way of knowing*, of his inner structure of meaning-making. It requires a qualitative and not a quantitative shift.

The books call for more sympathy for adults who are challenged by modern life. When we see young children failing in school, we would step in to design a better curriculum to support the children at where they are in their development. Might we not do the same for adults?

**Wilber, K. (2000). *Integral Psychology*. Shambhala**

Ken Wilber synthesizes many different streams of psychological theories as well as Eastern spiritual wisdom into what he calls an integral framework for psychology. Laying side-by-side the developmental stages described by different researchers, he was able to find comparables and lay them across the same chart. Among the human developmental models he touched up on was Piaget, Kohlberg, Kegan, Lovinger, Cook-Greuter, and Spiral Dynamics.

One of his biggest contribution is the quadrant model as the integral view of any domain. The quadrants are split by interior and exterior on one axis, individual and collective on the other axis. Evolution occurs in all 4 quadrants. Each instantiation in any quadrant has the correlate in every other quadrant. This avoids any reductionism that biases one quadrant over the other. For example, the interior quadrants tend to be dismissed by modern academics. The focus only on the exterior leads to what Wilber calls as being stuck on the *flatland*, ignorant of a whole other dimension of reality.

His other contribution is that evolution has many parallel lines that develop independently of each other. In psychology, the lines of moral, cognitive, emotional, social all develop separately.

So his framework for the integral perspective is also called AQAL (all-quadrant, all-lines), meaning it must cover all the quadrants and all the lines.

**Bohm, D. (1996). *On Dialogue*. Routledge.**

David Bohm, a well-known physicist, is tackling in this book the problem of "fragmentation" in human consciousness. He sees it as a significant source of many of problems in society.

He presents here a group practice that he calls *Dialogue* that might overcome the habitual fragmentation. It could achieve a flow of information across the group field.

**Roberts, K. (2011). *The Meaning Making that Leads to Social Entrepreneurial Action* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <http://www.ohiolink.edu/etd>**

In her doctoral dissertation, Kathleen Roberts examines the meaning-making of social entrepreneurs and any perspective-shifting experiences that inspired them towards social action. The research assessed the developmental level of participating social entrepreneurs using Torbert's Leadership Development Framework. The sample of social entrepreneurs in this study were shown to operate from the late-conventional to post-conventional stages of development — levels of meaning-making that are more complex than the average adult population. It suggests the level of development that may be required for someone to tackle the complex challenges of social entrepreneurship.

The author also interviewed the participants on any early perspective-shifting experiences that led them towards being a social entrepreneur. The themes that emerged — awakenings, community connections, exposures to global perspectives — highlighted expanding empathy as a catalyst for actions towards the social good. These insights could help to construct learning environments that further development of future social entrepreneurs.

**Gergen, K.J. (1999). *An Invitation to Social Construction*. Sage Publications**

**Gergen, K.J. (2009). *Relational Being*. Oxford University Press.**

In these 2 books, the social psychologist Kenneth J. Gergen puts forward his ideas on *relational being*. Individual identity is a social construct. Our entire society reinforces this construct that the individual is the primary reality, which leads to problems with narcissism and divisions. He invites us into imagining a different construct, where what is considered primary in reality is not the individual but the relationship. Normally, we consider relationship as an abstraction that is formed when individuals come together. He asks to consider relationship to be the primary substrate from which individuals get their identity. The relationship exists prior to what can be defined as individuals. Taking on this new construct generates new possibilities for our society. The willingness to change our language and our constructs is a form of what he calls *poetic activism*.

However, Gergen does not consider the developmental perspective of how people's and the society's meaning-making constructs evolve. By not recognizing how the different constructs stack up in evolution history, his theory misses a practical path on how to change the social constructs. And by only criticizing the problems that come with the construct of individualism without recognizing its value in the evolution history, his theory runs the risk of excluding the developmental achievements of individualism from the higher forms of relational constructs that he envisions. Doing so would conflate more complex forms of relational constructs with less complex ones.

**Basseches, M. (2005). *The Development of Dialectical Thinking As An Approach to Integration*. Integral Review.**

Michael Basseches describes dialectical thinking as a higher level of cognitive development than the formal operational thinking defined by Jean Piaget. Whereas formal thinking can model elements and relationships within an internally-coherent but closed system, dialectical thinking orients towards the processes and relationships that underlie the system. Dialectical thinking can see the process and history behind a fixed "form", and can therefore see its transformational potentials across time and in the interactions between forms. Whereas formal thinking is systematic and cannot tolerate contradictions, dialectical thinking is meta-systematic, open, and embraces contradictions.

Basseches describes how dialectical thinking would be suited to environments where there are lots of changes and multiple perspectives. He hypothesizes conditions for a learning environment that would support adults to develop the capacity for dialectical thinking. The conditions include supporting students through the growing pain of leaving the safety of formal thinking, helping them to see and appreciate multiple perspectives, yet also encourage them to do the hard thinking to go beyond just "relativism."

**Cook-Greuter, S.R. (2004). Making the Case for a Developmental Perspective. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 36, 275-281.**

Suzanne Cook-Greuter, known for her work in post-conventional stages of consciousness development, in this article reviews contemporary research around adult development and its empirical validations.

She makes a distinction between assessments of personalities and styles, which show the ways people are different but equal, and assessments of developmental stages, which show how some meaning-making and thinking frames are better than others, especially when faced with complex environments.

She also makes the distinction between lateral and vertical development. Lateral development is what we typically think of when we think of learning, schooling, and training. It fills a person with more knowledge and skills. Vertical development is rarer and takes more effort. It is about the transformations of consciousness towards meaning-making systems and worldviews that are "more comprehensive, more differentiated, and more effective in dealing with the complexities of life."

Different researchers have modeled development with different stages, but they can all be roughly organized into 4 tiers: pre-conventional, conventional, post-conventional, and transpersonal. Each successive stage is less self-centered, less defensive, more flexible, more inclusive, more complex in terms of the context and perspectives that can be integrated.

In organizations, knowing people's developmental levels allows better expectation to be set for the complexities of their responsibilities. It also supports them with opportunities to grow into their developmental edge, where they can take on more complexity.

**Parks, S.D. (1989). Home and Pilgrimage: Companion Metaphors for Personal and Social Transformation. *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 72 (2/3), 297-315.**

**Parks, S.D. (1998). *Faithful Becoming in a Complex World*. The Princeton Lectures on Youth, Church, and Culture. Retrieved from <https://youthlectures.ptsem.edu/?action=tei&id=youth-1998-05>**

**Parks, S.D. (1998). *Home and Pilgrimage: Deep Rhythms in the Adolescent Soul*. The Princeton Lectures on Youth, Church, and Culture. Retrieved from <https://youthlectures.ptsem.edu/?action=tei&id=youth-1998-05>**

Sharon Daloz Parks, a researcher in faith development, offers an complementary view of constructive-developmental theories by Piaget, Kegan, Kohlbert, and Fowler. Whereas the other theorists focused on the structure of knowing and meaning-making, Parks brought back in the importance of the content of knowing. And unlike the dominant understandings of development that are skewed towards individuation and differentiation, Parks re-orient us to the importance of integration. So, like Carol Gilligan, she is balancing the developmental theories with a more feminine view.

She uses the metaphors of Home and Pilgrimage to describe the two equal and interdependent aspects of human development, but the western view is skewed towards the pilgrimage, the outward journey, at the cost of the home-making.

She speaks to the yearning of young adults for meaning and purpose in a postmodern world, and she is interested in how to facilitate their journey not only towards independence but also towards a wider participation in a shared commons -- in other words, a good mix of home and pilgrimage. It needs a balanced alternation between outward encounters with the "others" and inward broadening of one's sense of "we".

For her, development must not just be about taking on more complex perspectives and structures of knowing. It must also be fueled by the contents of knowing, because the stories, images, metaphors, and symbols that fill our imagination inform how we choose to participate.

**Tarnas, Richard. (1993). *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas that Have Shaped Our World View*. Ballantine Books.**

Richard Tarnas, a professor of Philosophy and Psychology, traces the sweeping history of ideas that led to the modern and postmodern Western worldview, starting from the ancient Greeks, Judeo-Christianity, and medieval, to the Renaissance, Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution that set the stage for modernity, and finally the ideas started by Hume and Kant that led to the postmodern mind. He argues that the journey of the Western mind is a dialectical process that starts from being undifferentiated with the world of reality, to the differentiated but separate modern self, and to a stage where the differentiation has reached a limit and a higher synthesis is called for.

The human mind was casted by the Copernicus revolution out of its primordial context, its intimate connection with nature, into a differentiated and separate subjectivity, a position where it can see the world more objectively. It led the way into modern scientific progress, but in the process, also created the existential angst of being an atomic entity alienated from a universe that is seen to be devoid of meaning. But rather than seeing this an error, he affirms its developmental achievement, and sees it as part of a greater dialectical process that takes the human consciousness from primordial undifferentiation from its surrounding reality, to the differentiated autonomous mind that marks a modern self, to eventually a greater re-integration. It is also a journey that goes from being driven by the masculine impulse, being a hero that transcends his context, to be re-integrated with the feminine at a higher level of unity.

**Lent, J. (2017). *The Patterning Instinct: A Cultural History of Humanity's Search for Meaning*. Prometheus.**

Jeremy Lent, not an academic by training but a former CEO of a tech startup, spent a decade putting together what he called a "cognitive history" of humanity. He recognizes the power of the human mind to construct its own reality, so he looks back to the history of patterns in human minds for answers to our current unsustainable trajectory as a species. He recognizes how different cultures take on different values, and these different values shape different histories. The Western dualistic mindset, separating mind and body, God and nature, with its propensity towards transcendence and triumph, led to its modern dominance over other cultural views like those of the historical Chinese, which placed a higher value on the harmony between the parts. This separation created by the

Western dualistic mindset led to a sense of emptiness and meaninglessness in people that was soon filled by consumerism in a capitalist society, where self-interest lies supreme. The result is overconsumption and widened separation between those who have and those who have not.

He sees the relationship between our cognitive system and the tangible system we create to be a feedback loop where each can catalyze transformations in the other. So our hope lies in shifting the cognitive system before the collapse of the tangible system. To do so, we need to change the root metaphors that underlie our modern culture — "nature as machine" and "conquering nature" — to a systems view of life that sees the intrinsic interconnectedness between all things.

Tarnas sees the need for the collapse of the modern ego for our integration into a greater interconnectedness. In a similar language, Lent sees the need for a collapse and renewal of our cognitive pattern to avoid the collapse of our economic and ecological system. But unlike Tarnas, Lent's view is less dialectic. He does not celebrate the achievement of modern differentiation but critiques it in comparison to the Chinese philosophical traditions. The critique of one in favour of another, rather than seeing the two as being co-evolving in a dialectical process, could be a dualistic view of its own that stalls further evolution of human culture.

**Fein, E. & Jordan, T. (2016). Adult Development Meets Social Sciences—Reviewing the State of the Art. *Behavioral Development Bulletin*, 21 (2), 136-153.**

This journal article surveys research on the application of adult development (AD) theories to social science. AD frameworks have been applied mostly at the level of individuals, some at the level of organizations, but little at the macro level of politics, societal structures/processes, and complex public issues. However, the author cite examples that show the potentials of AD frameworks to contribute to understandings at the macro level.

The article summarizes findings from current social science research that are developmentally informed:

- "The skills of reasoning, argumentation, and meaning-making differ considerably across the typical population"
- "Large proportions of the adult population in western societies do not think systematically"
- "Conceptual complexity has an impact on collaborative skills and thus, on conflict management and resolution on all levels of politics"
- "Personal development fosters organizational growth and success. It can also predict leadership quality and effectiveness in politics, business, and organizational life"

Given the available research, even though it is still limited, the authors thinks it is reasonable to assume that "the levels of cognitive complexity within a population are a crucial factor for explaining the evolution of social forms and institutions in the respective societies."

The authors also note that the root of sociopolitical conflicts are often caused by the different levels of complexity between social actors.

The authors cite the research of Shawn Rosenberg, who showed that people think about politics at different levels of complexity. He described 3 stages: sequential, linear, and systematic, which roughly correspond to Piaget's levels of pre-operational, concrete operational, and formal operational. Majority of the people in his studies do not reason at the systemic level, putting into question the assumption of common political theory that all adults reason the same way.

**McLeod, S. A. (2018, August 05). Lev Vygotsky. Simply Psychology. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html>**

This article summarizes Lev Vygotsky's work on the socio-cultural approach to cognitive development and compares it with Jean Piaget's cognitive development theories.

In Piaget's theory, the development of a child is self-initiated by exploring and assimilating new experiences. In comparison, Vygotsky emphasizes on the role of social interaction to the process of development. He came up with the principles of the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD sits between the areas of learning that are beyond a child's reach and the learning that the child can achieve independently. And the ZPD is facilitated by the help of MKO who can be peers or teachers. Vygotsky viewed the ZPD as the most effective area for learning.

Piaget's theory describe discrete stages of development that are culture-independent. But because Vygotsky emphasizes the social factor, he sees cognitive development to vary across cultures. For him, the a child's environment will influence how they think and what they think about. He also places a larger emphasis on the role of language in shaping cognitive development, whereas for Piaget, language development is a consequence of cognitive development.

Both Piaget and Vygotsky are widely acknowledged as foundational figures to child development theories. To me, their theories are complementary rather than oppositional. Piaget studied the way children assimilate new experiences into increasingly more complex internal constructs, while Vygotsky focused on social environment as the causal factor to learning and development. Their theories point to a possible feedback loop in the development process: new social interactions catalyze changes to cognitive constructs; and changes to cognitive constructs makes possible new social interactions.