This Text Presents an Approach to:

Applying This Constellation of Concepts
'Learning to Live Complexity'

The unusual array of notions constellated on this web site does have 'practical applications.' Taken together these concepts and perspectives provide surprising insights to seemingly ordinary lives and difficulties. I offer a general approach for 'applying' these insights below. Related comments are provided in the 'Extra-Ordinary Understanding' and 'Mythical Knowing' texts listed on the **Presentations and Workshops Page** of this site.

The Difficulties of Engaging Awareness that We Necessarily Repress

Most concepts examined on this site are not 'useful' in the usual sense of 'solving problems.' Instead of 'providing answers' by narrowing one's focus down to Black versus White conclusions, these perspectives tend to amplify awareness. By posing 'multiple readings' of causation and significance they 'open up' the possibilities of understanding. The effect of their application is thus to reorient attention away from typically simplistic assumptions and toward unusually complex relationships—thus toward a greater capacity for 'learning to live the actual complexities of existence.'

That shift tends to reveal repressed or unacknowledged aspects of self, others, and world. The result can be a change in focus from seeking greater control over events to

engaging them in a more complete, thus more satisfying manner. However, since habitual perspectives on self and world cause us to act routinely and reflexively. noticing what has not been noticed is difficult. One becomes identified with one's habits and resists change. Yet, given an appropriate context, it becomes possible to evade those ordinary attitudes and apply the concepts on this site in ways that enable one to 'live complexity' more fully. Shifting towards more complex awareness promotes capacity to cope more adequately with conflicts and unexpected changes in our environments—from divorce to global warming. Ordinary assumptions are part of a necessarily practical 'reduction' of factors to a more 'manageable scale.' But the resulting 'ordinary status' tends to be dangerously incomplete. It ignores important 'troubles' and that can lead to both diminished sense of value and a debilitating ignorance of 'what is really happening.'

Approaching what we do not yet know or understand (much less what we do not want to know) can be intimidating—but also interesting. Subjects provoking 'interest' tend not to be 'what is already known.' Thus we become more interested or activated by encounters with unfamiliar or extraordinary conditions. The notion of 'interest' here relates to the word's Latin origins in the terms *inter* for 'between,' and *esse* for 'to be.' These word roots suggest some status that 'exists between' or 'in/between' the familiar conditions. The concepts associated on this website are useful in provoking interest in such 'more-than-ordinary' aspects of self and world that exist in/between what is known. A serious exploration of these 'near but obscure' factors tends to lead one to encounters with irreducible complexities. It is not surprising then, that we tend to ordinarily resist such knowing and ignore perspectives that prompt it, since awareness of them tends to 'complicate life.' But to consistently avoid this level of complexity cripples awareness of 'how things really really are.' Thus 'learning to live complexity' is not only a matter of experiencing life more fully, but ultimately one of effective adaptation and survival.

The following text outlines five related approaches useful in enhancing more complex awareness.

Five Engagements for Approaching Extra-Ordinary Re-Orientation

Just as there is a relatively ordinary orientation to self and world, there are relatively extra-ordinary ones. In seeking ways to re-orient attention from simplistic to more complex perspectives one must often begin by examining how one assumes things are or ought to be. Only by identifying these biases can one begin to sort out 'how things really really are.' In general, I facilitate this shift through engagements with five categories of concern.

1. Confronting the Reductions of Ordinary Status
2. Including Extra-Ordinary Complexity
3. Conceiving Extra-Ordinary Status
4. Valuing Disruptions of Ordinary Status
5. Inducing Extra-Ordinary Consciousness

Approaching these topics through some general concepts promotes awareness of the distinction between ordinarily reductive and extra-ordinary inclusive awareness. That general view can then be engaged in the specific concerns of any particular audience. Any life and work context can be explored by applying these 5 stages of 're-orientation to irreducible complexity.' In the process, insights that initially seem strange or disturbing can provide utterly unexpected responses to confusions and conflicts. Specific cultural and social phenomena, as well as personal experiences, often emerge as radically different than previously assumed.

These five topics can be elaborated in a progressive sequence. Some of the concepts associated with this process are listed below:

1. Confronting the Reductions of Ordinary Status
Acknowledging how the Orientations of Ordinary Assumptions Limit Awareness and thus Reduce Complexity of Understanding: Establishing an orderly continuity of socially constructed meaning and predictable behavior requires simplification. Normal reality is a 'social construct' that ignores or even denies aspects of both mind and matter. *Much of self, others, and the world is thereby rendered invisible or invalid.*
*** Concepts*
-- Prejudicial Continuity: Preference for predictable continuity of identity and reality imposes adherence to standards and routines—often at the cost of repressing awareness of conflicts. The appearance of continuity validates social structure.
-- Routine Definition: Ordinary status is enforced by routine preferences, reflexive behaviors, social roles, cultural beliefs, religious references, even scientific definitions.
-- Unacknowledged Contradictions: Standards for ordinary status typically involve contradictions that are mostly ignored in order to sustain assumptions of continuity.
-- Limited Consciousness: Habitual attitudes (conscious and unconscious, personal and collective) restrict awareness, thought, feeling, and thus action.
-- Singular Status: Conventional standards reduce identity & reality to singular states.
-- Linear Reality: Practical perspective tends to be mechanistic, linear, and oppositional.
-- Culturally Specific Identity: The basis for valid personal and collective identities vary between different social and cultural definitions of normative or ordinary status. Thus traits of normative reduction to ordinary status vary cross-culturally.
*** Applications*

--Identify particular examples of how ordinary attitudes reduce sensing of complexity in our actual experiences.
-- Expose typically unacknowledged contradictions in social standards for identity and reality.

2. Including Extra-Ordinary Complexity
Admitting a Status of Irreducible Complexity and Radical Interactivity for Things: Actual intricacies of phenomenal activity manifest irreducible levels of dynamic complexity, constituting a composite status of things that is 'un-decidable' and so, *relative to the reductions of ordinary social definitions*, impossible and thus extra-ordinary.
Concepts
-- Order out of Chaos: Some scientific theories pose the linear, orderly dynamics commonly assumed to organize reality as *actually deriving from* non-linear, chaotically unpredictable background contexts of discontinuous phenomenal activity.
-- Radical Interactivity: Non-linearity of extra-ordinary complexity is indicated by concepts such as order generating chaos, unpredictably emergent properties, chaotic behaviors of complex systems and global networks, sensitivity to initial conditions, contingent causation, and environmental disturbance regimes. These theories indicate an overall dynamical quality of radically or irreducibly interactive complexes of mutually modifying relationships.
-- Concurrently Multiple Status: Regarding phenomena as resulting from radical interactivity posits a composite, overlapping composition for all 'entities.' Each thus is a concurrently diversified, pluralistic 'condition' or multiple status existing within a mutually modifying interactivity of other such compositions.
-- Centerless Mind: Brain functions and activity that generate human consciousness or 'mind' manifest a similarly natural radical complexity of concurrent interactivity that has no singular hierarchic order. The self is chaotically self-organizing.
***Applications*:**
--Compare specific ordinary assumptions about identity and order to more complex analytical perspectives upon the phenomenal dynamics of actual experiences and events.
--Contemplate discrepancies between personal 'public personas' or 'presentations of self' and the tracking of actual 'internal' cognitive activity.

3. Conceiving Extra-Ordinary Status
Re-Orienting Reason toward Radically Complex Awareness & Understanding: Humans are capable of engaging the irreducibly complex dynamics of phenomenal activities which 'exceed the parameters of ordinary reality' as both experiential and logical actualities. Such engagement is essential to activating the full range of 'adaptive capacities' that characterize human consciousness.
Concepts

-- Reasonably Coherent Inconsistency: Scientific reasoning about irreducible complexity provides a basis for understanding seeming inconsistencies and contradictions as logically complimentary factors in 'the ordering of things.'

-- A Dialectic of Order < > Disorder: An inclusive perspective on phenomenal activity must accommodate an interplay of linearly ordered and chaotic dynamics in an inclusive process of dialectical mutuality.

-- Complementarity of Reduction and Non-Reduction: Understanding overall coherence involves logically affirming specifiable states of being while resisting conclusive reduction and embracing discontinuity as 'part of order.' This constitutes a complementarity of reductive and non-reductive or inclusive understandings.

-- Diversified Knowing: The complementarity of reduction and non-reduction is approached by diversifying modes of thinking, analyzing, interpreting, and feeling—while accepting contrasting yet concurrently valid 'truths.'

-- Extra-Ordinary Understanding: Orientation toward relatively non-reductive perception, thought, and feeling through diversified knowing can logically extend sense of self and world beyond the limitations of ordinary status.

-- Embodied Pluralistic Consciousness: Concurrently multiple, non-linear composition implies a potential 'embodiment' of extra-ordinary status through thinking/feeling/enacting pluralistic, concurrently diversified states of being.

-- Mythical Status: A pluralistic, diversified condition of 'being manyness in/as/of oneness' can be understood as a 'mythical condition' requiring appropriately extra-ordinary modes or representation.

Applications

-- Examine historical and contemporary contexts exhibiting reasonably valid yet non-linear dynamics constituting coherent inconsistency.

-- Compose versions of identity and reality that are rationally non-linear yet logically inclusive of contradictory factors.

--Identify experiences of self and world that 'feel' concurrently diversified.

4. Valuing Disruptions of Ordinary Status

Appreciating Trouble as Access to the Extra-Ordinary Complexity of Pluralistic Being: Conflicts and disruptions of familiar order typically manifest the more irreducible complexities of phenomenal activity, thus providing opportunities to engage the actual diversity of 'what's really really going on.'

*** Concepts***

-- Disordering Stimulus: 'Trouble' and conflict with conventional norms constituting 'breakdowns in proper order' act as 'disturbance regimes' that stimulate potential for more complexly inclusive awareness.

-- Return of the Repressed: 'Troubling' events tend to bring complexities repressed by the simplistic reductions of ordinary status into overt expression.

-- Reductive Reactivity: The intensity of how ordinary identity reacts to particular conflicts and disruptions of habitual status indicates their potential for providing access to repressed complexities. Immediate and virulent attempts to reduce consequences of disruptions to ordinary status suggest an opportunity for accessing extra-ordinary awareness.

-- Transformative Transgression: Potentially transformative disruptions of ordinary status arise from such factors as challenges to established authority, interpersonal conflict, inconsistent status quo standards, confusing contradictions and paradoxes, disruptive or deviant behavior, destructive actions, social disorder, disease, psychological distress, depression, and mania. The 'collapse of egoic identity,' 'hell of war,' and 'tragedy of disaster' tend to either intensify reductive reactivity or 'awaken' extra-ordinary awareness.

*** Applications**

-- Explore instances of trouble as expressions of ordinarily unacknowledged complexities.

-- Practice suspending ordinary expectations and assumptions about 'how things ought to be' while employing non-reductive analysis to examine experiences of conflict and trauma for non-linear dynamics and diversified meanings constituting extra-ordinary status.

5. Inducing Extra-Ordinary Consciousness

Practicing Disruptions that Promote Encounters with the Radical Interactivity of Irreducible Complexity: There are modes of thought, action and expression that dynamically manifest the logic of the irreducible complexities of self and world 'as experiential consciousness.' These necessarily 'make trouble' for ordinary assumptions but are essential for inducing more inclusive awareness and understanding.

*** Concepts**

-- Adaptive Re-Orientation: Effective human adaptation to the inherently chaotic dynamics of evolutionary environments (psychological, social, economic, and ecological), require periodic re-orientations to a more-than-ordinarily-defined existence.

-- Participatory Manifestation: Re-orientation to irreducible status requires practicing identity destabilization, social transgression, logical contradiction, and non-reductive representation in extra-ordinary styles (from the scientifically abstract to the artfully symbolic). Contexted as 'adaptive re-orientation' these enactments can manifest participation in radically interactive dynamics *by overtly precipitating them*.

-- Encountering Otherness: Manifesting re-orientation to radical complexity requires disruptions of ordinary status capable of generating an overt sense of 'otherness' about self, others, and world. Embracing such encounters is essential to engendering and affirming experience of concurrently diversified status.

-- Submission to Creative Chaos: Attention to emergence of spontaneous and unplanned creativity resulting from disruptions of ordinary status tempers the dominance of habitual assumptions and provides access to intelligence that is otherwise unavailable.

*** Applications**

-- Seek novel understanding by deliberately engaging practices that transgress habitual boundaries of personal experiences, modes of meaningful expression, and approaches to existing knowledge.

--Learn ways to precipitate expressions of and participation in the creative self-ordering of chaotic behavior (from symbolic improvisation to scientific experiments with chaotic phenomena).

-- Activate and admit self-contradiction as a basis of knowing complexities of self, interpersonal relationships, and world.

Illustrating these Five Aspects of "Knowing Extra-Ordinarily"

Below are a few examples of how to illustrate these concepts and efforts for shifting awareness:

1. Confronting the Reductions of Ordinary Status

Acknowledging how the Orientations of Ordinary Assumptions Limit Awareness and thus Reduce Complexity of Understanding:

Each culture generates collectively shared social assumptions that define 'how things really are.' Those assumptions shape habitual attitudes that reductively define self and world. This creates an eventual need for more inclusive, complex awareness that can 'elaborate' repressed or unacknowledged aspects of phenomena.

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* Reductions prompt Elaborations *

Personal & Social Habits of Percpetion, Thought, Expression
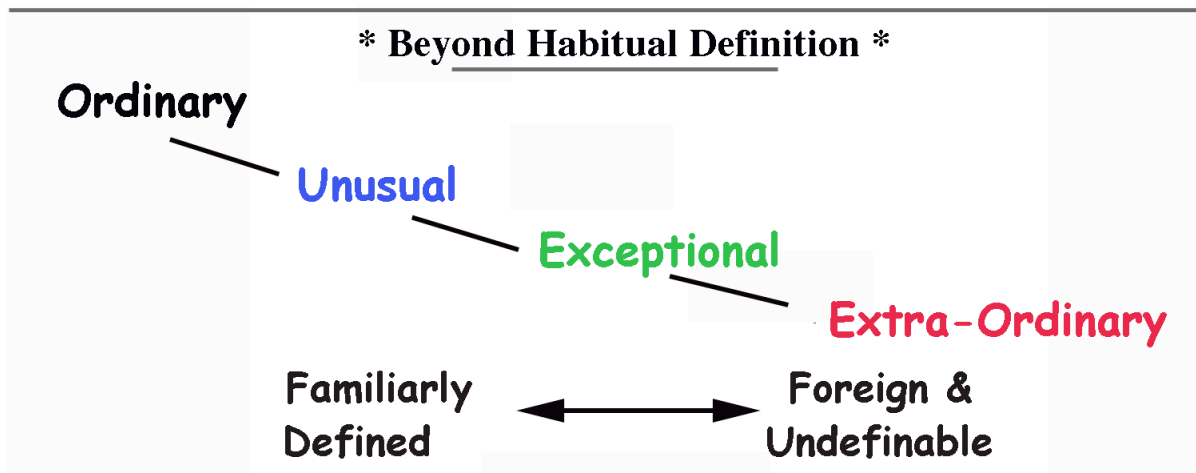
Ordinary Reductions of Actual Phenomena

-- Thus --

Restrictive Sense of Self, Others, & World

-- Therefor --

**A Need to Engage Extra-Ordinary Aspects
of Awareness & Understanding
that Elaborate What Habits Deny**

This inherent consequence of standardized socio-cultural definitions of identity and reality suggests there is always an important a range of self and world that is necessarily 'other' and can only be known by transgressing habitual identity. Thus relative spectrums for identification develop.

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* Beyond Habitual Definition *

Ordinary

Unusual

Exceptional

Extra-Ordinary

Familiarly Defined ⟷ **Foreign & Undefinable**

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2. Including Extra-Ordinary Complexity
Admitting a Status of Radical Interactivity and Irreducible Complexities for Things

Ordinary or familiar status tends to be regarded as singular and fixed. Practical concerns depend largely upon such predictable assumptions about things and events. Thus there is a tendency not to notice, or to ignore unstable or dynamic conditions. However, unstable or disjunctive states of being must eventually be accommodated.
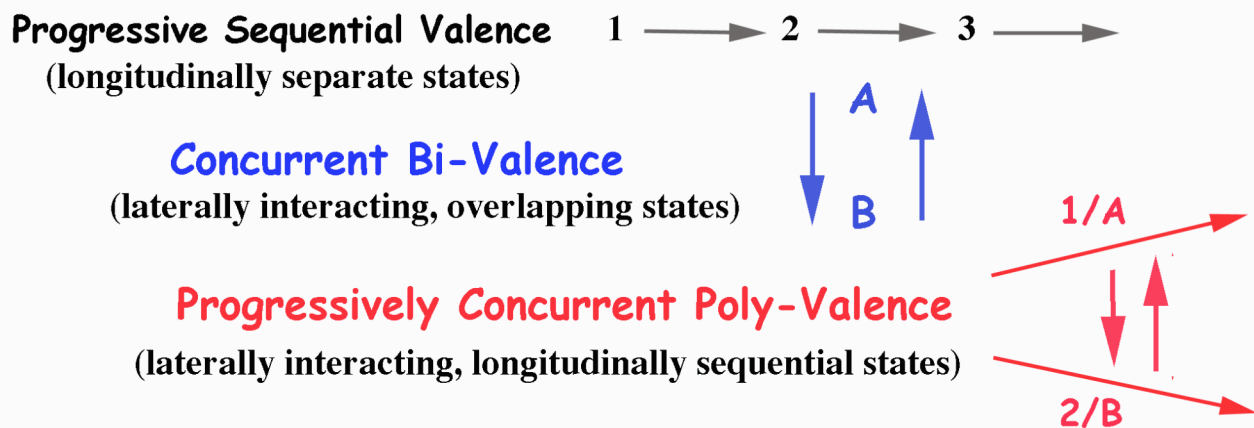
* One Way   and   The Other *

Static Status
**(fixed, consistent**
boundaries & activity)

Dynamic Status
(unstable, changing
boundaries & activity)

Thus, while it is reassuring to assume that events develop in linear sequences of cause and effect, this view obscures factors of concurrently interactive causation. There is more than one direction of dynamic development.

* Layers of Directional Dynamics *

Progressive Sequential Valence
(longitudinally separate states)

Concurrent Bi-Valence
(laterally interacting, overlapping states)

Progressively Concurrent Poly-Valence
(laterally interacting, longitudinally sequential states)

1 ⟶ 2 ⟶ 3 ⟶

A B

1/A
2/B

Dynamic activity can progress linearly through distinctively singular states. But it also manifests a 'lateral' field of activity. Whereas the linear mode involves a multiplicity of factors in succession, or converging to create a single event, the lateral one involves concurrently rather than successive actions and reactions. Taken together, these directional dynamics constitute a condition of multi-directional, mutually modifying, non-linear interactivity.

* Orders of Complexity *
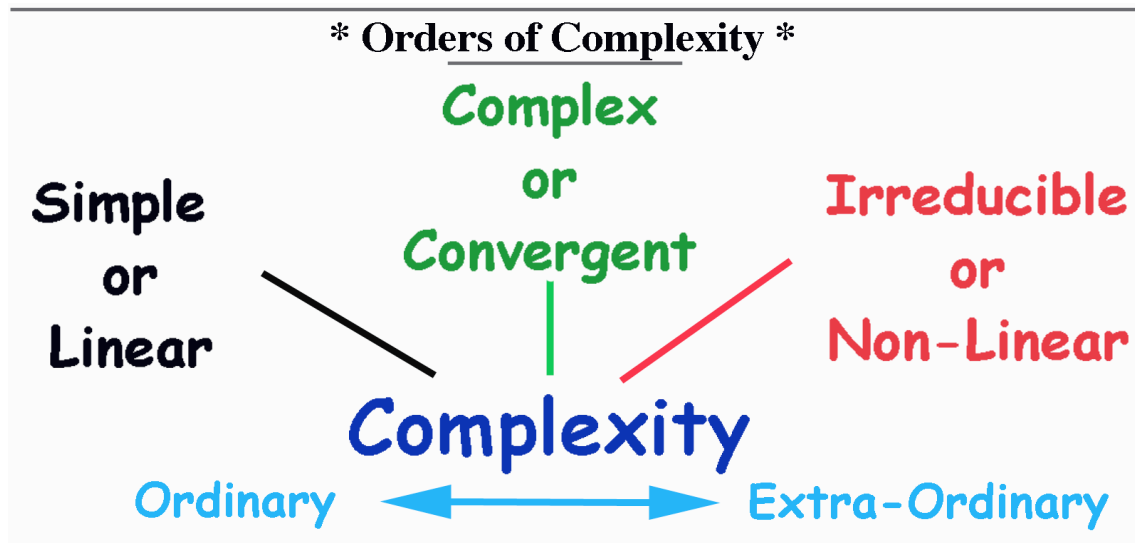
There appears then something of a spectrum of complexity, extending from the linearly sequential to concurrently convergent linearity and then to a non-linear condition of potentially indeterminable or irreducible concurrent interactivity.

3. Conceiving Extra-Ordinary Status
Re-Orienting Reason toward Radically Complex Awareness & Understanding

To think in terms of non-linear dynamics is challenging to ordinarily pragmatic attitudes. It involves thinking of things and events as singular yet also somehow overlapping or interpenetrating—as exclusive parts involved in an inclusive interplay that blurs boundaries and confuses causal relationships. A simple way of describing this is as a contrast between 'knowing by reduction to exclusive singularities' versus 'knowing by non-reduction to inclusive but indistinct multiplicities.' Taken together, these modes suggest a 'knowing by singularity and plurality concurrently.'

* Knowing by both Singular and Plural Logics *

Exclusive Reduction
(only one way:
singular, sequential states)

Inclusive Non-Reduction
(neither one way or another:
mulitple, variable states)

Irreducibly Complex Phenomena
(this way AND that way:
chaotically concurrent interplay of specifica states from which order emerges)

Ability to track such concurrency of singularity and plurality tends to be obstructed by the judging of priorities in order to impose hierarchies of value since on what is being observed. When relationships between factors are not linear but disjunctive and mutually modifying, hierarchical priority is not applicable. Thus one can only analyze the qualities of non-linear events if one suspends judgment about 'how things ought to be.'

* Analysis vs Judgment *

Judgment of Value

*relative to personal & social biases
*reflexively preferential
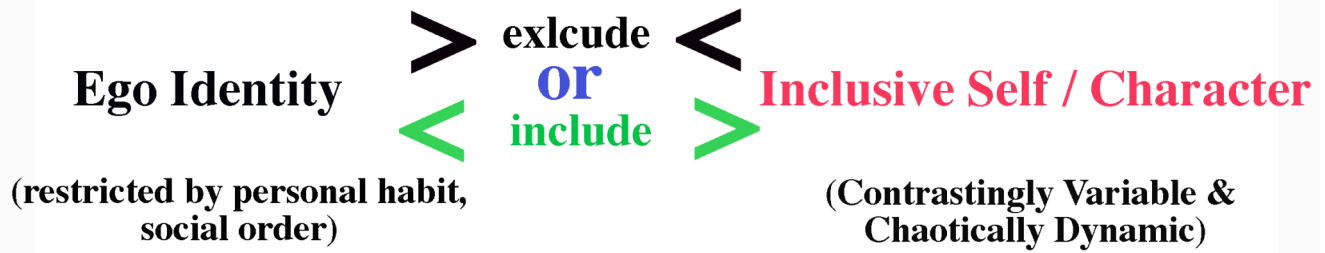*hierarhcially oppositional

Analysis of Actualities

*relative to criteria for differentiation
*distinctions without preference
*inclusive of inconsistencies

4. Valuing Disruptions of Ordinary Status
Appreciating Trouble as Access to the Extra-Ordinary Complexity of Irreducible Being
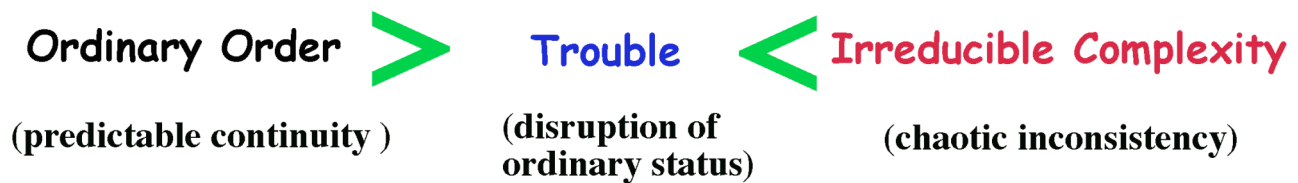
Evading the reflexive grasp of ordinary assumptions upon awareness tends to require notable disruptions of ordinary status. On occasion a person will act in surprising ways, disrupting relations with others. In such circumstances one's habitually sense of self or 'ego identity' is confronted with unfamiliar, ordinarily repressed aspects of 'the rest of the self.' The resulting sense of self-conflictedness suggests the chaotically dynamic multiplicity of the inclusive status of the self. A question thus arises about whether the "I" should repress or embrace aspects of self it does not normally acknowledge.

* Reductive vs. Expansive Personal Struggle *

Ego Identity   > **exlcude** <   **Inclusive Self / Character**

or

< **include** >

(restricted by personal habit,   (Contrastingly Variable &
social order)   Chaotically Dynamic)

Confronting more-than-ordinary complexity tends to 'make trouble.' Or, trouble tends to happen in psyche and society when underlying complexities have not been somehow acknowledged.

* The Trouble with Complexity *

Ordinary Order   >   **Trouble**   <   **Irreducible Complexity**

(predictable continuity)   (disruption of   (chaotic inconsistency)
ordinary status)

Attempting to evade 'trouble' tends to increase the pressure of unacknowledged complexities upon ordinary attitudes. It could be wise to occasionally examine our lives for unappreciated complexities of conflict, contradiction, and disorder.

* What's The Trouble? *

Commerce

Business

Politics

Society

Art

Education

Relgion

Family

Marriage

Sexuality

Contradictory Standards or Goals?

Naive or Simplistic Expectations?

Improper Impulses?

Suppressed Need for Conflict?

Disparity of Methods & Purposes?

Paradoxical Values?

Incongruous Experiences?

Unacknowledged Factors & Motives?

Dominance of Reflexive Habits?

Attachment to Dogma & Doctrine?
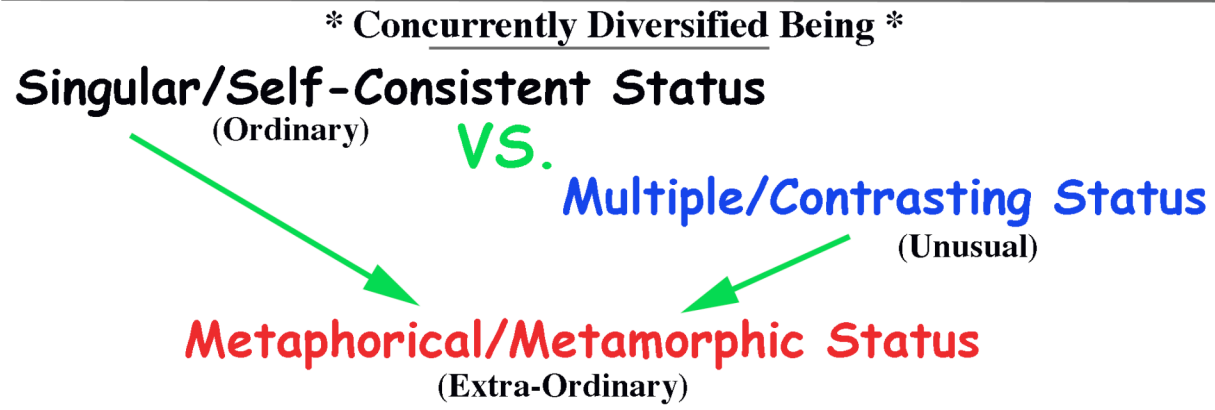
5. Inducing Extra-Ordinary Consciousness
Practicing Disruptive Encounters with Irreducible Complexity and Overt Expressions of Its Radical Interactivity:

By deliberately engaging conditions of unpredictably chaotic phenomena in which there is no certainty, attention can become diversified. This brings forth the mind's innate capacities to understand in multiple modes of knowing concurrently and thus think in terms of coherent inconsistency.

* Shift from Precision to Accuracies *

Getting It Right

Exclusive Status

Closed Representation

Relation as Sequential
Mechanism

Getting It Variously

Inclusive Status

Open Representation

Relation as Constellated
Concurrency

Such a status, of things being singular yet multiple, is most vividly validated if it is experienced as 'of' both an individual's consciousness and embodiment. In this condition one experiences one's existence as 'of more then one status all at once.' Such a sense of self can reasonably be termed 'metamorphic experience.'

* Concurrently Diversified Being *

Singular/Self-Consistent Status
(Ordinary)   **VS.**

                    Multiple/Contrasting Status
                              (Unusual)

            Metaphorical/Metamorphic Status
                    (Extra-Ordinary)

Additional texts elaborating these themes can be accessed on the **Presentations & Workshops** page. Additional illustrations of reductive and non-reductive association are available on the **Concurrent Being** page.