

# Reflections on Integral Spiral Dynamics

Clare W. Graves, whose original Levels of Human Existence theory developed into Spiral Dynamics, was very close in his intent to Ken Wilber. Wilber emphasises that everything is true, but partially true, and strives to find an integral map that is broad enough and deep enough to encompass everything that has been and is. This is Graves:

"The vehicle that we are going to look at will say to you that all [theories of human behaviour] are correct, and the thing that is important is to see how they are all correct and what their relationship is to one another" (LHE, 4)

What I have noticed in studying and teaching Wilber's work, Spiral Dynamics, and Graves' original speeches and writings, are some interesting syntheses which for me shed even more light on the universe and people's place in it. These are what I want to share below.

## The Three Tiers

Graves initially suggested the existence of eight patterns or stages - from Beige to Turquoise. Beige and Purple were deduced from research rather than initially observed. He also suggested that the first six stages (Beige to Green) make up one Tier (although he didn't call it this), and that there would be certainly a second Tier of which Yellow and Turquoise were the first two stages, and quite probably a third Tier of 6 levels:

"My data suggest that man will move on to repeat on a higher level his first six psychological stages with a center on intellectually prone man as contrasted to action prone man of the first ladder. And then he will repeat the process a third time emphasizing his compassionate component. And, by then, in all probability, man will have changed his self and will move infinitely on." (*Levels of Human Existence*, 154).

In Extract G of *Kosmic Karma and Creativity*, Wilber works with three main levels, or three "major bodies (or mass energy realms)", which correspond to the three states of consciousness, waking, dreaming and deep sleep. The three Bodies he names as Gross, Subtle and Causal, following the Vedanta and Vajrayana traditions. We become aware of these different Bodies as our consciousness develops.

It seems to me that there is a clear correlation between Graves' levels (which I will now refer to as Tiers as per the Spiral Dynamics language) and these three Bodies or energy realms. The Bodies / energy realms exist in the exterior (UR), whereas the stages and Tiers of consciousness and values exist in the interior (UL).

So we get:

<b>Interior Stages</b>	<b>Exterior Forms</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Tier	Gross
2 <sup>nd</sup> Tier	Subtle
3 <sup>rd</sup> Tier	Causal

Table 1

At this point, we need to add another layer. The Forms above are what Wilber also refers to as Basic Structures. As such, they are part of our Distal self - that is, we have transcended them, as we are able to see them. So at 1<sup>st</sup> Tier, our Proximate Self, or consciousness, is not Gross, but Subtle. We use our mind to engage with the material world around us. Ever since the arrival of Prokaryotes, Wilber suggests that Subtle energy has been present in organisms. With the emergence of the neocortex (triune brain), Causal energy emerges, and humans become aware that they are distinct beings, with a Subtle mind of their own. This latter stage is equivalent to Purple / Red in 1<sup>st</sup> Tier.

So all three Bodies and energies are present at 1<sup>st</sup> Tier (and all Tiers beyond). How do they relate? One of the key tenets of Wilber's writings is the Transcend and Include principle. For healthy development, everything has to transcend and include what has come before. Transcendence is a moment of differentiation, as a previously Proximate stage shifts into the Distal self. At that point, there is also the possibility that that stage becomes disassociated, which means that instead of then being fully included, it is repressed (which leads to pathology). That skews all further development in that stream, until it is healed - re-integrated and fully included.

So in terms of healthy development, we so far have stages that have been both transcended and included, stages that have been transcended but not yet included, and stages at the Proximate Self which we cannot see but which we are currently working through, so which are being transcended. There is one more stage to add. If we are working through a stage, transcending it, that also means there is a further stage which is emerging - a sense of bigger context which we may occasionally catch glimpses of in the background, and which increases its presence in our consciousness as we move through the earlier stage. And finally there is what is still to come, but which we have as yet no inkling of.

The Proximate self is what is managing the relationships between the parts of the Distal self, in order to create the next level of holon.

So here is an attempt to depict these five states (Included, Transcended, Transcending, Emerging, Future) in relation to the three tiers:

	<b>Included (Distal)</b>	<b>Transcended (Distal)</b>	<b>Transcending (Proximate)</b>	<b>Emerging (Background)</b>	<b>Future</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Tier	Unborn	Gross	Subtle	Causal	Turija, Turijatita
2 <sup>nd</sup> Tier	Unborn, Gross	Subtle	Causal	Turija	Turijatita
3 <sup>rd</sup> Tier	Unborn, Gross, Subtle	Causal	Turija	Turijatita	

Table 2

Turija and Turijatita are 2 further stages that Wilber names from the Vedanta and Vajrayana traditions.

The stages highlighted in yellow are the ones whose energy is in some way interfering with the Self at that Tier. So at 1<sup>st</sup> Tier, we have transcended but are still including Gross; our Centre of Gravity, or Proximate Self, is Subtle; and the context that is emerging is Causal. 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier emerges fully when the Gross self has been Included. This is why Graves identified it as a "momentous leap" - not only is it a leap to a new stage, but also to a whole new Tier - and self. It's a major transformation in consciousness and energy.

These are not of course fixed stages where one suddenly shifts to another, although there is a crystallisation moment where the new Basic Structure forms. The emerging energy shifts more into the Proximate self as the Self transcends it, until there is enough of a "critical mass" for full emergence to happen and the new structure to settle down. Likewise, the Proximate reality slowly becomes transcended, and therefore becomes increasingly Distal, and we therefore become more aware of it. So towards the end of 1<sup>st</sup> Tier, we can begin to work more consciously with Subtle energies, as we begin to see its pattern more clearly in our Distal self and therefore also in the world.

One of ways that the shift from the Distal focus on Gross at 1<sup>st</sup> Tier to Subtle at 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier makes sense to me, is in the way we create our We's (LL). In 1<sup>st</sup> Tier, all vMemos exclude some humans - see some humans as an outsider It, rather than an insider Thou as part of a We. (Even Green, which though it claims to be in favour of diversity and tolerance, does not tolerate those who do not embrace those values themselves.) But when Yellow emerges with 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier, the embrace is all of humanity - there is space for everyone in the circle of compassion. So who then are the outsiders? In my experience, it is then that our focus shifts to the *relationships between the parts* (i.e. between people). So we talk about better and worse ways of making connections between people, and it is not the people themselves who are seen as the problem any more, but ways of relating to each other (LL) and the connecting systems (LR). This is another example of the Great Leap that Graves talked about. It is a shift from polarity to relationship. With the emergence of Coral comes the real felt experience of agency-in-communion - and the need to be responsible for your every action at every moment (responsible - able to respond to the evolving, emerging reality, right now, now and now).

In this context then, we can also see what role the different stages play in the transcendence of the Proximate self, and how those are similar at each of the Tiers.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Evolutionary Role</b>
1 (e.g. Beige / Yellow)	Entering new Tier. Solidifying old Tier. Unaware of new Body / self. Unconscious behaviour (relative to that Tier).
2 (e.g. Purple/ Turquoise)	Awareness of the Proximate self - feels new connections between old parts. Mystical, as can't make sense of it. Uses old understandings to try and get a grip on the newly perceived reality (e.g. Purple instills Gross forms with "magical" powers of the mind; Turquoise gives mental concepts to causal reality: "everything is interconnected, we cannot make differentiations, everything just is, and there is nothing more than the great Emptiness" - because the mind can't cope with the mental nonduality of the causal reality.)
3 (e.g. Red / Coral)	Birth! The new Basic Structure arrives on the scene big time! For the first time, the Self becomes aware of its new self, and announces its presence very clearly for all to hear. Red is the emergence of the Gross self (which we have chosen to call Ego), and Coral is the emergence of the Subtle self.
4 (e.g. Blue / Teal)	The new self becomes aware of the bigger context which it is a part of, and creates the necessary maps to generate the order which helps it make sense of its place in its world. Blue sees a mental / Subtle energy world of right and wrong, polarities, and creates a world to suit, where the mental self can feel right. Teal sees a causal world where the universe is the context, and creates a world of universal order, where the task is to connect to the emerging evolutionary

	potential of the universe itself.
5 (e.g. Orange)	The Proximate self begins to sense the limits of its being. As the emerging energy begins to interfere more, the picture becomes on the one hand more cloudy and relativistic (not as clear as at stages 3 and 4), but on the other hand it is more energised due to the interference of the more complex and subtle energy from the emerging Tier. Orange no longer sees right and wrong as being about mental opinions, but judges things by performance and achievement.
6 (e.g. Green)	The old Tier self starts to dissolve to make room for the new Tier self. The old concepts feel inadequate, everything gets lost in a relativistic mush as clarity dissolves. The best we can do is keep our heads down and try to blend in as well as possible. This is very clear in Green relativism and need for acceptance.

Table 3

I have found Clare Graves' original key descriptions of the stages very useful in clarifying my understanding of them. So I present them below, with hypothetical descriptions for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier stages beyond Turquoise. I feel I have some experience of all up to Teal - after that it is purely a cognitive exercise. I will go more into the essential nature of the Sacrifice-self / Express-self dynamic later.

Stage	Description
Beige	Express self for physiological survival
Purple	Sacrifice self to maintain the ways of old
Red	Express self impulsively at any cost without shame or fear
Blue	Sacrifice self for reward later
Orange	Express self for self-gain, but calculatedly
Green	Sacrifice self to get acceptance now
Yellow	Express self with concern for, and not at the expense of, others
Turquoise	Sacrifice self to existential realities
Coral	Express without shame or guilt for evolution's sake
Teal	Sacrifice self to emerging existential potential
Orange2	Express self awarely for Subtle self development
Green2	Sacrifice self to get Subtle energy acceptance now

Table 4

## The Central Stages (3/4)

These stages are where the self / energy / Body of that Tier is at its clearest. In 1<sup>st</sup> Tier, mental energy is essentially about polarity and differentiation (words and thoughts divide things up in order for our minds to be able to understand them and work with them mentally). Red and Blue are the places where polarity is at its clearest. Coral and Teal are also immensely clear energies - witness the teaching of Andrew Cohen and the maps of Ken Wilber.

Howard Bloom tapped into this in a recent book entitled *Reinventing Capitalism* - see <http://www.howardbloom.net> for a summary. A key point he makes is that current Western Civilisation is lacking in passion - classic for orange / green / yellow / turquoise. The passion is coming from those with fundamentalist beliefs - centred in red / blue. His concern is that that passion may be strong enough to rally enough

people in the project to pull down Western civilisation. In an age of complexity and relativism, a simple message can be very powerful.

His call is for us to re-ignite our passion. In SD terms, this means a shift into Coral - the passionate stage of second Tier. He suggests that an important part of achieving that is by recognising the positive things that capitalism has brought us. The risk with all the flak it is getting at the moment, is that it may be transcended, but could well be repressed rather than included, which will create all kinds of pathology. Inclusion means not taking everything that capitalism was, but from an eagle's view, selecting that which was useful and healthy, and integrating it into our future development.

## Inclusion for Emergence

As outlined above in the descriptions of the interaction of the Gross, Subtle, Causal etc Basic Structures in the Tiers, it is when one of them is fully included that it leads to the emergence of the next Tier (see Table 2). This also applies to the stages at each Tier. So Yellow only emerges once Beige has been fully Included, Turquoise once Purple etc. Inclusion happens when all the existential problems at that stage have been solved. So what are the key elements of each 1<sup>st</sup> Tier system that need Inclusion for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier equivalent to emerge? In the table below I have listed my thoughts on this as far as Blue-Teal, as that's as far as I can stretch at the moment.

<b>Emergence</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Tier Healing</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Tier Wholeness</b>
Beige - Yellow	Processed any survival threats, any disturbed energy that means that Beige is still active (e.g. birth trauma)	I do what needs to be done for the good of the whole. I don't struggle.
Purple - Turq	Dealt with any worry about not belonging, about not being loved (e.g. deprived of unconditional love as a child when expected it unconditionally from the parents)	I belong in this universe and feel safe here, as there is only this here and now.
Red - Coral	Dealt with the Ego's need to be the best, or be a victim (2 sides of same coin - fight or flight)	I act and express myself fully and impulsively; I don't need to fight others to do that. I am fully here.
Blue - Teal	Dealt with death and worries about what happens after the disintegration of our Gross body.	I carry out my role in the universe. If I do this connected to the evolutionary flow, there will be later reward for the whole.
Orange - Or2		
Green - Gr2		

Table 5

## Sacrifice-self and Express-self

This tenet of inclusion for emergence sheds light on an important area in the Spiral Dynamics model - namely the interaction between Sacrifice-self and Express-self systems.

We have seen how at the macro-Structure level of Gross, Subtle, Causal, the inclusion of one Structure brings a new Proximate self / Centre of Gravity, and a new emerging system. This is the same at the micro-level of the Spiral stages. Graves himself observed this, as he noticed that there are nearly always three systems active - one exiting, one centre and one entering. In relation to Table 2, exiting is Transcended but still Including, Centre is Transcending (Proximate), and Entering is Emerging.

So this means that if we are centred in an Express-self system, it is the Sacrifice-self systems which are changing. This makes total sense, as these two types of system are actually a fractal of the fundamental universal evolutionary drivers, and we always have both of them present to some extent. Here's a quick table of other examples of the manifestation of Express-self and Sacrifice-self energy:

Express-self	Sacrifice-self
Yang	Yin
Agency	Communion
Doing	Being
Transcend	Include
Holy Ghost	Father
Diversity Generation	Conformity Enforcement
Risk	Insurance
I	We
Creativity	Kosmic Karma

Table 6

We're caught in between - making the Trinity.

So a conclusion of this, is that an Express-self system does not change into a Sacrifice-self system, nor vice-versa (although it might look like that if we just take one of the stages, e.g. Proximate). Actually, one form of Sacrifice-self energy shifts to another form of Sacrifice-self energy (stimulated by the emergence of more complex Express-self energy), and one Express-self energy shifts to another Express-self energy (stimulated by the emergence of more complex Sacrifice-self energy). So Orange doesn't shift to Green, but Orange shifts to Yellow, stimulated by the extra complexity of Green energy. And Yellow doesn't shift to Turquoise, but Green shifts to Turquoise (stimulated by the more complex Yellow energy).

Another tendency that I have observed in the Express-self and Sacrifice-self energies, is that Sacrifice-self energy tends to be generated when we are creating in-group relationships (when we are creating We's), and Express-self energy tends to be generated when we are dealing with out-group people. We define our Agency / wholeness by clarifying our boundaries, so in contrast to others - when we see an other as an It (from a 3<sup>rd</sup> person perspective). We determine our belonging / part-ness through connecting to others, seeing them as a You or Thou, thus creating a We (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person perspectives). Graves referred to the Express-self signature as trying to fit the world to me, and the Sacrifice-self signature as trying to fit myself to the world.

An interesting part of Graves' original research lay not just in a number of psychological tests, but in observation of the students he worked with and their interactions, particularly in relationship to authority. This line of thought started occurring to me as I observed international groups of young adults interacting in simulated environments. In one example, an in-group was triggering strong Green as they interacted with each other. Then the moment they had to deal with outsiders, you saw primarily Orange, flashes of Red when put under pressure, and a couple of brave souls from Yellow. Having noticed this once, I then looked to see if this pattern was present in the group activities, not only in the simulation environments, but also in the ways sub-groups within the group as a whole formed and interacted - and the pattern was clear to observe.

The recent war in Iraq had some interesting examples of that. Saddam Hussein, when addressing his own people, trying to connect them up, was triggering Purple and Blue. When he was referring to or addressing the enemy, he triggered Red. Bush Jnr triggered primarily Blue when addressing his own people, and a mixture of Red and Orange when referring to or addressing Saddam and his regime. Tony Blair was triggering mainly Green as he tried to pull his people together, and a combination of Orange and Yellow when he referred the Iraqi regime. Again, we see three systems at work.

If we are centred in, for example, a Sacrifice-self system, our in-group response is likely to be fairly predictable and stable, but our response to outsiders, our efforts to fit the world to us, are likely to fluctuate between a more complex and less complex system. The extent to which this happens, and what percentage of which one is interfering, will depend on how far one has been included and the other has emerged. It works of course the other way round as well - stable Express-self and more fluctuating Sacrifice-self.

(As a side comment, I think that personality types tend to be about preferences for one of these energies, which show themselves at all stages. We are therefore likely to spend more time centred in either Sacrifice-self or Express-self energy. Some of the typologies also then include indicators of complexity, and then it all starts to look like the vMeme levels or other scales of development.)

Below is an attempt to identify how each Stage influences the one below in its effort to include it, so that the following Stage can fully emerge.

<b>Proximate on Distal for Emergent</b>	<b>Interference</b>
Purple on Beige for Red	Introduces relationships
Red on Purple for Blue	Introduces hierarchy
Blue on Red for Orange	Introduces mortality to stimulate calculatedness
Orange on Blue for Green	Introduces plurality
Green on Orange for Yellow	Introduces respect for all
Yellow on Green for Turquoise	Introduces total unity
Turquoise on Yellow for Coral	Introduces ground of being
Coral on Turquoise for Teal	Introduces evolution

*Table 7*

One other interesting observation that Graves made on the relationships between the vMememes, is that as a vMeme at one level lights up, the one below dims down more

than the one above. The obvious reason for this is that our Self seeks out more complexity from the Emerging systems to help to solve the existential problem, rather than the lower complexity of the Distal system.

Related to that, he said "When a lower level system is dominant, that part of a higher level system emerging operates in the service of the lower level system". Looking at that at the level of Tiers, it means that in 1st Tier, the mind is a servant of the body. At 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier, mind is no longer servant, but is served by the Causal self.

### **vMeme systems as Fractals**

The patterns that the vMememes reflect fractal at every holonic level. They mirror the Change process between the stages themselves (thanks to Michael Mckee for this insight on the SD-Integral email list, 02/12/2002). They mirror the Chakras.

<b>Change Function</b>	<b>Stage (e.g. vMeme)</b>	<b>Chakra</b>
Consolidation, fused	1 (Beige, Yellow)	Connection to Kosmic Karma
Differentiation / dyadic relationship - aha!	2 (Purple, Turq)	Differentiation
Identification	3 (Red, Coral)	Intent
Realisation of externally-governed order	4 (Blue, Teal)	Open to others around
Independence from current Tier	5 (Orange, Orange2)	Communicating Agency
Communing for next Tier	6 (Green, Green2)	Insight into new connections

*Table 8*

### **Life Conditions and Four Quadrants**

There is an interesting parallel between the four quadrants and the life conditions categories:

UL - I, SELF Inner Needs and Concerns	UR - IT Physical Conditions
LL - WE, CULTURE Sense of Social Circumstance	LR - ITS, SOCIAL STRUCTURES Physical Environment, Place

Time is our sense of the Kosmic Karma, and so the third dimension of the quadrants - the lines or streams of development.

## Time and Currently Active vMememes

One of the interesting things about the emergence of the vMememes and their parallel expressions in the exteriors such as civilisational forms, economic systems etc, is how they are emerging at an ever increasing speed. Rough estimates are that Beige Survival Clans emerged around 100,000 years ago, Purple Tribes around 10,000 years ago, Blue Nation States around 1,000 years ago, Green Value Communities around 100 years ago. Graves was picking up the Turquoise pattern about 30 years ago. If that is the case, then we can be pretty sure that Coral and Teal are around now.

Evolutionary systems theorists point out that since the Big Bang, information has been rapidly increasing, with a parallel increase in the speed of change. This makes sense, as information is essentially our feedback loops from which we learn - so if that is increasing, then it is in our evolutionary nature to adapt to the feedback we pick up. That is how we have survived this long. Whether we manage to adapt to the current feedback we are getting is the global challenge we face.

If we fail to adapt, then the human holon will definitely break down, together with all holons above (any Subtle and Causal energies that have developed), and we'll probably bring down a few sub-holons along the way as well. This would of course be a great shame - people are beautiful beings, and currently the most whole expression of Spirit that is around, as far as we know. It would be a major blow to evolution and consciousness. What would happen after the breakdown is that Spirit would simply try again, carrying on from wherever it stops breaking down, and finding new ways to unfold in increasing complexity and compassion, having learned the lessons of the past. Who knows what would emerge?!

From where I'm at here in the Netherlands, there does seem to be a rapid emergence of Turquoise, Coral and Teal, which is what is needed to deal with our current existential problems. In fact, many people have had Turquoise interference for quite some time - experiences of Enlightenment. The problem has been that Green guilt and sense of egalitarianism has stopped many people recognising and accepting it. As Andrew Cohen says, Enlightenment is just what you experience as you sense the ease of being in meditation. There is not a huge long path to Enlightenment. All it means, is awareness of the next major Tier of development. The reason that Enlightenment is such a relevant term, is that 1<sup>st</sup> Tier is Gross matter, and exists below the speed of light (it's sub-luminal). 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier subtle / mind energy exists beyond the speed of light (super-luminal). We all know that our thoughts can travel the depths of the universe far quicker than any light ray, let alone a space-craft! So majorly more light - Enlightenment.

Enlightenment actually occurs at the second stage of each major system / Tier - that is at Purple, at Turquoise and at 3<sup>rd</sup> Tier second stage. This is the point where one first becomes aware of the new Body (Gross, Subtle, Causal etc). It is enlightening because it is a completely new mindset and wiring of the brain, and it shifts our levels of perception of energy up a major step. These stages are experienced as nonduality due to the fact that they are the last moment in our old Basic Structure before the new one is fully born - we can no longer see the divisions between the old parts as they are all connected up in preparation for the new birth.

The trip from a Turquoise sense of the mystical interconnectedness of all things, to a Coral living expression of evolution, is the recognition by your Self of the fact that you have actually experienced Enlightenment, and that your responsibility now is to bring that ease of being into your everyday life, in every moment, always. That forces a

recognition that you have evolved (yes, beyond some others), and leaves Green fully transcended and included - no longer interfering. This is an important step, as the kind of governance systems we need to develop for the world right now have to be Turquoise in nature, which means that we have to have evolved at least Coral to be able to consciously design them. So get on with that integral practice!

## **Healthy / Unhealthy expressions of vMememes**

This is an issue which has been around a while and which I have been grappling with. Where I've got to on it, is that healthy / unhealthy is of course dependent on the vMeme perspective. Essentially, it is understood as how much of a positive or negative impact certain behaviour has on the well-being of the whole that we perceive at that level. The more complex the vMeme, the bigger the whole becomes. As 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier unfolds, the whole becomes all of the humanity and Planet Earth in an evolutionary context. So from this perspective, unhealthy behaviour is behaviour that damages the evolution of any of the parts, and pollutes the bigger worldspace that is the Distal context (the Universe is the Proximate context). The task then becomes to help people to be who they are, to provide opportunities and gentle stimuli for development, whilst protecting the bigger exterior context (i.e. the planet) and more compassionate interior space.

This is where current hot issues around global governance arise. That will be the subject of another paper.