

Reflections v1 - Upgrade

The Exponentially Accelerating Rate of Change and Human Development

Note

This paper builds on the writings in my first *Reflections* papers on Ken Wilber's *Kosmic Karma and Creativity* drafts and Spiral Dynamics. A familiarity with the concepts in those writings and models is assumed.

Introduction

This paper is written with the insight that the rate of evolutionary change is accelerating exponentially. Paradigms, technology, intelligence and human form are all developing at an exponentially accelerating rate of changeⁱ. Following the pattern of emergence so far, one would have expected Teal to appear on the scene about 5 years ago, and the 2nd Tier equivalent of Green to be with us in a couple of years. Once we hit 3rd Tier, time seems to take on another dimension, and new Stages appear in a matter of days / hours. So things are moving very quickly now, and are about to start moving at a speed we cannot imagine right now. We will need to deal with it to survive - this article in an attempt to encourage people to start thinking along those lines.

Stages as Change Agents

Understanding human development from an evolutionary perspective implies the acknowledgement of stages of development. There are many ways to break down those stages (until you get to moment-to-moment). The ones I am most familiar with and will therefore refer to here are those popularised by Spiral Dynamics and Integral thinking.

It appears to me that stages are not only stages of development in their own right, but also play a role in the emergence of the next bigger level / holon, which will completely transcend and include the level / holon of which they are a part / sub-holon. So they are both stages and change agents. One pattern that seems to be fairly common is a set of six stages - which also correlates with the Chakras, if one accepts that the 7th Chakra is what plugs us into Spirit and continual evolution (note that it is located outside the physical body, above the crown).

The table below illustrates the role that each Stage plays in the evolution of a bigger Stage. The sub-stages organise themselves in a sub-holarchy, transcending and including each other. Once they have all emerged, there is a quantum jump to the next bigger Stage, which transcends and includes all of the lower bigger Stage, and in which the sub-stage cycle repeats itself, but at an exponentially more complex level. Examples of Stages therefore include, in Spiral Dynamics terminology, vMememes and Tiers - vMememes are sub-stages of Tiers.

Stage	Evolutionary Role
1	<i>Consolidation, fusing.</i> Entering new Stage. Solidifying old Stage. Unaware of new Body / self. Unconscious behaviour (relative to that Stage).
2	<i>Differentiation.</i> Awareness of the new Causal realm - 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. A sense of a new "home".
3	<i>Identification.</i> 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.
4	<i>Realisation of externally-governed order.</i> The new self becomes more aware of the bigger Causal 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.
5	<i>Independence</i> - from current bigger Stage. 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 Stage.
6	<i>Communing</i> - for next bigger Stage. The old Stage self starts to dissolve to make room for the new Stage 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.

Our Chakras manage these roles in us:

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

The table below shows some examples of these evolutionary roles in action for humans, through the vMememes and Tiers of Spiral Dynamics. I have felt experience up to Coral and Teal, and the rest is pure cognitive speculation, based on the patterns I currently perceive.

Stage	1st Tier	2nd Tier	Tiers
1	<i>Beige</i> - consolidates physical survival instinct as independent being	<i>Yellow</i> - consolidates mental and emotional survival as whole, independent being	<i>1st Tier</i> - consolidates survival as independent entity
2	<i>Purple</i> - differentiates itself from the non-human world, and instills Nature's forms with "magical" powers of the mind	<i>Turquoise</i> - differentiates itself from the purely physical human world, and gives mental concepts to trans-mental reality: "everything is interconnected, we cannot	<i>2nd Tier</i> - differentiates self from ego-mind

		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 trans-mental world	
3	<i>Red</i> - the identification and emergence of the ego-self	<i>Coral</i> - the identification and emergence of first trans-ego self	<i>3rd Tier</i> - the identification and emergence of the human holon at maximum potential
4	<i>Blue</i> - realisation of order in values and thinking of human world (right and wrong) with an ethno-centric perspective	<i>Teal</i> - realisation of order in the known Universe, with world-centric perspective (for the sake of the evolution of the planet)	<i>4th Tier</i> - realisation of order in the whole Universe (as big as humans under their own steam can ever come to know it)
5	<i>Orange</i> - independence from the physical world around, bringing ability to think about it, analyse it and develop it	<i>Orange²</i> - independence from the mental and emotional world, bringing ability to be conscious of it, analyse it and develop it	<i>5th Tier</i> - independence from the human, bringing ability to consciously analyse it and develop its capacities
6	<i>Green</i> - communing between all physical beings, emphasising the relationships between them, in preparation for becoming conscious of, working with and developing the more subtle energies that connect physical forms up	<i>Green²</i> - communing between all mental and emotional fields, in preparation for becoming conscious of, working with and developing the more subtle ("causal" from our current perspective) energies that connect mental and emotional fields up	<i>6th Tier</i> - humans in the form of individually separate entities are transcended by a super-organism that connects all humans up as part of a bigger whole. The next Tier is about the survival of that super-organism as it consolidates its wholeness and creates order amongst its human parts.

Given the edge many of us seem to be on, I thought it might be interesting to lay out how I perceive the life conditions to be for the emergence of Coral and Teal (following a friendly challenge by Don Beck):

Life Conditions that Trigger Coral and Teal

Triggering Coral

Time

Urgent need to act now, and get others to act as well. Action must be free from old, restraining patterns, linked primarily to "ego". Knowledge that in acting in freedom and integrity in the present moment, we create patterns that ripple into the future. Acting in the present for the future now is the felt need.

Place

A sense of the universal context. The survival of humanity is in no way guaranteed. If we fail to adapt to current feedback and act now, the universe will not wait for us. An awareness of planetary space and the global patterns of change in weather, water availability etc, and their evolutionary implications. Act here.

Problems

Being fully free from ego-interference, being whole and present. Needing to express fully concerns for evolution, to act on them, and to get others to act on them as well. Fear that one is not fulfilling one's greatest potential.

Social Circumstance

Need to get beyond who people are in terms of their social standing etc. Most concerned that people act out of their fullest potential to be fully human now. Not worried about how others see them either - a tangible passion about their life and work that will burn you if your ego tries to get in the way. Particularly concerned to jolt people who seem to have time on their hands to take responsibility for themselves and act for the greater good now.

Triggering Teal

Time

Time has evolutionary direction. It is by living in the present, on the edge of time, open to the unfolding direction, that we can best contribute to evolution. Evolution literally works through us - we are a "servant of the Divine".

Place

The Universe, here, now and with a sense of what's coming. Senses how developments on this planet link to Universal evolutionary trends.

Problems

What is my role? How do I let go and best serve evolution? Fear of not being the ideal servant of evolutionary order - "Fear of God". How do I maintain the discipline to stay connected in this distracting world?

Social Circumstance

Comparison with those who are serving evolution better than you. Sense of guilt if not doing enough. Demanding of one's students. Reward is not yours personally. You know that your every behaviour in every moment impacts everything else in the present and future - so the reward of your efforts will be reaped by those around and those to come.

States and Stages

The Gross, Subtle and Causal states are the states of the Manifest, Proximate and Emerging stages. We experience the Manifest as Gross, the Proximate as Subtle, and the Emerging as Causal. The Manifest is Gross because it is distal to ourselves and we can look at it. The Proximate is relatively Subtle compared to the Gross, because we cannot see it, as it is the water in which we swim. The Emerging is Causal as it is the background context we perceive everything to be arising out of.

Every stage that has been transcended, or transcended and included, shifts into the Manifest Gross realm. Everything that is currently being transcended is in the Proximate Subtle realm. Everything that is beyond our current Basic Structure is in the Emerging Causal realm.

Given that different stages are active in different people depending on their development, the Gross, Subtle and Causal realms will be composed of different stages, although our experience of Gross, Subtle and Causal will be similar. Our experience of Gross is our waking experience, our experience of Subtle is our dreaming experience and our experience of Causal is our deep sleep experience. The Subtle and Causal realms can also be accessed through meditative practice.

So our Gross, Subtle and Causal Bodies evolve as we shift through different stages. In this process, more of the Universe's unlimited potential becomes manifest in the Gross, we become conscious of greater potential in the Subtle, and we sense greater embrace in the Causal.

	Gross Included (Distal)	Gross Transcended (Distal)	Subtle Transcending (Proximate)	Causal Emerging (Background)	Future
<i>1st Tier</i>	Star dust, Quantum particles, atoms, molecules, cells etc	Physical form	Individual Mind	Collective Mind	Individual Soul Collective Soul Super-organism
<i>2nd Tier</i>	Physical form	Individual Mind	Collective Mind	Individual Soul	Collective Soul Super-organism1+
<i>3rd Tier</i>	Physical form Individual Mind	Collective Mind	Individual Soul	Collective Soul	Super-organism1+
<i>4th Tier</i>	Physical form Individual Mind Collective Mind	Individual Soul	Collective Soul	Super-organism1	Super-organism2+
<i>5th Tier</i>	Physical form Individual Mind Collective Mind Individual Soul	Collective Soul	Super-organism1	Super-organism2	Super-organism3+
<i>6th Tier</i>	Physical form Individual Mind Collective Mind Individual Soul Collective Soul	Super-organism1	Super-organism2	Super-organism3	Super-organism4+

I have felt some confusion around States and Stages, and I think that is due to how relatively static development has been until recently. Subtle and Causal have sometimes been referred to as Stages, due I think to the fact that the Stages of Individual and Collective Mind have been in the Subtle and Causal States for so long (in human life-span terms). As the rate of change accelerates, we will see new Stages shifting through individuals, our collective belief-systems and our social systems within the space of a human life-time. This is why it is important to understand that the States are related to our experience of where we are at - they are the relational containers which our Stages flow through, not fixed Stages themselves. We then come to see that emerging Stages are relatively more subtle and causal than earlier ones, in a natural evolutionary flow.

Enlightenment

Enlightenment is always the experience of the Absolute - that is to say, it is that we can find no words for, as it is completely beyond our immediate world of cognitive comprehension. It is the ground of being out of which everything seems to arise.

I believe it is an experience of the Causal realm. It can therefore be experienced in the deep sleep state, and in meditation or peak experiences. There are some important consequences of understanding Enlightenment in this way.

The experience of the Causal realm is always an experience of the Absolute, but the Stage which is currently emerging in the Causal realm will be different depending on the level of development. It will be the Stage following the current Stage in the Subtle Proximate State. It is important to remember also that there are different scales of Stage active at the same time - e.g. vMeme, Tier. So if the Stage in the Proximate State is Yellow, the Stage in the Emerging State will be Turquoise. At the same time, at a bigger scale, the Subtle Proximate is 2nd Tier, and the Causal Emerging is 3rd Tier.

Following this logic, there are also different intensities of Enlightenment and felt experiences of the Absolute. From Yellow, a sense of Turquoise is one level of intensity, and a sense of 3rd Tier is another. To take it right down to the everyday level, our sudden discovery of a solution to a seemingly intractable dilemma is a less intense form of "Enlightenment" (the proverbial light bulb goes on) - although it can seem pretty exciting at the time. This is Einstein's "No problem can be solved with the same thinking that created it".

What all these levels or intensities have in common, is that the insight into the next level transcends and includes the current level (be it a vMeme, a Tier or a dilemma). Another thing they have in common is that no sooner has a new level been reached, than the new problems which will trigger the emergence of the next vMeme, Tier or solution begin to unfold.

Another interesting thing to note is that as our consciousness develops in complexity and compassion, change is speeding up. The time between new Stages emerging shortens. This means that we have more regular experiences of the Causal State - more regular Enlightenment. As the rate of change moves towards Singularity (as some people are currently calling this approaching moment of apparent transition), Enlightenment will appear to be a more permanent state, as the Stages are shifting through so quickly, that there's not much time in between before we get another sense of the Causal. Beyond Singularity, or after some transition in the future, our consciousness will shift up a whole scale of Stages, and Enlightenment will no longer be experienced so intensely in the sensing of the Causal realm of the old Stages, but rather in relationship to emerging bigger Stages. So, for example, instead of each emerging vMeme creating an intense sense of Enlightenment, it will be each emerging Tier.

Another important thing to remember is that interpretation of the experience of the Causal realm, of Enlightenment, depends on the level of development. Our experiences are filtered through our Proximate Stage. So how we explain Enlightenment (or whatever we call it) to others will depend on the Stage currently active in us.

Currently, a major shift that is going on is from 1st Tier to 2nd Tier, so awareness of and grounding in that Stage is what is often referred to as Enlightenment. It is typified by a realisation of the interconnectedness of all things, by the Oneness that we are all a part of, by the energy that connects everything up, by the ease of being that it gives us etc. This is particularly a sense of Turquoise, which is the vMeme that builds the basis for the 2nd Tier. A more evolved sense of 2nd Tier Enlightenment, adds the element of living in the world from Turquoise, from this place of rest and ease of being, and taking the responsibility to act in the world from a place of wholeness and freedom. It emphasises the need to actually act and be free and whole every moment of our lives. This is more a sense of Coral (the next express-self system beyond Turquoise).

It seems to me that many of the insights and experiences that sages and traditional recognised spiritual teachers have traditionally had, has been of the emerging Causal Stage of 2nd Tier, from their 1st Tier Proximate Self. So it is a very intense experience of the Causal, as it is at a whole bigger level than just the insight into the next emerging vMeme (for example). Their descriptions of this experience and their teachings about how to achieve a centre of gravity in those Stages reflect therefore their sense of the 2nd Tier (e.g. Turquoise and Coral).

The thing is that the rate of change is increasing exponentially. That means that whilst it is essential to help people to develop to these more enlightened, complex and compassionate stages of being, it is also essential to prepare the way for people to develop the stages (vMememes and Tiers) beyond that more quickly than anyone seems to be expecting - as the exponentially complexifying life conditions around us will demand it of us. If tetra-evolution does not occur, and the interiors don't evolve quickly enough or broadly enough to match the exteriors, the holon will simply break down with all the tragic consequences.

Agency and Communion

One of the things that has been noted, is that as our consciousness develops, our sense of Agency and Communion both intensify, and at the same blend more closely together. This makes sense, particularly when seen in the evolutionary perspective of emerging systems.

When analysing the time that it took for currently-existing vMememes and their correlated society-forms to emerge, it is noticeable that they tend to emerge in pairs. The big jump is from a sacrifice-self system (e.g. Purple) to the next express-self system (e.g. Red), and then the next sacrifice-self system follows on relatively quickly (e.g. Blue), compared to how quickly the next sacrifice-self system emerges. So they do not develop in a straight line, but in a kind of zigzag, in bursts of two (Beige/Purple 100,000/50,000, Red/Blue 10,000/5,000, Orange/Green 300/150 years ago).

This makes sense because for a system to survive, it needs to develop "governance", "capture" or "management" systems fairly quickly in order to protect the new, larger collective space from the highly creative adventures of the latest express-self system. This is the role of sacrifice-self systems, which then settle things down, and keep the lid on it all, until the express-self energy starts feeling too oppressed by it all, and emerges with its next level of complexity - transcending the boundaries of the old sacrifice-self system. And so it goes on - and on.

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ⁱ See Ray Kurzweil's writings - I read <http://www.kurzweilai.net/articles/art0134.html?printable=1> - he tends to focus on the exterior side of brain development - it's interesting to look at the correlates for consciousness development on the interiors - nano-robots or higher consciousness for you - or both?