



# Graves' Emergent Cyclical Levels of Existence Theory: An Integral Analysis

By Will Varey (Principal)

## Introduction

The work of Dr. Clare W. Graves will potentially be seen as the most significant research done in the 20th century towards a systems conception of adult psychological development. It is also likely that his work will eventually lead the lists of widely miss-interpreted and misapplied theoretical models of the human condition. With the publication of his collected thoughts in *The Never Ending Quest* (Graves 2005) we have the opportunity to revisit his work as an integral whole for the first time.

The principal reason for the predicted misinterpretation of Graves' work is that any comprehensive system that models the domains of human consciousness will not be able to be seen by most of us. The more inclusive and universal a truth about ourselves becomes, the greater its risk of reduction and simplification into different worldviews, as each of us finds our own familiarity with a recognizable part. At the same time, as the inclusiveness of any model expands in its complexity of the systems described, so will the chance that some of the parts will not be understood by all. We will see the parts we like or know and assume we understand the whole. Such is the nature of perspectives within emergent systems.

This sense making process will both elevate (and privilege) some parts of Graves' work and reduce (and negate) others, differently for different people. However, because the model concerns the essence of human nature, there will be within our common experience a sense of underlying truth. Making conscious and testing any truth claims as to the actual scope of the model using the same worldviews that misperceive it, creates an ontological difficulty of significant proportions. Graves' levels of existence theory will therefore confuse us for many years to come. Knowing more about its scope at least allows us to understand more about the scope of our own understanding. <sup>1</sup>

## Integral-ness

The question, of where may be the strengths and weaknesses of any theoretical model based on its inquiry methodology, can be looked at in many ways. We may examine the credentials and neutrality of the researcher, the appropriateness of the modalities of inquiry, the cross comparative span of the sample and control groups, the scope of the model's applicability, its cultural transferability, the dependability and predictability of its outcomes or the reliability, replicability and rigour of the approach. There are many ways to critique any finding of 'truth'.

Unfortunately, we are not familiar in the academic traditions with ways to 'see' and to 'judge' attempts to integrate across disciplines using multiple paradigms of inquiry. In our mono-disciplinary academic world such approaches are usually met with scepticism as to their rigor, as their breadth finds them without an acceptable Kuhnian paradigm from which they can be viewed. What we then do is fail to see them at all.

Where our concern with a model is mostly about the scope of the inquiry, so as to determine what the model actually covers (rather than the precision of the mono-paradigmatic research methodologies used within that scope), *integral methodological pluralism* provides the most useful reference chart that we presently know of to assess the degree of 'inclusiveness' as a preliminary step to understanding what it really is we are looking at.

Few pluralistic research methodologies can be said to be truly meta-paradigmatic and multi-ontological. Even fewer could be said to cover multiple levels, quadrants, lines, states and types using integral forms of inquiry. Integral theory provides us with a means to assess the 'integral-ness' of any theory of observed and interpreted phenomena. By this approach we may better appreciate the inherent breadth and bias of any 'less-than-integral' theory.

A fair question for us then to ask is how Integral was Graves' research, and as a result, how integral is his systems conception of adult biopsychosocial psychological development? With the answer to this question we can discover what it is that each of us are seeing in our partial understanding of this intriguing model.

## Integral Theory

The elucidation of Integral theory by Ken Wilber (1995, 1997, 2000a) marks a significant shift in our understanding of the many forms of human inquiry of phenomena observed and felt.

Wilber does not claim to have created the integral view, but has seen from the meta-level the universalities in the approaches of others, with each being different in their level of inclusion and the degree of privilege afforded to the different domains in the many observations made of the manifestations of all forms of phenomena.

Prior to the publication of this work there had been many integral researchers, it is only that we had not been able to label them as such. For exemplars of the integral approach Wilber (2000) mentions, in particular, James Mark Baldwin, Jürgen Habermas, Sri Aurobindo and Abraham Maslow (in the company of Goethe, Schelling, Hegel, Fechner, James, Whitehead, Steiner and Gebser). The researchers themselves may not have been completely cognisant of why the approach they adopted seemed to them more 'inclusive, complete and whole.'

Wilber (2000a) assists us by outlining just a few of the multiple factors that a richly holonic view of the Kosmos (from within our own limited human experience) may wish to include, but notes that any model that does not include most of these is not a very integral model. Features of an Integral<sup>2</sup> approach to theoretical analysis as described by Wilber (1995, 1997, 2003, 2005) may embrace:

- The skill of AQAL (all quadrants, levels, lines, states, types) 'simultracking'
- The recognition of the three principles of integral methodological pluralism
- The adoption of the eight major ontological perspectives for inquiry
- The premise of meta-paradigmatic aperspectivalism
- The ability to 'see' holons, holarchies and the processes of their emergence
- The integral transformative practice of the observer as participant.

There are many others, however from a theoretical position, and for the purposes of this paper, this general set will suffice as a base to guide us.

## Approach to this Analysis

The question of an Integral analysis of Gravesian theory could be answered using a number of different approaches. Two that suggest themselves are structural differentiation and emergent comparison.

The first approach may follow reductionist lines and would outline the components of an Integral theoretical approach and research methodology and then contrast the components of Graves' theory and research methodology and assess differences and shortfalls of the Graves approach against the Integral frame.

The second approach could follow constructivist lines, adopting a 'pointing out' approach, placing features of both together for contemplation to develop an

emergent understanding of the relative strength and depth of Graves conclusions from the comparisons formed.

For the reasons that these theories are complex and to reduce them to a comparative table would be to lose much of their nuance, and that the assessment of Graves' research written prior to the language of Integral theory does not lend itself to direct reductionist comparison, the emergent comparative approach is preferred by this researcher in this study.

While these approaches are very different, the outcome is the same. The approach chosen has the integral advantage in that the reader must assess their own understanding and conclusion, with the author being less a proponent of a view held, and more a guide to views hold-able in this important question. Any personal ambiguity felt is part of the answer offered.

All this paper merely does then is to point to an aspect of Integral theory that characterises an Integral approach and to then point to an aspect of Graves' theory and research practice for comparison as to its relative 'integral-ness'.

In doing so, the widely available and verifiable written reference work of both authors is used as the sole source of the points of comparison. The views formed from this work are therefore not from any position of information privilege, but open to all. However, an initial understanding of the major components of both models is assumed.<sup>3</sup>

## All the Parts of the Whole

In *Integral Psychology* Wilber (2000) outlines some major schools in the field of psychology and describes what an Integral approach to psychology would require:

“What if on the other hand, all of the above accounts were an important part of the story? What if they all possessed true, but partial, insights into the vast field of consciousness? At the very least, assembling their conclusions under one roof would vastly expand our ideas of what consciousness is and, more important, what it might become. The endeavor to honor and embrace every legitimate aspect of human consciousness is the goal of an *integral psychology*.” (2000:2)

Graves also echoes this fundamental principle in his approach to his research question. The goal expressed was not to find a partial truth, but a compositional truth of all:

“So, if we are to have a meaningful psychology of adult man, it must depict man as the being he is – as one who values change in peculiar ways, as one whose values rise from pylons rooted in deep recesses of his biological nature. It must accept that in some manner all the established systems of psychology somehow represent the whole. Each of them, no matter how strange it may seem, is neither right nor wrong, but is a psychological datum, a part of the whole. The whole is the *all* of each, not the best of each. No condescending mixture of parts will be sufficient to represent the larger whole. There can only be one psychology of man in which somehow all the psychologies must be represented; and the body of this book is a suggestion in that direction.” (2005: 31-32)

Both researchers indicate their premise that ‘the whole is the all of the each’.

## Right Hand Left Hand

Wilber (1995) describes how, while the Right Hand domains of the objective and inter-objective can be *seen*, the Left Hand domains of the subjective and inter-subjective must be *interpreted*. The distinction is made noting that the Right Hand path always asks, “What does it *do*?” or “How does it work?” thus seeking to offer explanations based on naturalistic, empirical, observable variables; where the Left Hand path asks, “What does it *mean*?” (1995:132).

Graves’ systems conception acknowledges both the observable and interpreted aspects of human existence. For him the Right Hand path and Left Hand path appear to be inseparable. He considered them manifesting together as a resultant existential state of psychological, cultural, neurological and environmental operants. For Graves, human nature could not be explained in a reductionist way:

“Human nature does not exist in the tissues of the human being. It comes to exist in the bio-chemical-social-environmental field.” (2005:488)

Wilber (1995) explains why this conception is close to the truth:

“The Left-Hand dimension does not emerge from the Right-Hand dimension, but rather *goes with it*, as the within, the interior of the exterior, *at every stage*.” (1995:576)

## Quadrants

Wilber makes our understanding of quadrants simple when he says:

“There are important truths in both the Left - and the Right-Hand approaches and both are required for a balanced or “all-quadrant” view. My position is that every holon has (at least) these four aspects or four dimensions (or four ‘quadrants’) of its existence, and thus it can (and should) be studied in its intentional, behavioral, cultural and social settings. No holon simply exists *in* one of the four quadrants; each holon *has* four quadrants.” (1995: 135)

What we understand from an Integral approach is that many scholars, specializing in only one quadrant, deny importance or even existence to the others. Even if they study a phenomena in all four of its settings, they may explain what they see from one aspect only. But if ‘we look at the four quadrants without trying to reduce any to the others, a surprise indeed awaits us’ (Wilber 1998:74).

Graves (1973, 2001, 2002, 2005) describes different aspects of his theory as psychosocial, psychocultural, neuropsychological, psychoneurological, environmentosocial, biosocial and biopsychosociological. He also identified human personality as the resultant state of 1. a psychological state of being, 2. a physical state of being, 3. the environmental conditions 4. the socio-cultural conditions. (1971:14). However, recognizing that there are correlations between many aspects of the four quadrants, while being extremely sophisticated, is not the same as holding them as an integral conception and resisting the reduction of their aspects into a single domain.

The strength in Graves’ work was the combination of these distinct domains into an ‘integral’ conception of human nature that was squarely framed in all four quadrants. He saw how the four domains influenced psychological existence and also looked at the correlates of the levels of psychosocial existence he had identified to depict the psychological systems, the neurological systems, the socio-cultural systems and the observed institutions of society all together in one model (Graves 1971 Fig. 4).

This integration of the intentional, behavioral, cultural and social domains into his systems conception is clearly expressed in his findings and conclusions:

“That when the human is centralized in one state of existence he or she has a psychology which is particular to that state. His or her feelings, motivations, ethics and values, biochemistry, degree of neurological activation, learning system, belief systems, conception of mental health, ideas as to what mental illness is and how it should be treated, conceptions of and preferences for management, education, economics and political theory and practice are all appropriate to that state. A person may show the behavior of a level in a predominantly positive or negative manner. (2005: 506). ... When a group of

men are in [one existential] state, the cultural ways and institutions generated are consonant with the centrality of that state. If a person is in a different [existential] state, he will be motivated, perceive, value and believe in a different manner. If society is in some other state, it will generate different cultural ways and different institutions for managing human affairs." (Graves 1971:14)

## Upper Left

Wilber (1995) explains the Upper Left domain to us:

"Theorists and researchers of the Upper Left investigate interior consciousness as it appears in *individuals*, and this has resulted in everything from psychoanalysis to phenomenology to introspective psychology to meditative states of consciousness (e.g. Freud to Jung to Piaget to Buddha)." (2000:51)

Graves was a psychologist and college lecturer who taught the different theoretical schools of psychology. Subject observation and psychometric testing was one of the familiar stances he understood in psychological inquiry. While he used these approaches to confirm his data, Graves based his initial research on the premise that a conception of human personality could best be discovered by *asking* various human personalities. He then looked for the smallest number of coded categories that could be validly determined from that data. He describes his approach as:

"When I asked adults, aged 18 to 61, to take four weeks of time to think through and develop, as best they could, their personal conception of the psychologically mature human being, the task was undertaken on the basis of three assumptions: 1. They would project themselves into their conception, 2. If I collected a considerable number of these conceptions, I would have a reasonably representative sample of what human beings would see the best of human life to be, 3. With these ideas in hand, I might be able through study of them and the people who produced them, to come closer to the goal of [what it means to be alive as a human being]." (2005:54)

Graves research question was no less than the age-old question as to the essence of human life: "*What is human life about? What is it meant to be?*" (2005:52). The meaningfulness of this aspect of his research was in undertaking the dialogue necessary to discover what did the answers *mean* to those of whom he inquired.

## Lower Left

While any theory of psychology may be true for an individual, Graves was interested in finding how all theories were true for all individuals of the species. His research on the development of individual adults was premised on the discovery of a theory of the collective, where adult personality has as its relatives, 'healthy personality and healthy culture.' (2005:489). In describing his initial approach to this problem he wrote:

"The emergent cyclical levels of existence conception of adult personality and cultural institutions began in a simple fashion. It started when I surmised that some of our adult problems exist because our means for managing them are based on erroneous conceptions of: 1) the psychological development of the adult human being; and 2) the psychological development of the species *Homo sapiens*." (2005: 33)

Graves saw the psychological development of individuals in different existential states and identified the correlate development of different cultural institutions in the Lower Left (1971, 2005). Graves model does not reduce the psychological states he discovered to cultural values, nor does he reduce the cultural values he identified to psychological states, but instead he holds both together.

## Upper Right

Graves was actively working on his theory at a time when the field of neuroscience had not yet benefited from more recent technological advances in imaging and neurochemistry. However, he hypothesized the existence of neural configurations in brain functioning as the physical correlates of the levels he identified in the Upper Left and the corresponding neurochemical triggers for these configurations. He resisted suggestions to deny this part of a whole approach from others:

"You said that you feel that we shouldn't get involved in the chemical side. My feeling is that we have got to get involved. We absolutely must do so, in that we are already halfway across the bridge moving down the other side. The data is already in the literature that the chemical side is there." (2002:63)

Graves maintained that the Upper Right physical correlates existed and these should not be reduced in their explanation simply to the psychological behavior observed:

"You see what I'm trying to do is to explain the brain in terms of behavior. I'm reversing the process. I'm saying that I've got the behavior. Now I am

going to say what the brain is like because man behaves the way the brain is constructed. I'm not trying to explain behavior in terms of the [known theory of the] brain." (2005:65)... And so, I am saying in theory there is a very tight relationship between structure, chemistry and behavior. If you had pure conditions and this behavior with this chemistry, then you'd get this behavior. If you had this behavior then you would get this chemistry and structure. This is in theory, but we recognize that in reality the pure conditions and ideal states of theory don't necessarily exist." (2002:67)

Unlike other researchers who sought to explain the phenomenological experience of individuals as a function of brain chemistry, Graves recognized that his findings of structures in the Upper Left must have correlates in the Upper Right, and found that that this was supported by the existing literature.<sup>4</sup> Rather than ignore the Upper Right considerations in the findings he had made from the data, he developed a comprehensive biopsychosocial theory for the structure of the brain.<sup>5</sup>

## Lower Right

Graves concludes his description of his biopsychosocial model by identifying the significance for Lower Right structures where the shift to seeing adult personality 'not as a recognizable cross section but as a vertically orientated multi-dimensional trend phase [then] leads us toward certain significant reorganizations of our view of human problems.' (2005:488).

Graves identifies the scope of the correlates that would require re-thinking in our Lower Right social systems as a result of his findings, including; labor-management relations, political science, hard science, the critique of art, music and literature and the theory of literary criticism, industrial organisation, economic growth, national planning, international development, foreign policy, political organization, approaches to poverty, welfare problems, medical services, the provision of housing, food distribution, educational systems, university administration and societal planning as a whole, also making the distinction between the management of heterogeneous and homogenous societies (2005).

On the topic of future planning for societal health he describes what was then (and is still) a remarkably visionary process for management in the Lower Right of the societal revolutions already occurring:

"When one begins to see the problem of goals, and organizing to promote certain goals, from within this point of view, three aspects of current planning seem possibly in error. One is the type of planning which conceives that the ultimate society is the one for which we should plan. A second is to plan a society around the percepts of only one level of existence.

And the third is the type of planning which seeks to return to the past. Each of these forms of planning are erroneous from an infinitely evolving point of view, the point of view of this book. ... Future planning must be pluralistic for a long time to come, possibly forever. This is so because at no time in the foreseeable, or intermediate, future can one conceive of all people at one level, and because it is very difficult to conceive that a process that is ever evolving will ever get all people to the same position on the existential staircase. Above all else, future planning must take into account that there is not A consciousness revolution taking place in the world. Instead there are five fully developed revolutions in full process and two others operating to a lesser degree." (2005:497-499)

From this we see the enormity of the correlations in the Four Quadrants that Graves' theory requires of us and society as a whole.<sup>6</sup>

## Levels

The definition of what constitutes a level is problematic. There are certain criteria by which we determine levels within a holarchy. Wilber describes this in relation to the Great Chain of Being:

"The Great Chain of Being – [is] perhaps a bit of a misnomer, because as I said, the actual view is more like the Great Nest of Being, with each senior dimension enveloping or enfolding its junior dimension(s) – a situation often described as 'transcend and include'. ... Each senior level in the Great Nest, although it includes its juniors, nonetheless possesses emergent qualities not found on the junior level. ... In short, each higher level possesses the essential features of its lower level(s), but then adds elements not found on those levels. Each higher level, that is, *transcends* but *includes* its juniors. And this means that each level of reality has a different architecture, so to speak." (1998:7-9)

The distinction between levels and other stages along a line of development is that levels are observable, not as a point reached, but as a resultant and dynamic stabilized condition. They are distinctly definable in that each level will have emergent properties which both transcend and include the properties of all of those of prior levels. Often what researchers claim to be levels are simply descriptive typologies of different stages or kinds of development without emergent properties. Graves did not make this mistake.

The levels of existence that Graves described are known as AN, BO, CP, DQ, ER, FS, A'N', B'O'. The sequence may continue but this was as far as he found data to verify them. His process was to find levels that had essential features and to

discern how these were different from other levels that included some of these features based on their different conceptual architecture indicated by reoccurring subtle differences. The two sides of his double helix are the environmentsocial *problems* for living (A-B') and the neuropsychological *equipment* for living (N- O'). The infinite combinations of these explain the multitude of specific human expressions that may arise within the identified underlying general pattern. The full sequence is described:

“When the momentary resultants of each side of the double-helix are conceptualized as the existential problems for living and the existential means for living, there is a need to represent the psychodynamic resultant of the interaction of both sides of the double helix. This resultant I will designate as *The Existential State* of the species, group, or individual. The existential state is the force field which must be discerned if one is to understand the psychological nature of the species, group or individual.” (2005:162)

Graves did not identify momentary and different states of existence as a fragmented theory of personality or different stages of development within a particular line of personality theory, but found levels of existence that included and reconciled all the different theories of personality.

He always expressed his conception of levels as letter pairs, reflecting that they were both a system of levels and levels of systems, being a composite phenomena of many other biological, environmental, cultural and systemic components that exist as dynamic existential states, rather than a description of typological stages or personal traits.<sup>7</sup>

## Lines

Wilber (2000, 2000a) provides examples of a few of the potential lines of development in the Upper Left quadrant such as: cognition, morals, self-identity, psychosexuality, ideas of the good, role taking, socio-emotional capacity, creativity, altruism, several lines that can be called “spiritual” (care, openness, concern religious faith, meditative states), communicative competence, affect/emotion, musical skills, kinesthetics, gender identity, defence mechanisms, interpersonal capacity, empathy and modes of space and time.

Graves (2002, 2005) conducted a number of standardized psychometric studies of his sample groups directed towards gaining data on different lines of development and dimensions of personality in the Upper Left to find any correlations in the preliminary levels of existence he had identified. These tests included intelligence,

authoritarianism, dogmatism, rigidity, deference, autonomy, affiliation, change aggressiveness, self-control, honesty, desire to be different, kindness, loyalty, independence, religiousness. Graves also cross-correlated the levels of existence he identified with the systems noted by Harvey, Hunt and Schoder (1961) and their own tests for correlation across thirty eight distinctive lines of development and dimensions of personality (Graves 2005).<sup>8</sup>

In addition, Graves proposed his own conception of other lines of development supported by his own research and other research literature in: learning systems, thinking styles, motivational systems, means values, end values, problems of existence and the nature of existence with nodal points corresponding with the levels of existence he found as identifiable existential states (1970, 1974, 2002, 2005).

## States

Wilber (1999, 2000, 2000a) includes in any full spectrum approach to the integral model as it appears in humans a recognition of *states* of consciousness, including the ordinary or normal states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep and the nonordinary or altered states of meditative, chemically induced states and peak experiences, as tastes of our ultimate ever-present awareness. He explains the distinction between states and the structures of consciousness that exist within them as follows:

“States are all temporary, passing phenomena: they come, stay a bit, and go, even in cycles. Structures, on the other hand are more enduring; they are fairly permanent patterns of consciousness and behavior.” (2000:286)

Graves hypothesized that were three different temporary states within which the enduring structures of his levels operated and that these were activated by the presence of certain neurochemical triggers. He labeled these supplemental systems X, Y and Z explaining their operation as follows:

“The letters X, Y and Z will represent, respectively, the *activating* systems, the *supporting* systems and the *elaborating* system. (2005:162) It is conceived that each system is connected by a pressure-type neurochemical switching sub-system X which has the capacity to be off, partially on, or fully on. Its operation follows a J curve (2005:165). ... This continuing interaction produces, in order, the existential states of the first spiral of existence and those of the second spiral which are now beginning to appear. Theoretically, this spiraling can continue for as long as *Homo sapiens* exist because the elaborating system Z in the human brain is essentially infinite.” (2005: 174)

In theory, the nonordinary activation of the X system would trigger the experience of new levels, of the Y system a deep nodal consciousness in existing levels and in the Z system the experience of second tier consciousness structures as temporary states. As a pattern of natural development, we would experience these states when awakening into new levels, as the conscious existence within levels and in the profoundly different psychological experience that existence within emergent tiers requires – describing possibly a experience common to all humanity, like the experience of the waking, dreaming and sleeping states is to us individually.

## Types

Wilber (2003) distinguishes types as pre-existing components of personality, gender, culture etc. that exist as a *horizontal* typology at almost any level of vertical development.

Graves noted after doing over thirty psychometric tests for cross verification of correlations across levels that:

“Also the data demands that some dimensions of personality or culture be shown to vary little over all systems. The constant form of the systems illustrates this.”(2005:188).

For example, intelligence showed essentially no variation over the systems whereas other traits that were not related to type varied corresponding to the level of existence of the subject (Graves 2002, 2005). As he said: “Intelligence is not a factor in determining movement through these systems.” (2002:32). He also identified those unique situations when type varied as a result of stress at the different transitions between stages within levels (2005).

However, Graves found something much more significant regarding type, particularly with regard to the theory of personality. While many attributes of individual personality were consistent through the systems, others varied significantly. Graves observed:

“There are dimensions in personality that are system specific, in which they are the same in most systems but quantitatively different in one specific system, which is aggressive and the like. There are some dimensions that seem to crop up at certain times and stand out at certain times in personality and then they seem to disappear. ... The factor being measured appears in one system and then it is out in the next system. ... There are dimensions in personality that have a cyclic trend to them. ... At this point in the data, I tried to rationalize my data with all the existing theories of personality with which I was acquainted. And I would get into them. And I would be in

trouble in every one of them. Always I had a mass of data left over unaccounted for by any theory of personality within which I tried to rationalize the information.” (2002:33)

With this data Graves concluded that many of the attributes of personality that we consider to be attributes of unchanging type, were attributes of the level of existence, and not of the person. This finding would make redundant (or misleading) many of the standardized tests for personality traits and other systems of typology that do not have a basis in stage development.

Graves findings enable us to see true type and surface type in personality, those that are pre-existing and do not change and those that are not types, but merely stages.

He recognized that true personality type is an unchanging constant ‘at almost any level of vertical development’, but not all. With the appearance of the A’N’ system and the beginnings of a second tier, he required a new theory of what it means to be a healthy adult personality:

“The thing that hit me, that stopped me cold for a while because I just didn’t know what to do with it, was this: The *express self but not at the expense of others* [A’N’] found more solutions than all the others put together. ... So I had to conceptualize that a sudden and almost unbelievable change in human behavior takes place when the individual begins to believe that psychological health should be both expressive of self and taking care of the other human being at the same time. When the human being starts to think in this manner, that thinking evidences a personality reorganization that is almost unbelievable in character and it must be represented in this conceptualization.” (2002:47)

## Waves

A major limitation of any levels model is in its rigidity. Wilber describes the role of *waves* in an Integral understanding as follows:

“Waves are the “levels“ of development, conceived of in a fluid, flowing and intermeshing fashion, which is how most developmentalists today view them. ... Of course, none of these waves are rigid or linear platform, like so many bricks stacked on top of each other, but rather are fluid, flowing average modes of consciousness.” (2003: 43-44)

Graves’ Levels of Existence theory is similarly not limited to a rigid conception of levels. To perceive of it as brick like steps would be to neglect his actual conception

of a sequence of (at least) eight flowing forms that emerge in a complex pattern of wave-like activation over sequential periods of psychological time:

“...psychological development is, overall, a complex wave like phenomenon. It is not, as previous words may have led you to believe, a discrete step-by-step movement that takes place. Slowly the movement begins. Then it picks up pace until it reaches a new nodal state, tarries at this stage for a while, then slowly (but never completely recedes) (2005:176) So each way of life seems to come upon us in a rushing ground swell, then to have its moment of smooth sailing on the sea of life, only finally to break down from the weight of its own way of being.” (2005:60)

## Stages

Wilber notes that within any of the levels of development there may also be a ‘multitude of identifiable stages that mark progression through these overlapping and fluctuating waves’ (2003:48).

Graves’ system conception of personality also noted that within each level of existence he had identified there were distinct and repeating stages that manifested differently at each wave like level. He said:

“Overall, psychological development can indeed be seen as a complex wave-like phenomenon. But development does not occur in the smooth and flowing manner suggested by Exhibit VIII. It is more a spurt-like, plateau-like, more a progressive, steady state, regressive movement in which certain demarcation points can be readily distinguished.” (2005:178)

Graves (2005) noted the five stages of transition in each level as being: *a.* arising of the existential problem, *b.* time of values crisis, *c.* occurrence of insight, *d.* times of confrontation and *e.* point of consolidation - as a sequence of identifiable stages within a continuously flowing emergent process.

## The Big Three: I-We-IT

Wilber’s work identifies modernity as the period in which there was *differentiation* of the cultural values spheres of art, morals, science – or the “Big Three” (the Beautiful, the Good, the True; I, We, It) as a result of which ‘each of the spheres could pursue its own truths and aspirations without domination or violence from the others’ (1998:50).

In our post-modern world we have the experience of the *dissociation* of the Big Three, being what happens when the process of differentiation goes too far:

“Differentiation gets out of control, and the various subsystems cannot be easily integrated: they fly apart instead of fitting together. The parts don’t differentiate, they dissociate, and the result is fragmentation, repression, alienation.”(1998:53)

Graves’ research question was based on the recognition of the ‘contradiction and conflict, the confusion and controversy which pervades the field of personality theory.’(2005:38). His stated aim was the re-association of the psychoanalytic (I), humanistic (WE) and behaviorist (IT) conceptions of the human experience:

“The literature, the arguments of theorists, and the accumulated data clearly indicate that a theoretical need is present in the late twentieth century psychological world. It is the need for a reconceptualisation of personality, culture and the concept of maturity. This reconceptualisation should depict in one model why and how the concepts of personality, culture and maturity develop and change with time as environmental conditions, accruing knowledge, and the current human activity alter the conditions of human existence for better or for worse.” (Graves 2005:159)

Graves went on to answer the question of what would the integration of the these fields look like as an emergent flowing process in dynamic movement, as a whole perspective of our own species’ continuously emerging psychological life space:

“So emergent cyclical theory represents psychological development as an environmental-organismic field varying both quantitatively and qualitatively from one psychological system to another. Systems of personality and culture and concepts of maturity are only momentary systemic organizations of existential states in their current environmental circumstances. In emergent cyclical theory, concepts of personality, culture and maturity depict the organisation around a point in the flowing process that is human life. They represent where a species, a culture or a person’s development is now. But the point around which organization takes place or the form of the organization are not necessarily destined to remain as they are at any moment in time. On the other hand they may fixate where they are. Thus by focusing on the psychological life space of the species *Homo sapiens*, it is possible to see what have come to be the basic aspects of the emergent cyclical model of psychological development.” (2005: 166)

## Individual and Social Holons

Both Wilber and Graves recognise that a complete conception of a model of human psychology must apply to both individual and social holons. Wilber writes:

“But first, let me be very clear about what is being attempted here. I have suggested that there are individual and social holons, each of which has an interior and an exterior. Thus, in evolution in general, and human evolution in particular, we are tracing *four different strands*, each of which is intimately related and indeed dependent upon all the others, but none of which can be reduced to the others. ... The four strands are the interior and the exterior of the individual and the social, or the inside and the outside of the micro and the macro.” (Wilber 1995:125)

Graves begins his conception with the species of *Homo sapiens* as a whole, then groups and working back to the individual:

“In sections 2, 3 and 4 of Exhibit VII, we see the basic determinants specified through one model to the species *Homo sapiens*, a group of *Homo sapiens*, and an individual member of the species. ... Section 2 shows that a unique set of life problems arise because of the very existence of *Homo sapiens*, and that the existence of *Homo sapiens* is maintained by the unique equipment for living of the species. ... Section 3 shows how this same model can be used to describe, explain and explore a group of individuals organised into a culture. Membership of a particular group, at a particular moment in psychological time, in a particular region of psychological space, creates the particular life problems of the particular group of people. ... Section 4 utilises the same basic concepts of the emergent cyclical double helix model to depict the psychological development of the individual. The life problems of the individual in need of solutions produce the conditions *of* existence of the individual. The person’s individual neuropsychological equipment produces his or her conditions *for* existence.” (Graves 2005:174-6)

## Non-Exclusion

The ‘integral-ness’ of theoretical conclusions is supported by an integral approach to the research that informs them. Wilber (2003) outlines the three principles of integral methodological pluralism that can act as guidelines to incorporate the most number of truths from the most number of sources. The first of these is described as *non-exclusion*:

“Non-exclusion means that we can accept the valid truth claims (i.e., the truth claims that pass the validity tests *for their own paradigms* in their own fields, whether in hermeneutics, spirituality, science, etc.) insofar as they make statements about the existence of their own enacted and disclosed phenomena, but not when they make statements about the existence of phenomena enacted by other paradigms. That is, one paradigm can competently pass judgments within its own worldspace, but not on those spaces enacted (and only seen) by other paradigms.” (2003:Part 2)

Graves (2002) through his research sought a theory of psychology that embraced this first principle, excluding none of the validly researched theories of psychology within that diverse field, and found a truly integrative model. He said:

“I chose as an area of research concern, the confusion and contradiction, the conflict and controversy in psychological information and theory (2002:5). One of the things I came to in time, as you will see, is that in my mind we do not have any argument, whatsoever, as to whose theory of human behavior is correct or is the best. The vehicle we are going to look at will say to you that all of them are correct and what their relationship is to one another.” (2002:4)

## Unfoldment/Enfoldment

Wilber describes an Integral approach as one that also embraces the second principle of *unfoldment*:

“This holonic or holarchical pattern of flowing existence - transcend and include - is summarized in the principle of unfoldment. This heuristic principle suggests that all paradigms, like all moments, are in themselves true and adequate; but some paradigms can be more encompassing, more inclusive, more holistic than others. ... The unfoldment principle, as suggested, can also be called the enfoldment principle - they are flip sides of the same prehensive stream. Each moment unfolds a new and creative expanse that enfolds and embraces its predecessors (an Eros that reaches up and an Agape that reaches down).” (2003:Part2)

Graves' intention was to integrate the perspectives from multiple paradigms in the field of psychology. On completing his conception he then looked for comparisons with other researchers' findings who had also conceptualized stage development models from a systems view (e.g. Kohlberg, Loevinger, Heard, Mumford, Erikson and 20 others). Graves did this comparison for the entering, exiting and nodal forms of his eight levels (forming a 22 stage framework) and found models with between two to nine stages, all of which he reconciled with his own, enfolding all

without negation (2005: Table VII). This tabulation process is reflected in the integrated depiction that informs our reading of Wilber's *Integral Psychology* (2003) which provides us with a similar artifact of the deeper inquiry undertaken.

Graves found confirmation in this saying:

"From this I conclude that when so many different people, from so many different directions traveling many different ways arrive at essentially the same destination at approximately the same time in history, something significant has occurred. Namely these remarkable facts tend to confirm that the systems point of view presented in this book is not an artifact of my somewhat peculiar methodologies." (2005:448)

## Enactment

Wilber's third principle of integral methodological pluralism is described as *enactment*:

"Subjects do not perceive worlds but enact them. Different states of subjects bring forth different worlds. For AQAL, this means that a subject might be at a particular *wave* of consciousness, in a particular *stream* of consciousness, in a particular *state* of consciousness, in one *quadrant* or another. That means that the phenomena brought forth by various types of human inquiry will be different depending on the quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types of the subjects bringing forth the phenomena. A subject at one wave of consciousness will not enact and bring forth the same worldspace as a subject at another wave; and similarly with quadrants, streams, states, and types." (2003:Part2)

The principle of enactment explains why each person who understands Graves' theory does so from a different worldspace. Graves understood that he himself was coming from particular streams of psychology with a particular perspective, and acknowledged the strengths and weaknesses of that perspective, respecting those strengths and seeking to mitigate the weaknesses. In his words:

"Theoretically this book is a contribution to phenomenological, existential, humanistic and cognitive developmental emergent stage psychologies. As such it attempts to meet some of the criticisms that have been directed at them. It attempts to bring some systematic toughness to the loose and discursive phenomenological and existential thinking. It attempts to move humanistic psychology away from its maudlin and sentimental view of human nature toward an emphatic representation closer to the realities of being human." (2005:7)

However, an Integral approach is not simply to 'know thyself' but also one that seeks "to present an all quadrant, all level view, which is the full spectrum in its multiple modalities – a conception that specifically attempts to accommodate the most amount of evidence from the most number of researchers." (Wilber 2003:55).

In forming his systems conception of personality Graves acknowledged his own enacted perspective and sought to expand this in the eventual formulation:

"With limited exceptions, during the research years, I tested the conceptual system myself. Therefore when the problem of verifiability took center scene it was necessary to seek outside my work situation for means to really test the conceptualization. Fortunately, the literature provided useful information for this purpose. When I did search, I found many people had and have been working along a similar vein of thought." (2005:406)

## Eight Primal Perspectives

Wilber (2003, 2003b) identifies eight major categories of inquiry paradigms that may inform an Integral approach. These comprise what holons look like or feel like *from the inside*, and to contrast that with what they look or feel like *from the outside*, in each of the four quadrants. As Wilber explains:

"For now, our simple introductory point is that by honoring all of the indigenous perspectives of being-in-the-world, we can more graciously arrive at an Integral Methodological Pluralism that embraces the many modes of inquiry that human beings are *already* practicing in any event--and they are practicing them because these methodologies are "real" by any meaningful definition of that word. The various methodologies--from empiricism to hermeneutics to behaviorism to systems theory--are as real as the first-, second-, and third-person perspectives that enact them. The attempt to privilege any single methodology is simply an attempt to violate the other native perspectives that support different practices, a violence that any genuine Integralism--guided by non-exclusion, enfoldment, and enactment--would surely want to avoid (Wilber 2003)

The strength in Graves' methodology of inquiry was the embracing of many modes of inquiry and many different methods within those modes. His initial research involved the review of essays containing personally held conceptions of the psychologically mature adult personality (phenomenology). The same subjects completed various psychometrics tests (structuralism). He asked his students to defend their conceptualizations of the healthy adult in a social context and observed changes in their shared and personal understanding (hermeneutics). He

reviewed the anthropological research on the Tasaday peoples of Mindanao, the bushmen of the Kalahari and the Ik tribe of Uganda to support his observations or where there were none he could make directly (ethnomethodology/ cultural anthropology). He incorporated the verifiable research on brain functions and formation of cognitive structures (cognitive science). He measured the reaction times in the perceptual readiness of word recognition using tachistoscopic testing to assess existential states (empiricism). His study subjects were observed in group problem solving exercises comparing the different structures of approaches of people with the same dominant existential state under identical conditions (social autopoiesis). He also examined the relationship of qualitative and quantitative environmental conditions and their correlates in terms of cognitive styles forming a comprehensive theory of the systems of behavior he observed (general systems theory) (Graves 1969, 1973, 2001, 2002, 2005).

Graves looked directly at the question of verifiability and comprehensiveness, seeking independent verification of his model through similar studies once he had completed the heuristic process of inquiry (which eventually spanned a 25 year period of naturalistic observation). While the rigor of his methodology is unable to be tested (as much of the original data has been lost), the diversity of the scope of his inquiry is not in question.

## The Emergence of Human Nature

The most significant aspect of Graves work is the research finding that 'the nature of man is not fixed'. It is a truth we already understand but seemingly cannot comprehend. We assume human nature is a closed state we are evolving within, but find instead that it is an open, constantly evolving system, we are emerging from.

The significance of this understanding and how it then frames all knowledge of ourselves and the universe around us is immense. In appreciating this the sands that comprise the foundation stones of human knowledge and experience slip effortlessly away.

In *Sex, Ecology and Spirituality* (1995), Wilber outlines the emergence of human nature and the transformation of the hominids (or 'proto-humans') into true humans (homo sapiens) leading us through the Magical-Animistic, Mythological, the Mythic-Rational, Rational, Vision Logic and the Centaur in Vision Logic which he had developed within the context of the whole of human history (Wilber 1980, 1981, 1986, 1996).<sup>9</sup>

Along similar lines of inquiry into the evolutionary path of the emergence of human nature, Graves (writing in the 1970's and drawing on the work of other

researchers at that time) proposed corresponding timeframes for the emergence of human nature through the levels of existence he had identified:

“[This] represents the AN psychological space, the space in which all *Homo sapiens* lived until about 40,000 years ago. At that time changes in the conditions of human existence, probably climatic, apparently triggered the appearance of the leading edge of BO thinking. This resulted in a considerable increase in the psychological space of *Homo sapiens*. About 10,000 years ago, a new set of existential conditions – probably population numbers – came to be. As a result, the P system in the brain was activated in the leading edge of humankind. Another increase in psychological space occurred as the CP state of existence emerged. The about 4000 years ago the D problems, probably full awareness of the fact one must die, arose activated the Q system, and produced another increase in psychological space. About 6000 years ago, the conditions of existence for the leading edge of mankind changed again. He became aware that this is the only life he would ever have. These conditions activated the fifth level neuropsychological system, the R system, and the human began to operate in the ER manner. But with the beginning of the realisation that one is not an individual independent from all others, about 80 years ago, the psychological space changed again. The leading edge of humankind started its move to the FS state of existence. And it was just some 30 years ago that psychological space started to show its greatest changes to date.” (2005:182)

## Interior Transformation

Wilber (1997) says:

“The methodology of an integral study of consciousness would apparently need to include two broad wings: the first is the simultaneous tracking of the various levels and lines in each of the quadrants, and then noting their correlations, each to all the others, and in no way trying to reduce any to the others. The second is the *interior transformation of the researchers themselves*.”

Graves says this about the beginning of his journey reflecting the intention and frustration seen in his earlier works (Graves 1959, 1962, 1965, 1966):

“When I entered into this research I had just about had it with the profession of which I am a part. I had gotten sick and tired of going into the classroom and having to referee the argument as to whose research was right or whose theory was right. I had gotten to the point where in the summer of 1952 I was seriously considering that there must be some other way a man can make a living. And I didn’t want to go back into the

classroom again. Even though I love the classroom setting I was just so sick to my stomach and the like that I didn't want to go back into it again and I said to myself: I just can't go back in there unless in some manner or another I can at least think that I am attempting to get this situation, that is confronting me, in hand." (2002:4)

The interior transformation of a person can be known only to that person as a felt experience, although it may be seen externally by those who know that person well. Graves own personal change is expressed over 20 years after his quest began, within the conclusion he eventually reached, which is filled not only of hope, but also with personal everlasting significance:

"This, to me, is the most significant of all the aspects of the level of existence point of view. What can be more significant to man than to see and accept that the values of Individualistic man of fifty years ago, those values which made modern society what it is today, are no longer the values by which man should live today? And what can give more purpose to existence than the never-ending quest for that new set of values which will be consonant with each new set of existential conditions? What can make life more zestful than to ever have to reach for values and new purposes; to always have our reach in life exceeding our grasp? If there is a never ending tendency, beyond the pleasure principle, and if we have in general, provided a map to this ever-changing process, then we have helped provide everlasting significance to the lives of all generations of mankind." (Graves 2005:504)

## Incompleteness

Neither Wilber nor Graves claimed to have developed a final and complete theory of everything. Both had the premise that the theoretical frameworks they had developed were open-ended as to their development, but also felt it important for our development, that they captured what was already known.

In Wilber's words:

"The integral paradigm will inherently be critical of those approaches that are, by comparison, partial, narrow, shallow, less encompassing, less integrative. We will be exploring this integral vision, this T.O.E. [Theory of Everything], in the following pages. But it is definitely not a final view or a fixed view or the only view; just a view that attempts to honor and include as much research as possible from the largest number of disciplines in a coherent fashion (which is one definition of an integral or more comprehensive view of the Kosmos)." (2003a:2)

And in Graves:

“The theory presented is of course a sketch; it is not finished. Obviously, it is oversimplified with yet much to be tested before one accepts this point of view. Man does not necessarily move slowly and steadily as described. In our world of past and present, there are societies and people at all levels, and societies and peoples whose levels are mixed; but these and other complications, such as transitional state value systems, are complications to be dealt with elsewhere. All men do not progress, and some societies may wither and die. Man may never cross his great divide; but on the other hand, ... - he may. And so the problem of ethical and moral decline lies, this theory says, not so much in the breakdown and discard of the ‘old’ as in the retention of existentially inappropriate values during a period of profound transformation in human existence.” (2005:402)

We have a significant amount of more work to do to live up to the vision of these two theorists and their perspective on our present and future way of being.

## Integral Research Agenda

In the conclusion of *‘The Marriage of Sense and Soul: Integrating Science and Religion’* Wilber identifies the continuing research agenda:

“What remains to be done is to begin correlating this data with the simultaneous and corresponding *changes in the other quadrants*, thus generating an “all-level, all quadrant” integral view. ... In short how will these stages of our own higher evolution manifest in all four quadrants.” (1998:209)

Graves’ likewise proposes a continuing research agenda towards our own integral evolution:<sup>10</sup>

“If adult personality and its relatives, healthy personality and healthy culture, are processes passing through definable nodal stages; if there is a psychology of man particular to each stage; then our task as scientists and practitioners must take a decided change. As scientists, we must seek those better models which represent this process, and we must seek to know more the principles for change involved in the process. We must seek further for keys to predicting what new stages are yet to appear. And as practitioners we must re-examine our approach to man’s many problems.” (2005: 489)

## Conclusion

Both researchers find that their integral conceptions ask the question of what is the emergent path for human nature and, hesitantly, find some potentiality for our species in their answers. On the emergence of human nature they write:

“And transformation into what, exactly? Is the centaur the end of the line? Put it another way: is there any conceivable reason that evolution, which has labored so mightily for fifteen billion years and produced so much undeniable wonderment, would just up and abruptly cease? Are there not higher spirals lying yet ahead? If we have discerned even the vaguest features of time’s arrow, can we not stand on tiptoe and foresee dimly the arrows arc into tomorrow?” (Wilber 1995:209)

“That is, man has reached the point of finishing the first and most primitive ladder of existence: the one concerned with the emergence of the individual of the species *homo sapiens* and his subsistence on the planet. ... Will man inevitably progress, both as an individual and as a species, to higher levels of existence? The answer is that man can indeed become fixed at one level, and he can regress (Graves 1974:73-78). ... [But] let us not give up on mankind. Let us first re-examine the evidence. Let us not revert only to past solutions. Let us look forward for possible new approaches. Let us ask: Has this work reordered mans’ value behaviour so as to provide for his future rather than prepare for his demise?” (Graves 2005:402)

What the work of Graves and Wilber do have in common is they provide a means of seeing the path that has gone before and provide us with a way to glimpse the path ahead. The reading of one with the other enables us to see this path more clearly.

That role, of seeing the path ahead, is ours. Our ability to work with the Integral framework sometimes limits our view and experience. As a magnifying glass of great clarity we run it over the largest of maps and, because they are not written in our familiar terms and in usual frames, we fail to see what has not been made clear for us.

Every now and again, when we come across a map of great detail, we recognize once more our original experience, that Integral is not a privileged domain we have into ways of seeing, but offers us a way of seeing into privileged domains.

Will Varey  
27 November 2005

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> One reason we needed Wilber to write *Sex, Ecology and Spirituality* (1995) and *Marriage of Sense and Soul* (1998) was that our capacity for differentiation (the dignity of modernity) and disassociation (the disaster of modernity) is both subtle and astounding. It is subtle in that we fall awkwardly into these traps without any effort. It is astounding in the degree to which we do so collectively. The frequency with which we take something that is integral (as all phenomena is) and reduce it in our understanding to fragmented partialness is remarkable, continuous and all pervasive. It seems that it is only by taking an Integral 'pause' to reassess what we have seen, and have not seen, that a wider truth is revealed.

<sup>2</sup> For clarity in this paper, and because it is an underlying theme, the distinction between an 'integral' inquiry using that term in its conventional and relative sense and an inquiry which uses the Integral framework and the AQAL model as a mode of conscious inquiry is made by referring to 'integral' and 'Integral' respectively (noting that an Integral approach may not necessarily be integral, and visa versa).

<sup>3</sup> A useful first source to a reader of this paper is a *Theory of Everything* (Wilber 2000) which outlines the fundamentals of Integral theory and Graves model from the work of Beck and Cowan. Wilber references the 1981 Summary Statement for Graves' model (Ch1. fn.4) and the book *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering values, leadership and change* (Beck and Cowan 1996) and other communications with those authors (Ch1.fn8.) for that summary. This paper only uses work attributed to Dr. Clare Graves.

<sup>4</sup> Graves found that he required a systems conception of personality to explain the data he had discovered. In developing his levels of existence theory he created new language to explain the four correlates for each existential state. These are: the momentary operants on the environmental side (*Conditions of Existence*), the momentary operants on the organismic side (*Conditions for Existence*), the psychodynamic resultant on the environmental side (*Existential Problems*) and the psychodynamic resultant on the organismic side (*Existential Means*). He then recognized that this also occurred for the collective group. He also recognized that conditions could be both quantitative and qualitative. The two sides of his double helix are the *environmentosocial* problems for living (A-B') and the *neuropsychological* equipment for living (N- O'). When the operants and resultants are stable, the corresponding existential states become potentially available and appear as the macro-phenomena that Graves observed as the eight emergent levels of existence. The infinite combinations of these describe the multitude of *schema* within the identified core *thema* and potentially comprise the source code for all existential states for all of humanity (e.g. A-N in all its forms, etc.). Rather than explain away his observations because they conflicted with known theory, he extended his frame of inquiry and conceptualized the correlates to his observations that would provide a theory of all phenomena and then confirmed its consistency with known fact.

<sup>5</sup> In Graves' words: "If general and specific support cannot be found for my conception of the organismic side of the helix, then the whole structure tumbles." (Graves 2005:407). Graves compiled a bibliography of material that supported his contention about the correlate existence of the brain structures and changing neurochemical configurations for the levels of psychological existence he had identified (Graves 1969, 2005). While the mechanics he described may be, in contemporary terms, simplistic, further work could prove (or disprove) the 'organismic' side of Graves' conceptualization as operating (partially or wholly) in all members of the species, with the environmental side then explaining all of the entire diversity of human behavior, thought, feeling and action.

<sup>6</sup> An Integral approach requires of us an expansive view. Wilber (1995) describes the process of subtle and gross reductionism where the Four Quadrants of a holon are reduced to their Right Hand correlates and occasionally to their Upper Right atomistic parts. A similar phenomena occurs where the Right Hand aspects of a holon are reduced to their Left Hand interpretive correlates of meaning and occasionally to Upper Left representations of states or stages of consciousness. We label a person as a level of existence (e.g. Green) and therefore assume to know the interpretative world of the person, not because we have asked, but because someone else once did. Rather than a flatland without interior depth, we may find ourselves in a vertical world without dimension. We are faced with only a series of coloured doors of perception we can walk through and in doing so presume to understand the complexity of the human experience. Even though Graves' presented his theory (often in columns) in its four correlates, describing the existential states (UR), the motivating problems of existence (UL), the collective ends values (LL) and the means values that manifest socially (LR), it would be no surprise to any student of integral theory and human nature to witness the many reinterpretations of Graves' levels by their dissociated labels, distinct from the conditions of existence and the conditions for existence which give rise to them in psychological space and time. We find within this a very natural expression of the continuing disaster of post-modernity and Graves' own theory. We are too human not to take the 4D dynamic system he envisaged as an expanding double helix and its correlates and find it easier to manage as 2D cut-outs of static stereotypes, to know its truth, and at the same time sense in the silhouettes that something is missing.

<sup>7</sup> Many may see Graves Levels of Existence theory as a theory of levels. This is a completely correct, and partial, truth. Once Graves had identified the levels he did significantly more work before publishing. It is his *system conception of existential states* that he should be remembered for rather than the levels that comprise one part of this. This error is like remembering Graves' contemporary, Abraham Maslow, only for his hierarchy of needs diagram and not his work on the overarching humanistic theory of personality that informs it. In these simplifications we become the victims of our subtle and gross reductions. An example of this would be to place the letter-pair existential states (e.g. A'N') as levels on a single line in the Upper Left. The letter codes in fact describe the psycho-neurological system resultant arising from the environmental (including social and cultural) conditions operating. As neurological systems of the brain they are better located (if anywhere) in the Upper Right. A better question (and the one Graves asked in his own way) would be how do the eight existential states manifest in all four quadrants? It is at this point that AQAL comparisons cease to be useful unless the systems conception in Graves' work is first understood as a whole.

<sup>8</sup> The most significant finding from the correlation of lines with levels was the ascending correlation between higher levels of existence and the lines of development of cognitive complexity, appropriateness of solutions generated and relevance of questions asked, and the descending correlation with the lines of development of rigidity and dogmatism. This supported Graves' significant proposition that an increase in psychological space and freedom accompanied the emergence of the higher existential levels (together with their corresponding more complex problems of existence) (Graves 2002, 2005).

<sup>9</sup> Graves goes one step further than Wilber and proposes that human existence at the F-S level of existence is at the '*threshold of being human*', seeing mankind's development from this point as the crossing of a great divide and a 'demarcation point between those things he has in common with animals and those things that are uniquely human' (2005:503). While recognising that higher stages of development are potentially available to us in an open system, Graves does not propose further trans-personal levels beyond those which he had research data to support the existence of.

<sup>10</sup>. Graves' work has been introduced to many people through the trademarked product Spiral Dynamics® and the brand name Spiral Dynamics Integral. This paper does not extend to an analysis of the Spiral Dynamics model, the research into values systems done using that model or to any other conceptions or extensions of Graves' work. That scope is outside this work.

Spiral Dynamics® is described by the holders of the trademark as follows: "Spiral Dynamics (SD) is largely a simplification and popularization of Dr. Clare W. Graves's 'emergent, cyclical, double-helix model of adult biopsychosocial systems development - 'Levels of Existence Theory' for short. It is, therefore, a bridge which seeks to cross the lines of disciplines and knowledge sets to pull many ways of knowing together. The work is rooted in systems theory and developmental psychology, and concentrates on the quest to describe mature adult personality in operation with all its permutations, positive and negative traits. Graves's very descriptive label, "biopsychosocial systems," suggests the imperative to integrate the biological/genetic, with the psychological factors and the sociocultural forces in a systems view. (One reason good intentions fail is that all these elements are not incorporated in the solutions and addressed simultaneously). " [Source: <http://www.spiraldynamics.org/learning/faq.htm> Accessed: 15 November 2005]

Spiral Dynamics Integral (SDi) approach to integral theory is explained as: " In fact, the word "Integral" in SDi refers precisely to the coming together of different entities to empower, align, enhance, and shape the various positive concepts, packages, and approaches - when and where appropriate - as they work in the background and at deeper levels to influence humankind's vMemetic Codes." [Source: <http://spiraldynamics.net/evolution.shtml> Accessed: 15 November 2005]

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